

Translanguaging in Indonesian EFL Teacher Education: Meaning-Making and Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT


Despite the multilingual realities of EFL classrooms, English language teaching in many contexts continues to be influenced by monolingual ideologies that limit the recognition of multilingual practices in learning and teaching. Limited research has examined how translanguaging practices support meaning-making and pedagogical development among preservice teachers in Indonesian EFL teacher education contexts. This study examined translanguaging practices among preservice English teachers in an Indonesian EFL teacher education context, focusing on how these practices supported meaning-making and shaped pedagogical orientations. A qualitative case study design was employed involving 30 undergraduate students enrolled in a Sociolinguistics course. Data were collected through reflective narratives and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicated that translanguaging functioned as a dynamic and strategic resource in three main ways: facilitating conceptual understanding of complex content, sustaining interaction and participation during communication, and supporting the development of inclusive pedagogical perspectives. Participants flexibly used Indonesian and English to bridge linguistic gaps, maintain communicative flow, and enhance comprehension. The findings also showed that translanguaging contributed to shifts in language ideology, with participants increasingly viewing multilingual practices as legitimate and pedagogically valuable. This study highlights the importance of integrating translanguaging-oriented approaches into teacher education programs to promote more inclusive, context-responsive, and equitable English language teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing prominence of English as a global language has significantly reshaped language education, particularly in multilingual societies where learners routinely navigate multiple linguistic systems. In many contexts, including Indonesia, English is learned alongside national and local languages, creating complex multilingual environments that challenge traditional monolingual approaches to teaching and learning. Recent studies have highlighted that language use in such contexts is inherently dynamic, as learners draw on diverse linguistic resources to construct meaning and participate in communication (Mariyono, 2024; Rozi, 2023). This reality calls for a shift in perspective, recognizing multilingualism not as a barrier but as a valuable resource for learning in English language education.

Within this shift, translanguaging has emerged as a key theoretical and pedagogical framework for understanding multilingual language practices. Translanguaging refers to the flexible and integrated use of linguistic resources by multilingual speakers, moving beyond the notion of separate language systems (Liu & Fang, 2022; Wei & Garcha, 2022). Rather than viewing language alternation as interference, translanguaging conceptualizes language as a unified repertoire that supports meaning-making, communication, and identity construction. A growing body of research has demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing comprehension, participation, and learner engagement across diverse educational contexts (Alhazmi, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). In this sense, translanguaging is increasingly understood as both a linguistic practice and a pedagogical approach that aligns with inclusive and equitable education.

In educational settings, translanguaging has been shown to facilitate deeper understanding of academic content and to promote active participation in classroom interaction. Allowing learners to use their first language alongside English can support comprehension, particularly when dealing with complex concepts, and can create more inclusive learning environments (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Ooi & Aziz, 2021). Furthermore, translanguaging has been linked to the development of multiliteracy skills and improved academic outcomes in multilingual classrooms (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2023; Wawire & Barnes-Story, 2023). These findings suggest that translanguaging is not merely a communicative strategy but a meaningful pedagogical resource that supports socially just and context-responsive language education (Karpava, 2025).

Despite these advances, the implementation of translanguaging in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts remains uneven. Many educational systems continue to privilege English-only policies, reflecting deeply embedded monolingual ideologies that position English as the sole legitimate medium of instruction (Koser, 2023; Nguyen, 2022). In Indonesia, this tension is particularly evident, as English language teaching often operates within a contradiction between institutional expectations and the multilingual realities of learners and teachers (Rozi, 2023; Siregar, 2020). As a result, there is a need to better understand how translanguaging is actually practiced and experienced within EFL classrooms.

This issue becomes even more critical in teacher education, where preservice teachers develop their beliefs about language, pedagogy, and professional identity. Teacher education programs play a central role in shaping how future teachers conceptualize multilingualism and respond to linguistic diversity (Tuimebayeva et al., 2024; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). While exposure to translanguaging perspectives can foster more flexible and inclusive pedagogical orientations (Asfaha et al., 2023; Jeon et al., 2025), there remains limited empirical research examining how preservice teachers themselves engage in translanguaging practices and how these practices influence their emerging teaching beliefs, particularly in Global South contexts such as Indonesia.

Furthermore, although previous studies have explored translanguaging as a classroom strategy, fewer have examined its role in meaning-making processes and identity formation among preservice teachers. Emerging research suggests that translanguaging is closely linked to learners' sense of identity and agency, as it enables them to draw on their full linguistic repertoires to express themselves and negotiate meaning (Almashour, 2024; Dutton & Rushton, 2021). However, empirical evidence on how these processes unfold in teacher education settings remains limited, indicating a clear gap in the literature.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates translanguaging practices in Indonesian EFL teacher education, focusing on how preservice English teachers mobilize their linguistic resources for meaning-making, interaction, and pedagogical reflection. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How do preservice English teachers engage in translanguaging practices in an EFL teacher education context? (2) How do these practices support meaning-making and interaction? and (3) How do translanguaging practices shape preservice teachers' pedagogical orientations? By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the growing body of translanguaging research by providing empirical insights from an underrepresented context and by highlighting its implications for more inclusive and context-responsive English language teaching.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Multilingualism and English Language Education

The increasing complexity of multilingual societies has significantly reshaped contemporary perspectives on English language education. In many educational contexts, particularly across Asia and other multilingual regions, learners routinely use multiple languages for academic, social, cultural, and interpersonal communication (Daongan et al., 2025; Rozi, 2023). In Indonesia, for example, learners often navigate local languages, Indonesian as the national language, and English as a foreign language simultaneously within classroom interaction and daily communication. This multilingual reality challenges traditional monolingual models of English language teaching that position English as the sole legitimate medium of instruction and often discourage the use of learners' first languages. Such approaches are increasingly viewed as insufficient for addressing the

linguistic diversity and communicative practices that characterize multilingual classrooms in contemporary EFL contexts.

