

Research Article

TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANS-LANGUAGING IN TEACHING DEAF STUDENTS

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Abstract.

Trans-languaging in teaching English to deaf students has different practices and perceptions. This study aimed to explore the perspective of a teacher of deaf students in implementing trans-languaging. Interview results of an English teacher and three recordings of the teaching and learning process were analyzed qualitatively in order to get a deep analysis of this research. The teacher was asked several questions about their experience teaching deaf students. The recordings were collected and analyzed to be the supporting data of the interview result. The result showed that the trans-languaging process is a helpful strategy in teaching deaf students because it really bridges the students and the teacher in learning English.

Keywords: *translanguaging, deaf students*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The use of translanguaging in today's era has been widely used among multicultural classes. The theory and practice of translanguaging derived from being in bilingual classrooms in Wales in the United Kingdom in the 1990s (Williams, 1994, 1996). The initiation of this practice was driven by the strive to promote the use of the local language, Welsh, as a minority language, in classroom activities and to comprehend how communication practices among bilingual students and their teachers can facilitate learning (Baker, 2001, 2006). The bilingual used here is to make their bilingual world more sense. It can be determined that translanguaging depicts more on the users than the language. This definition regards language resources as an integrated repertoire possessed by multilingual speakers although reflecting language boundaries to some extent (García & Li, 2014).

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In Indonesia, students are mostly acquiring at least two languages, Indonesian, and usually their mother tongue languages like Javanese, Madurese, Sundanese, etc. With the diversity of languages, Indonesian English teachers quite often use translanguaging to teach English subjects. Previous research conducted by Nursanti (2021) showed that in the multilingual classroom, the use of L1 was mostly rather than the L2. It was shown that the use of translanguaging helped students to be more comprehensive with the target language. It can be concluded that the practice of translanguaging in an ELT classroom is beneficial to students in a multilingual environment.

Apart from the regular multilingual classroom in which students are able to speak and hear normally, the interesting issue to raise is the use of translanguaging in teaching English to deaf students in an inclusive classroom. The translanguaging practice has been utilized to define bilingual or multilingual pedagogies (Allard & Pichler 2018; García 2009; García & Cole 2014; Holmström & Schönström 2018; Lewis, Jones, & Baker 2012; Swanwick 2017). It means that the concept of translanguaging in deaf students is combining the use of sign language, and spoken and written language in the classroom by deaf learners and their teachers. However, Snoddon (2017) mentioned that there are issues that translanguaging will encourage the growth of sign language by deaf educators and the uncritical mixing of sign and spoken language in the classroom rather than supporting and validating the use of sign language and that this practice will encourage the manipulation of sign language by deaf educators.

Based on the preliminary study, researchers found that the English teacher who taught deaf students mixed Bahasa Indonesia and English. She was also accompanied by a sign language translator. Going forward, since there is not much research to investigate a clear explanation about the implementation of translanguaging in the EFL classroom for deaf students in Indonesia, the research in this study will focus on the teachers' perception of translanguaging implementation in teaching English to deaf students. In a nutshell, it is possible that deaf students with multilingual language will live up in attending English education through the practice of translanguaging.

Furthermore, another study also mentioned that teachers have applied traditional and classic ways in teaching the English language in ESL classrooms by putting the students in an English environment with minimum intervention of their first language (Matamoros-González et al., 2017). Therefore, the researcher also wants to investigate more about the purpose of using translanguaging. Moreover, teaching deaf students surely has difficulties. The researcher also wants to discover the challenge and its solution in implementing translanguaging in teaching English to deaf students.

The current study aimed to gauge EFL teachers' perceptions and practices toward the use of L1 in English classrooms consisting of deaf students. Specifically, the problems which would be answered in this study are as follows:

1. What are the perceptions and practices of English language teachers towards translanguaging?
2. What are the purposes of EFL teachers in using Bahasa Indonesia in their classrooms?
3. What are the challenges faced by the English teacher while implementing translanguaging in teaching deaf students?
4. What are the solutions done by the English teacher towards the challenges in implementing translanguaging in teaching deaf students?