Recent scholarship in multilingual education argues that multilingualism should not be viewed as a problem or interference in language learning, but rather as a valuable cognitive, social, and pedagogical resource that supports meaning-making, participation, and identity development (Agustin & Syakhrani, 2025; Mariyono, 2024). From this perspective, multilingual learners actively draw on their full linguistic repertoires to negotiate understanding, construct knowledge, and engage in communication across contexts. This shift reflects broader developments in applied linguistics that increasingly recognize the dynamic and fluid nature of language practices in globalized societies. However, tensions remain between multilingual realities and institutional policies that continue to privilege monolingual English norms in many EFL settings. As a result, learners and teachers often negotiate between maintaining English exposure and utilizing multilingual resources to facilitate comprehension and interaction. These debates highlight the need for more inclusive and context-responsive approaches to English language education that acknowledge multilingualism as an integral part of learners' lived experiences rather than as a barrier to language learning.

2.2. Translanguaging as a Theoretical Framework

Over the past two decades, translanguaging has gained increasing prominence as a major theoretical and pedagogical framework in multilingual education and applied linguistics. Originally introduced in bilingual education contexts and later developed extensively by scholars such as Ofelia Garcia and Li Wei, translanguaging emerged as a response to traditional monolingual perspectives that viewed languages as separate and autonomous systems. The growing recognition of globalization, mobility, and multilingual communication practices has contributed to the increasing relevance of translanguaging in contemporary language education. Rather than treating multilingual learners as switching between distinct languages, translanguaging conceptualizes language use as the dynamic and flexible deployment of an integrated linguistic repertoire (Liu & Fang, 2022; Wei & Garcia, 2022). This perspective challenges long-standing assumptions in English language education that prioritize English-only instruction and position first language use as interference. Instead, translanguaging recognizes multilingual practices as cognitively, socially, and pedagogically meaningful processes that reflect how learners naturally construct meaning and interact in multilingual contexts.

As both a theoretical lens and an analytical framework, translanguaging has become increasingly influential in EFL learning because it provides a more realistic understanding of how multilingual learners communicate, learn, and negotiate meaning. In many EFL classrooms, learners frequently draw on their first language to clarify complex concepts, maintain participation, bridge lexical gaps, and sustain interaction during communication (Jahan et al., 2023; Ooi & Aziz, 2021). Consequently, translanguaging is increasingly viewed not merely as a communicative

strategy, but as a pedagogical orientation that supports meaning-making, learner engagement, and inclusive classroom interaction. At the same time, the implementation of translanguaging in EFL education remains contested due to the continued dominance of monolingual ideologies and English-only policies in many institutions (Közer, 2023; Nguyen, 2022). These tensions are particularly visible in multilingual Global South contexts such as Indonesia, where teachers and learners constantly negotiate between institutional expectations and multilingual classroom realities. Therefore, translanguaging serves as a central framework in this study because it enables deeper understanding of how preservice teachers mobilize multilingual resources for meaning-making, interaction, and the development of pedagogical perspectives in EFL teacher education.

2.3. Pedagogical Benefits of Translanguaging

A growing body of research demonstrates the pedagogical potential of translanguaging in enhancing learning outcomes. Studies have shown that translanguaging supports comprehension by allowing learners to access prior knowledge through their first language, thereby facilitating deeper engagement with academic content (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2023; Ndhlovana & Charamba, 2023). In addition, translanguaging promotes active participation and interaction by reducing linguistic barriers and enabling learners to express themselves more fully (Jahan et al., 2023; Ooi & Aziz, 2021). These findings suggest that translanguaging functions not only as a communicative strategy but also as a cognitive and interactional resource that supports meaningful learning.

Beyond cognitive and interactional benefits, translanguaging is closely linked to issues of equity and inclusion in education. By validating learners' linguistic repertoires, translanguaging challenges deficit-oriented perspectives that marginalize non-dominant languages (Grapin et al., 2025; Karpava, 2025). It also supports multiliteracy development and expands access to learning opportunities in multilingual classrooms (Pacheco et al., 2024; Wawire & Barnes-Story, 2023). These perspectives position translanguaging as an important component of socially just and inclusive pedagogy.

2.4. Translanguaging in EFL Contexts: Challenges and Tensions

The growing interest in translanguaging within EFL education reflects broader shifts in applied linguistics toward recognizing multilingualism as a normal and valuable dimension of language learning. Across diverse EFL contexts, including Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, translanguaging has increasingly been integrated into classroom interaction, collaborative learning, academic literacy development, and teacher scaffolding practices. Research suggests that multilingual learners frequently draw on their first languages to support comprehension, negotiate meaning, and sustain participation during communication, particularly when engaging with cognitively demanding tasks (Jahan et al., 2023; Ooi & Aziz, 2021). In higher education and teacher education contexts, translanguaging has also been associated with critical reflection, learner agency, and the

development of multilingual pedagogical awareness (Jeon et al., 2025; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). These developments indicate that translanguaging is increasingly understood not only as a linguistic practice, but also as a pedagogical orientation that supports more inclusive and context-responsive approaches to English language education.

Nevertheless, the implementation of translanguaging in EFL settings remains complex and contested because it intersects with broader ideological, institutional, and pedagogical debates about language learning and proficiency. In many educational systems, English continues to be positioned as the primary marker of academic competence and global competitiveness, leading institutions to maintain English-only policies despite multilingual classroom realities (Kozler, 2023; Nguyen, 2022). Consequently, teachers often experience tensions between institutional expectations to maximize English exposure and the practical need to use multilingual resources to facilitate understanding and participation. Critics of translanguaging argue that excessive reliance on first languages may reduce opportunities for target language input and interaction, whereas advocates emphasize its role in supporting cognitive engagement, learner confidence, and equitable participation. These debates demonstrate that translanguaging in EFL education is not simply a matter of classroom language choice, but a broader negotiation involving language ideology, educational policy, teacher identity, and pedagogical legitimacy. In multilingual contexts such as Indonesia, these tensions become particularly significant because teachers and learners must constantly navigate between monolingual institutional norms and the multilingual realities of classroom communication.

2.5. Translanguaging, Teacher Education, and Identity

Teacher education plays a central role in shaping how future teachers understand language, pedagogy, and classroom interaction in multilingual educational contexts. In many Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, multilingualism forms a natural part of everyday communication and educational practice, as learners and teachers routinely navigate national, local, and foreign languages within academic and social interaction. In these contexts, preservice English teachers are expected not only to develop English proficiency, but also to negotiate beliefs about language use, teaching practices, and professional legitimacy in multilingual classrooms. However, teacher education programs have traditionally been influenced by monolingual ideologies that position English-only instruction as the ideal model of language teaching. As multilingual realities become increasingly visible in EFL education, translanguaging has emerged as an important framework that challenges these assumptions by recognizing learners' full linguistic repertoires as valuable pedagogical resources.

Within EFL teacher education, translanguaging has increasingly been used to encourage preservice teachers to critically reflect on language ideology, multilingual pedagogy, and classroom interaction. Studies in multilingual educational contexts have shown that exposure to

translanguaging perspectives can support more flexible and inclusive approaches to English language teaching by helping preservice teachers understand how multilingual learners use multiple languages to construct meaning, negotiate understanding, and sustain participation during communication (Jeon et al., 2025; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). In Indonesia and culturally related contexts such as Malaysia and Brunei, translanguaging practices frequently occur in English classrooms because learners naturally move between English, national languages, and local languages during learning activities. These multilingual practices demonstrate that language learning in EFL contexts is often fluid and dynamic rather than strictly separated according to monolingual norms. Consequently, translanguaging-oriented teacher education can help future teachers develop pedagogical awareness that is more responsive to multilingual classroom realities.

Beyond pedagogy, translanguaging is closely connected to teacher identity and agency. Multilingual preservice teachers continuously construct professional identities while navigating competing expectations regarding English proficiency, language legitimacy, and teaching competence (Almashour, 2024; Dutton & Rushton, 2021). In many EFL settings, teachers are often implicitly expected to approximate native-speaker norms, which may position multilingual language practices as less legitimate in formal instruction. However, translanguaging perspectives challenge these assumptions by repositioning teachers as multilingual mediators who can strategically use multiple linguistic resources to support learning and interaction. In culturally multilingual societies such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, this perspective is particularly significant because multilingual competence reflects learners' and teachers' lived linguistic experiences rather than a deviation from idealized monolingual standards. Translanguaging therefore enables preservice teachers to view multilingualism not as a limitation, but as an important professional and pedagogical resource.

The integration of translanguaging, teacher education, and identity highlights the need to understand multilingual pedagogy not only as a classroom strategy, but also as a transformative process that shapes how future teachers conceptualize language, learning, and professional practice in EFL education. Although translanguaging practices frequently occur in multilingual classrooms, empirical research examining how preservice teachers experience these practices and how such experiences influence their pedagogical beliefs and identity formation remains limited, particularly in Southeast Asian EFL contexts. Much of the existing research has focused primarily on classroom interaction rather than on the broader relationship between multilingual practices, teacher cognition, and professional identity development. This indicates the need for further research exploring how translanguaging informs the development of inclusive, context-responsive, and multilingual-oriented teacher identities in Indonesian EFL teacher education.

2.6. Research Gap and Contribution of the Study

Although translanguaging has been widely examined in multilingual education and applied linguistics research, much of the existing scholarship has primarily focused on classroom interaction, bilingual education, and general pedagogical practices rather than on the interconnected dimensions of meaning-making, interaction, and pedagogical development in EFL teacher education contexts (Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021; Rezaee et al., 2025). Recent studies have increasingly highlighted the pedagogical value of translanguaging for supporting multilingual learners' participation, comprehension, and engagement in language learning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Zhang et al., 2024). However, empirical research examining how preservice teachers themselves experience and negotiate translanguaging practices remains relatively limited, particularly in multilingual Global South EFL contexts where English learning is shaped by complex sociolinguistic realities (Debreli, 2026; Jeon et al., 2025). Furthermore, previous studies have often examined translanguaging, teacher cognition, and identity separately, with limited attention to how these dimensions interact within teacher education settings.