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative design by incorporating data from English teachers who teach deaf students. The priming method was selected to explore teaching the implementation of translanguaging in teaching deaf students. An in-depth interview was conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of the implementation of translanguaging. The observation was done to obtain triangulation data from the interview. Data such as interview guides and field notes were to help obtain the data.

This study used content analysis in order to process the result of the interview. A Six-step framework by Braun and Clarke (2013) was followed in analyzing the data. The audio-recorded interview was transcribed verbatim, omitting irrelevant vocalizations. To gain a full understanding of the data, the researchers listened to the recordings and read the transcripts several times (Polit & Beck, 2012). Step one of thematic analysis encourages familiarity with the interview content. During this step, the accuracy of anonymized transcripts was confirmed by reading and re-reading transcriptions and listening to original recordings concurrently. In step two, initial codes were generated which involved manual, line-by-line, inductive open coding of all transcript data using a descriptive code and adding new codes as the analysis progressed (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Following initial coding, step three entailed the generation of themes. Codes were refined and combined iteratively as data collection continued, and themes describing manifest content were developed. During step four, themes were reviewed for each interview and across interviews to determine that themes were an accurate representation of the data. The aim of step five is to 'identify the essence of what each theme is

about' Braun and Clarke (2013 p.92) and to ensure themes are relevant to the research question. During steps four and step five, the generation of themes and sub-themes was discussed and agreed upon by the authors. This led to step six and the presentation of the findings consisting of themes, and subthemes, which are supported by quotations from participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

3.1.1. Teacher's Perceptions and Practices Towards Translanguaging

The first research question is probed through the interview of the teacher of deaf students. The teacher thinks that she does not need to use L1 all the time but she combines verbal and sign language. In the process of teaching and learning, the teacher teaches deaf students by using oral or verbal communication while the students receive the information through sign language. Facing this situation, the teacher needs the help of JBI (Juru Bahasa Isyarat) in translating English words to the deaf students. The combination of verbal communication and sign language in the classroom shows that translanguaging emerges in the context of teaching English to deaf students. The practices of translanguaging in the classroom can also be seen from the recording of the classroom session. The teacher introduces particular English words, and the JBI helps the teacher translate it into sign language. This strategy is really helpful yet challenging at the same time. The teacher should make sure that her communication with JBI and her interaction with the students work simultaneously. The teacher waits or gives a break when the JBI tries to translate what she said to sign language to the students. When the students responded in sign language, the teacher should also wait for the JBI to translate it to verbal communication. This way of communication requires different time and energy allocation compared to the regular classroom.

3.1.2. Purposes of EFL Teachers Use Bahasa Indonesia in Their Classrooms

From the data analysis focusing on the recording of the meetings, the teacher uses Bahasa Indonesia in explaining materials to the deaf students because it is easier for the JBI to translate and for the students to comprehend. In addition, the teacher believes that the use of Bahasa Indonesia in the classroom depends on the proficiency level of

the students, and for this study, the classroom mostly uses Bahasa Indonesia uses in order to ensure that the students understand the instruction and the materials but when it comes to the vocabulary building or answering questions, the teacher shift to the use of English by spelling the vocabulary and the JBI translate it into sign language. The translanguaging in the classroom is needed because the students need visualization that can be seen from the sign language by the JBI. The geographical rationale is also one of the reasons for using Bahasa Indonesia in the classroom. In Indonesia, we have SIBI or BISINDO, while in English-speaking countries, the sign language is somehow different. This is why the teacher uses Bahasa Indonesia when she has to explain materials to the students.

3.1.3. Challenges Faced by English Teachers in Implementing Translanguaging in Teaching Deaf Students

The challenge faced by the teacher is when she should explain English material, the material is delivered in Bahasa Indonesia because the teacher and the JBI only know sign language for Indonesian. Because of this challenge, the process of teaching and learning takes a bit more time than in a regular classroom. For example, when the teacher wants the students to answer a question, they have to ask them to translate the question first. In one of the recordings, in the minutes of 0:58 and 3:46, the teacher gave them a question about “the following chart is social media brand usage from 2018 to 2020, except...” and “what is the most used social media brand in 2018?”, instead of asking the students to directly answer the question, the teacher asked them to translate it first and guide them to answer the question. Here, the translanguaging process can really be seen. The teacher shifts from English to Bahasa Indonesia and the JBI transfers it to sign language.