In Indonesia, where multilingualism represents an integral part of educational and social interaction, English language teaching frequently operates between institutional monolingual expectations and multilingual classroom realities (Rozi, 2023; Siregar, 2020). Similar patterns have also been observed in culturally related Southeast Asian contexts such as Malaysia and other multilingual EFL environments, where learners and teachers routinely mobilize multiple linguistic resources despite the dominance of English-oriented pedagogical norms (Mohammad Sauffi et al., 2026). Nevertheless, there remains limited research exploring how preservice English teachers in these contexts use translanguaging to support meaning-making, interaction, and pedagogical reflection during teacher education. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates translanguaging practices among preservice English teachers in Indonesia by integrating perspectives from multilingual education, translanguaging theory, and teacher identity. In doing so, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of translanguaging in EFL teacher education and highlights its potential for fostering more inclusive, context-responsive, and equitable English language teaching practices.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative instrumental case study design to investigate translanguaging practices among preservice English teachers in an Indonesian EFL teacher education context. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aims to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and language practices in depth. The instrumental case study design was chosen to provide broader insights into how translanguaging operates as a cognitive, interactional, and pedagogical phenomenon within a specific educational setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). The study was conducted in a Sociolinguistics course within an undergraduate English Education program at a private Islamic higher education institution in

Indonesia. The course ran for one academic semester (14 weeks) and addressed topics such as multilingualism, language ideology, and language variation. Instruction was primarily conducted in English, although students were observed to use Indonesian and local languages flexibly during classroom interaction, creating a natural multilingual environment for the emergence of translanguaging practices.

The participants of this study consisted of 30 preservice English teachers enrolled in the course. They were selected using purposive sampling, as they represented a relevant group for examining translanguaging in EFL teacher education. All participants were multilingual, typically using Indonesian as a national language alongside local languages such as Sundanese or Javanese, in addition to English as a foreign language. To obtain deeper insights, 10 participants were selected for follow-up interviews using maximum variation sampling, ensuring diversity in language background, self-reported English proficiency, and levels of classroom participation. This sampling strategy allowed the study to capture a wide range of translanguaging experiences and perspectives relevant to the research objectives.

Data were collected using two qualitative instruments: reflective narratives and semi-structured interviews, enabling methodological triangulation. Reflective narratives were collected at the end of the course, where participants were asked to write texts of approximately 300–500 words. They were allowed to use either English or Indonesian to ensure authentic expression. The prompts guided participants to reflect on their multilingual backgrounds, their experiences using English and other languages, and their perceptions of language use in learning and teaching. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected participants to explore their translanguaging practices in greater depth. Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 minutes and was guided by open-ended questions focusing on language use, such as how participants use multiple languages in learning English, situations in which they switch languages, and their perspectives on using Indonesian in English classrooms. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian to facilitate richer responses, audio-recorded with participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English when necessary.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis following (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022) six-phase framework. The process began with data familiarization through repeated reading of narratives and interview transcripts. This was followed by initial coding using an open coding approach to identify patterns related to participants' language use. Codes were then grouped into categories reflecting recurring patterns, such as conceptual clarification and communication maintenance. These categories were further developed into themes by aligning them with three analytical dimensions of translanguaging: meaning-making, interaction, and pedagogical orientation. The themes were reviewed and refined across both datasets to ensure consistency and coherence. The final stage involved interpreting the themes in relation to the translanguaging framework. To

enhance analytic rigor, peer debriefing was conducted, and discrepancies in coding were discussed until agreement was reached.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were applied. Credibility was established through data triangulation and prolonged engagement with the data. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a detailed audit trail of the research process. Confirmability was addressed through reflexive practices to minimize researcher bias, while transferability was supported by providing a detailed description of the research context and participants. The researcher's positionality as the course instructor provided insider access but also required reflexive awareness to reduce potential bias during data collection and analysis.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the study. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional authority prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent. They were informed that their participation would not affect their academic evaluation and that they could withdraw at any time. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used, identifying information was removed, and all data were securely stored with access limited to the researcher.

RESULTS

This section presents findings derived from reflective narratives (RN) and semi-structured interviews (INT), providing complementary perspectives on preservice teachers' translanguaging practices. The narratives reflect participants' awareness of their language use, while the interviews capture how translanguaging is enacted during interaction. The findings are organized into three main themes: (1) translanguaging for meaning-making, (2) translanguaging for interaction and participation, and (3) translanguaging and emerging pedagogical orientations.

4.1. Translanguaging for Meaning-Making

Participants reported using multiple languages to support understanding, particularly when engaging with complex academic concepts that were difficult to process through English alone. The data indicate that translanguaging is used in different ways to facilitate comprehension, including shifting to Indonesian to clarify abstract ideas, reprocessing information in a more familiar linguistic framework, and then returning to English once meaning is established. In many cases, participants described using their first language as an intermediate cognitive tool to unpack difficult terminology, interpret theoretical explanations, and organize their thoughts before expressing them in English. This flexible movement between languages enabled them to maintain continuity in learning, reduce confusion, and engage more deeply with course content. Additionally, some participants extended this process by drawing on local languages, suggesting that meaning-making involves multiple layers of linguistic resources rather than a simple transfer between two languages.

4.1.1. Conceptual Scaffolding through Multilingual Resources

The analysis revealed that one of the most prominent functions of translanguaging among participants was conceptual scaffolding during academic learning. Participants frequently described using Indonesian as a cognitive resource when encountering abstract concepts, unfamiliar terminology, or complex explanations presented in English. The movement between Indonesian and English appeared to help participants process information more effectively before reconstructing meaning in English. This pattern emerged consistently across both reflective narratives and interview data, suggesting that translanguaging played an important role in supporting comprehension and meaning-making processes. The following excerpts illustrate how participants used multilingual resources to scaffold conceptual understanding during learning activities.

(1) “When I don’t understand the explanation in English, I try to think in Indonesian first so I can understand the concept better.” (RN08)

(2) “Sometimes I mix Indonesian and English when explaining because it helps me understand abstract ideas.” (RN12)

(3) “If I explain only in English, sometimes it’s difficult. So I use Indonesian first, then I continue in English.” (INT03)

(4) “I switch to Indonesian when the concept is too difficult, then after I understand, I try to explain again in English.” (INT07)

These excerpts show that participants consistently used Indonesian as a resource to support comprehension when encountering complex concepts. The movement between Indonesian and English appears to be purposeful, allowing participants to process meaning before rearticulating it in English. This pattern is evident across both reflective narratives and interview data, indicating consistency in reported and enacted practices. Overall, the data suggest that translanguaging is regularly employed as part of participants’ learning processes.

4.1.2. Resolving Lexical Gaps and Maintaining Cognitive Flow

The analysis further showed that translanguaging was used strategically to overcome lexical limitations during communication. Participants frequently reported switching to Indonesian when they encountered difficulties recalling specific English vocabulary, allowing them to maintain continuity in speaking and sustain the flow of ideas. Rather than interrupting communication, the movement between languages appeared to function as a compensatory strategy that supported fluency and ongoing participation in interaction. This pattern emerged consistently across reflective narratives and interview accounts, indicating that translanguaging played an important role in helping participants manage communicative challenges while maintaining cognitive flow. The following excerpts illustrate how participants used multilingual resources to address lexical gaps during interaction.

(5) “When I don’t know the word in English, I just say it in Indonesian so I don’t stop thinking.” (RN05)

(6) “Mixing languages helps me continue speaking without losing my ideas.” (RN14)

(7) “Sometimes I cannot find the English word, so I say it in Indonesian first, then I try to translate it.” (INT02)

(8) “I feel it’s helpful, but sometimes I worry that I depend too much on Indonesian.” (INT09)

These excerpts indicate that participants used translanguaging to manage lexical gaps while sustaining the flow of their ideas during communication. Switching to Indonesian allowed them to continue expressing thoughts without interruption, particularly when specific English vocabulary was unavailable. This pattern is evident across both narratives and interviews, showing consistency between reflective awareness and actual language use. At the same time, some participants expressed concern about relying on Indonesian, suggesting variation in how this practice is perceived.

4.1.3. Integrating Prior Knowledge Across Languages

The analysis also revealed that participants relied on prior linguistic and conceptual knowledge to support understanding of English content. Participants frequently described connecting new English terminology and concepts with meanings already established in Indonesian and local languages. This process appeared to help them interpret unfamiliar information more effectively by linking new knowledge with familiar linguistic frameworks. In several cases, participants also drew on local languages such as Sundanese as part of their meaning-making processes, indicating that translanguaging involved multiple layers of linguistic resources rather than movement between only Indonesian and English. These patterns were consistently reflected across both narratives and interview data, suggesting that multilingual knowledge played an important role in participants’ comprehension and learning processes. The following excerpts illustrate how participants integrated prior knowledge across languages during academic learning.

(9) “I understand English better when I connect it with what I already know in Indonesian.” (RN11)

(10) “When I learn new terms in English, I try to remember the meaning in Indonesian first.” (RN03)

(11) “Usually I understand the concept in Indonesian in my mind first, then I try to explain it in English.” (INT05)

(12) “Sometimes I also think in Sundanese because it feels more natural, then I translate it.” (INT08)

These excerpts show that participants drew on prior knowledge in Indonesian and local languages to interpret and understand English content. The use of familiar linguistic frameworks appeared to support comprehension of new terms and concepts. This pattern is evident in both reflective narratives and interview data, indicating consistency across data sources. The inclusion of local languages such as Sundanese also suggests that multiple linguistic resources are involved in participants’ meaning-making processes.

4.2. Translanguaging for Interaction and Participation

The findings revealed that translanguaging was not only used to support comprehension, but also functioned as an important communicative resource during classroom interaction. Participants frequently moved between Indonesian and English to sustain participation, negotiate meaning, and maintain engagement during discussion activities. The analysis showed that translanguaging enabled participants to respond more confidently in interactional situations where exclusive use of English was perceived as challenging. Across both reflective narratives and interview data, participants described multilingual language use as helping them remain involved in classroom communication, collaborate with peers, and reduce hesitation during interaction. These patterns indicate that translanguaging played a significant role in facilitating participation and supporting communicative engagement in multilingual EFL learning contexts.

4.2.1. Sustaining Communication in Classroom Interaction

The analysis revealed that translanguaging played an important role in sustaining classroom communication during interaction. Participants frequently described switching to Indonesian when they encountered difficulties expressing ideas fully in English, particularly during spontaneous classroom discussion. Rather than interrupting communication, the movement between languages appeared to help participants maintain conversational continuity and remain actively engaged in interaction. This practice enabled participants to continue sharing ideas, respond to peers, and avoid communicative breakdowns that might otherwise limit participation. The pattern emerged consistently across reflective narratives and interview data, indicating that translanguaging functioned as a practical communicative strategy for sustaining interaction during classroom activities. The following excerpts illustrate how participants used multilingual resources to maintain communication during interaction.

(13) “If I only use English, sometimes I stop because I don’t know how to continue.” (RN06)

(14) “Using Indonesian helps me keep speaking and not stay silent.” (RN10)

(15) “When I speak in class, I start in English, but if I get stuck, I switch to Indonesian so I can continue.” (INT01)

(16) “It helps me stay in the conversation. If not, I will just be quiet.” (INT06)

These excerpts indicate that participants used Indonesian as a resource to sustain communication when they encountered difficulties in expressing ideas in English. Switching languages enabled them to continue speaking and remain engaged in classroom interaction rather than withdrawing from the conversation. This pattern appears consistently in both narrative reflections and interview accounts, showing alignment between perceived and actual practices. Overall, the data suggest that translanguaging supports ongoing participation during communicative challenges.

4.2.2. Negotiating Meaning in Multilingual Dialogue

The analysis further indicated that translanguaging supported participants in negotiating meaning and establishing mutual understanding during classroom interaction. Participants frequently described switching between Indonesian and English when clarifying explanations, confirming interpretations, or responding to peers who experienced difficulty understanding English expressions. The movement between languages appeared to facilitate collaborative discussion by allowing participants to restate ideas in more accessible forms and ensure that communication remained mutually comprehensible. This practice was particularly evident during peer interaction, where participants worked together to construct shared understanding through multilingual dialogue. The consistency of these patterns across reflective narratives and interview data suggests that translanguaging functioned as an important interactional resource for collaborative meaning negotiation in multilingual EFL classrooms. The following excerpts illustrate how participants used translanguaging to support shared understanding during discussion activities.

(17) “Sometimes I repeat my explanation in Indonesian so my friends understand better.” (RN09)

(18) “If my friend doesn’t understand, I explain again in Indonesian, then we discuss it together.” (INT04)

(19) “We mix languages when discussing so we can confirm if we understand the same meaning.” (INT10)

These excerpts show that participants used translanguaging to facilitate mutual understanding during interaction. Rephrasing and switching languages allowed them to clarify ideas and ensure that their peers shared the same interpretation. This pattern is evident across both narratives and interviews, indicating consistency in how participants manage communication collaboratively. Overall, the data suggest that translanguaging plays a role in supporting shared understanding during discussion.

4.2.3. Reducing Anxiety and Enhancing Participation

The analysis also revealed that translanguaging contributed to reducing communication anxiety and increasing participants’ confidence during classroom interaction. Participants frequently described feeling more comfortable and willing to participate when they were allowed to move flexibly between Indonesian and English rather than being restricted to English-only communication. The possibility of switching languages appeared to reduce fear of making mistakes, lower interactional pressure, and encourage more active engagement during discussion activities. This pattern suggests that translanguaging functioned not only as a linguistic strategy, but also as an affective support mechanism that helped participants participate more confidently in multilingual learning environments. The consistency of these findings across reflective narratives and interview data indicates that multilingual language use played an important role in shaping

participants' emotional experiences during classroom communication. The following excerpts illustrate how translanguaging supported confidence and reduced anxiety during interaction.

(20) "I feel more confident when I can use Indonesian because I am not afraid of making mistakes." (RN07)

(21) "If only English is allowed, I feel nervous and don't want to speak." (RN15)

(22) "I'm more relaxed when I know I can switch languages. I don't feel pressured." (INT03)

(23) "I feel comfortable, but I think maybe I should practice more English." (INT09)

These excerpts indicate that participants experienced greater confidence and reduced anxiety when they were able to use multiple languages during communication. The option to switch to Indonesian appeared to lower pressure and encourage more active participation in classroom interaction. This pattern is reflected in both narrative and interview data, showing consistency across sources. At the same time, some participants expressed a desire to improve their English use, indicating variation in how this practice is perceived.

4.3. Translanguaging and Emerging Pedagogical Orientations

The analysis revealed a noticeable shift in participants' perceptions of multilingual language use in English learning. Many participants initially associated language mixing with inappropriate or ineffective English teaching because of prior exposure to monolingual ideologies emphasizing exclusive English use. However, through their learning experiences and classroom interaction, participants gradually began to view translanguaging as a practical and pedagogically meaningful approach that could support comprehension and participation. This change in perspective appeared consistently across reflective narratives and interview accounts, suggesting that participants' experiences with multilingual communication influenced how they evaluated language use in educational settings. The findings indicate that translanguaging contributed to the emergence of more flexible pedagogical beliefs regarding the role of multiple languages in EFL learning. The following excerpts illustrate participants' changing perceptions toward translanguaging practices in classroom contexts.

4.3.1. From "Language Mixing" to Legitimate Practice

The analysis revealed that participants experienced important changes in how they perceived multilingual language use in English learning contexts. At the beginning, several participants viewed language mixing as inappropriate because they associated effective English learning with exclusive English use. However, as participants engaged in classroom interaction and reflected on their own learning experiences, translanguaging gradually came to be understood as a useful and contextually appropriate strategy for supporting comprehension and participation. This shift suggests that participants' experiences with multilingual practices contributed to the development of more flexible perspectives regarding language use in EFL classrooms. The consistency of this pattern across both reflective narratives

and interview data indicates that translanguaging influenced participants' evolving pedagogical beliefs and attitudes toward multilingual learning practices. The following excerpts illustrate participants' changing perceptions regarding translanguaging in English language learning.

- (24) "Before, I thought mixing languages was wrong in learning English." (RN02)
(25) "Now I think it helps learning because students can understand better."
(RN02)
(26) "I used to think English must be used all the time, but now I think it depends on the situation." (INT08)

These excerpts indicate a shift in participants' perceptions of language use in learning. Initially, language mixing was viewed as inappropriate, but over time it came to be seen as a useful and acceptable practice. This change is evident in both reflective narratives and interview responses, suggesting consistency across data sources. Overall, the data show a transition in how participants evaluate translanguaging in educational contexts.

4.3.2. Translanguaging as Inclusive Pedagogy

The analysis further showed that participants increasingly viewed translanguaging as an inclusive pedagogical approach that could support diverse learners in multilingual EFL classrooms. Participants emphasized that allowing the use of Indonesian could help students better understand instructional content, particularly those who experienced difficulty following English-only explanations. Translanguaging was therefore perceived not merely as a communication strategy, but also as a way to create more accessible and supportive learning environments for students with varying levels of English proficiency. This perspective emerged consistently across both reflective narratives and interview data, indicating shared beliefs regarding the pedagogical value of multilingual practices in classroom instruction. The findings suggest that participants associated translanguaging with more equitable and learner-centered approaches to English language teaching. The following excerpts illustrate participants' perspectives on translanguaging as an inclusive pedagogical practice.

- (27) "Teachers should allow Indonesian so students don't get confused." (RN13)
(28) "Not all students are good at English, so using Indonesian can help them."
(INT05)

These excerpts indicate that participants viewed translanguaging as a supportive approach for accommodating diverse learners in the classroom. The use of Indonesian was seen as a way to enhance understanding, particularly for students with lower English proficiency. This perspective appears consistently in both narrative and interview data, reflecting shared views on the role of multiple languages in teaching. Overall, the data show that participants associate translanguaging with more inclusive classroom practices.

4.3.3. Repositioning Teacher Identity

The analysis also revealed that participants began to reconceptualize their professional roles as future English teachers through their experiences with translanguaging. Rather than viewing teaching primarily as enforcing English-only communication, participants increasingly emphasized the importance of supporting students' understanding through flexible and context-responsive language practices. This shift suggests that translanguaging influenced how participants understood effective teaching, learner support, and classroom interaction in multilingual EFL contexts. Participants appeared to position themselves not merely as transmitters of English language rules, but as facilitators who could strategically mobilize multiple linguistic resources to enhance learning and participation. The consistency of this perspective across both reflective narratives and interview data indicates alignment between participants' pedagogical beliefs and their multilingual learning experiences. The following excerpts illustrate how participants repositioned their identities as future teachers in relation to multilingual classroom practices.

(29) "As a teacher, I should help students understand, not only focus on English rules." (RN04)

(30) "I think teachers need to use both languages to support students." (INT06)

These excerpts indicate that participants began to reconceptualize their roles as teachers in relation to language use. Rather than focusing solely on enforcing English-only norms, they emphasized supporting students' understanding through flexible language practices. This perspective is reflected in both narrative and interview data, showing alignment between beliefs and experiences. Overall, the data suggest a shift toward viewing teachers as facilitators who can draw on multiple linguistic resources.

The findings of this study demonstrate that translanguaging practices are evident across multiple dimensions of learning, including meaning-making, interaction, and pedagogical orientation. Participants consistently reported using Indonesian, English, and, in some cases, local languages in flexible ways to support their understanding of complex concepts, sustain communication during interaction, and engage more actively in classroom activities. These practices were observed in both reflective narratives and interview data, indicating alignment between participants' awareness and their actual language use. The data show that translanguaging functions as a regular part of participants' learning processes rather than an occasional or incidental strategy.

At the same time, variations were observed in how participants perceived and evaluated these practices. While many participants viewed translanguaging as helpful for comprehension and participation, some expressed concerns about becoming too reliant on Indonesian and emphasized the importance of improving their English proficiency. These differing perspectives suggest that translanguaging practices are shaped by both practical learning needs and underlying beliefs about language use. Overall, the findings indicate that translanguaging is a flexible and context-

dependent practice that reflects the dynamic nature of multilingual learning in EFL teacher education.

DISCUSSION

The present study provides important insights into how translanguaging functions as a systematic and meaningful practice in Indonesian EFL teacher education. Rather than being a peripheral or compensatory behavior, translanguaging emerges as a central mechanism through which preservice teachers construct understanding, sustain interaction, and develop pedagogical perspectives. This finding supports the view of translanguaging as the dynamic deployment of an integrated linguistic repertoire, where multiple languages are mobilized flexibly to achieve communicative and cognitive goals (Liu & Fang, 2022; Wei & Garcha, 2022). By situating translanguaging within teacher education, this study extends previous research by highlighting its role not only in learning processes but also in shaping future teaching practices.

At the cognitive level, the findings indicate that translanguaging plays a significant role in facilitating meaning-making. The use of Indonesian and other linguistic resources to process complex academic content confirms that multilingual learners rely on their full linguistic repertoire to deepen understanding. This aligns with previous research demonstrating that translanguaging supports conceptual development by enabling learners to connect new information with prior knowledge (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2023; Ndhlovana & Charamba, 2023). However, the findings also suggest that this process is not merely automatic but often strategically managed, as learners move between languages to achieve clarity. This highlights the dynamic and purposeful nature of translanguaging in supporting higher-order thinking.

In addition to its cognitive function, translanguaging operates as a mechanism for managing linguistic challenges, particularly in addressing lexical gaps. The ability to temporarily shift to another language allows learners to maintain cognitive flow and continue expressing ideas without interruption. This supports existing studies that position translanguaging as a resource for sustaining complex thinking and communication (Jahan et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2024). At the same time, the presence of participants who expressed concerns about over-reliance on Indonesian reflects the influence of monolingual ideologies that equate language separation with proficiency. This suggests that translanguaging practices are shaped not only by communicative needs but also by internalized beliefs about language learning.

At the interactional level, translanguaging contributes to sustaining communication and enabling active participation in classroom interaction. The ability to shift between languages allows learners to remain engaged in discussions and avoid communication breakdowns, supporting findings from previous research on translanguaging as an interactional resource (Gatil, 2021; Ooi & Aziz, 2021). Moreover, translanguaging facilitates the negotiation of meaning through rephrasing, clarification, and confirmation across languages. This aligns with studies emphasizing the role of

translanguaging in collaborative knowledge construction and dialogic interaction (Jeon et al., 2025; Shi, 2024). These findings highlight the importance of translanguaging in creating more inclusive and participatory classroom environments.

The study also underscores the affective dimension of translanguaging, particularly its role in reducing anxiety and increasing learner confidence. The flexibility to use multiple languages appears to create a more supportive learning environment, allowing learners to participate more actively without fear of making mistakes. This finding is consistent with previous research linking translanguaging to improved learner engagement and emotional comfort (Nguyen, 2022; Olğun-Baytaş et al., 2023). However, the coexistence of increased confidence and lingering concerns about language use suggests that learners continue to negotiate between multilingual practices and dominant monolingual expectations.

A significant contribution of this study lies in its identification of shifts in language ideology and pedagogical orientation among preservice teachers. The findings indicate a movement from viewing language mixing as inappropriate to recognizing translanguaging as a legitimate and effective pedagogical resource. This transformation aligns with research that positions translanguaging as a means of challenging monolingual norms and promoting more inclusive approaches to language education (Karpava, 2025; Wei & Garcha, 2022). Importantly, this shift appears to develop through experience and reflection, highlighting the role of teacher education in shaping more flexible and context-responsive language beliefs.

From a pedagogical perspective, translanguaging is increasingly understood as an inclusive and equity-oriented approach that accommodates diverse learners. By allowing the use of the first language, teachers can support comprehension and participation among students with varying levels of proficiency. This aligns with research emphasizing translanguaging as a tool for promoting educational equity and access (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Grapin et al., 2025). However, the persistence of concerns about appropriate language use indicates that the integration of translanguaging into pedagogy requires deliberate support and critical engagement within teacher education programs.

The findings also contribute to understanding the development of teacher identity in multilingual contexts. Preservice teachers begin to reposition themselves as multilingual mediators who facilitate learning across languages rather than as enforcers of English-only norms. This aligns with studies on multilingual teacher identity that highlight the value of integrating linguistic resources into professional practice (Tuimebayeva et al., 2024; Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023). The study extends this perspective by showing how such identity shifts are grounded in lived experiences of language use during teacher education.

Furthermore, the findings reveal a developmental trajectory in which translanguaging evolves from an implicit learning strategy to an explicit pedagogical orientation. Initially used to manage comprehension and communication challenges, translanguaging becomes increasingly recognized as a valuable teaching resource. This progression supports

research emphasizing the role of reflection in teacher learning and professional development (Asfaha et al., 2023; Jeon et al., 2025). It also highlights the potential of translanguaging to bridge the gap between learning experiences and pedagogical practices.

From a broader perspective, the study reinforces the conceptualization of translanguaging as both a linguistic and ideological practice that operates across cognitive, interactional, and pedagogical domains. This integrated perspective contributes to ongoing discussions about the role of translanguaging in diverse educational contexts (Zhang et al., 2024; Zhu & Wang, 2025). In the Indonesian context, the findings highlight the tension between multilingual realities and monolingual educational norms, suggesting the need for more flexible and context-sensitive approaches to English language teaching (Rozi, 2023; Siregar, 2020).

Overall, this study demonstrates that translanguaging is a multifaceted and transformative practice that shapes how preservice teachers learn, interact, and conceptualize teaching. By providing empirical evidence from an underrepresented context, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of translanguaging in EFL teacher education and underscores its potential to support more inclusive, equitable, and context-responsive language education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that translanguaging functions as a systematic and strategic practice in Indonesian EFL teacher education, directly supporting preservice teachers' meaning-making, interaction, and pedagogical development. Rather than serving as a compensatory mechanism, translanguaging enables learners to actively mobilize their multilingual resources to scaffold complex understanding, maintain communicative flow, and participate more confidently in classroom interaction. These findings contribute to the field of English Language Education by providing empirical evidence that multilingual practices play a central role in shaping how preservice teachers learn and engage in EFL contexts.

The study further contributes to current scholarship by showing that translanguaging is closely linked to pedagogical and ideological transformation. Preservice teachers moved from perceiving language mixing as inappropriate to recognizing it as a legitimate and effective teaching resource, leading to the emergence of multilingual teacher identities as mediators of learning. This highlights the pedagogical value of translanguaging as an inclusive and equity-oriented approach that responds to linguistic diversity. However, the findings also reveal ongoing tensions between multilingual practices and entrenched monolingual norms, indicating that the adoption of translanguaging in teacher education requires sustained critical engagement and institutional support.

The implications of this study suggest that teacher education programs should integrate translanguaging more explicitly into curricula to promote inclusive, context-responsive, and equitable pedagogies. At the

same time, this study is limited by its focus on a single institutional context and a relatively small sample size, which may affect the broader applicability of the findings. Future research is recommended to examine translanguaging practices across diverse educational settings and to explore how preservice teachers implement these practices in real classroom contexts over time. Longitudinal studies may also provide deeper insights into how translanguaging-informed beliefs evolve and influence professional practice. Overall, this study reinforces the importance of recognizing translanguaging as a core pedagogical orientation in multilingual English language education.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

FH conceived the study, designed the methodology, and supervised the research process. RAY collected and analyzed the data and contributed to interpreting the findings. FH and RAY collaboratively drafted and revised the manuscript. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

During the preparation of this manuscript, ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used solely for language refinement. All research content, analyses, and conclusions are entirely the authors' own responsibility.

COMPETING INTERESTS STATEMENT

The authors declare no competing interests.

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