Another challenge is the way the teacher ensures that the whole class can follow the learning process. The teacher should look at the students’ expressions through their face or their sign language because they use zoom where they interact with each other visually. So, the teacher has two important jobs, which are managing the learning material works well and checking the students’ readiness and progress in receiving materials.

Different levels of deafness among the students are one aspect that the teacher should be concerned about. Since not all deaf students are able to communicate orally, the teacher should make sure that all the students get the same chance and treatment in participating in the classroom.

3.1.4. Solutions Done by English Teacher Towards Translanguaging in Teaching Deaf Students

In order to overcome the challenges happening in the classroom, the teacher uses the help of learning media in teaching deaf students. From the three virtual meetings being analyzed, all of the learning processes utilize PowerPoint. The JBI also helps her in explaining the particular term by typing it in the chat box feature in Zoom. Sometimes, sharing a website becomes a choice in teaching English to deaf students. Furthermore, the teacher agrees that she and the JBI need to learn International sign language, such as American or British Sign Language. This is aimed at bridging the communication between the teacher and the deaf students. Communicating in English sign language can make the teaching and learning process be more effective and not time-consuming. The other thing to pay attention to is the clarity of the PowerPoint and the speed of the teacher's lips when explaining the material. The teacher also combines the PPT and the feature of the zoom meeting, which is a pen or marking tool. This eases the students who are visual learners to stay focused on the learning process.

3.2. Discussion

Deaf students frequently have significant delays in phoneme development, vocabulary, and syntax. In higher education settings, deaf students commonly find themselves seated with hearing students and receiving instruction from hearing lecturers, often through sign language interpreters. The practices of English teachers toward translanguaging for deaf students are in line with the statement that translanguaging in deaf education needs to be considered in terms of learner-led and teacher-led practices (García & Li, 2014). Translanguaging thereby allows bilingual teachers and students to use of their entire repertoire of linguistic and semiotic resources, and when teachers use translanguaging as pedagogy, they build flexibly upon bilingual students' language practices.

The data showed how the teacher uses the language in the classroom for deaf students by combining the L1 which is Bahasa Indonesia to be translated into English through JBI (Juru Bahasa Isyarat). She stated that it will be difficult to translate the target language using sign language because the focus of the sign language must be different from British or American sign language.

The data showed that the teacher uses Bahasa Indonesia in explaining the materials and then switches the language when the materials are vocabulary building. Here, the

teacher finds out the strategy to teach deaf students to accommodate the teaching and learning process. In line with this result, the concept of translanguaging has its roots in bilingual education and was first described as a teaching strategy that teachers could use in aim to develop both the students' language and their content knowledge, but has more recently been described merely as bilingual practices (Mazak, 2017). Through the video recorded and also the teacher's interview, it can be seen that the process of bilingualism happens at the same time.

During the teaching and learning process, the teacher faces challenges due to the difference between SL and TL. According to the interview, the teacher stated that the main problem is how to deliver English materials to deaf students. Thus, the teacher explained the material using Bahasa Indonesia considering that it needs help from JBI. In the educational context, the type of translanguaging typically occurs when deaf learners are reading aloud, for example from an English text so they need the information to be translated. Here, sign language differs from one to another. JBI uses Indonesian sign language which emphasizes the use of Bahasa Indonesia itself while for other languages international sign language such as America Sign Language (ASL) or British Sign Language (BSL) can be used.

Due to the problem that arises, the solution can be taken from the media used by teachers in teaching deaf students. The study classrooms were found to be very well equipped with different media, e.g. website, computer, Zoom, etc., along with computer software such as PowerPoint and Word. Although the uses of white screens, computers, projectors, and PowerPoint slides are common in teaching in general (see, e.g., Mazak & Herbas-Donoso, 2015; Mondada, 2012), they are crucial for translanguaging purposes in deaf-led classrooms.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Implementing translanguaging in teaching English for deaf students means combining several languages in the classroom, such as sign language, oral, and written communication. Despite the challenges happening in the classroom, translanguaging helps English teachers deliver the materials to the students. JBI (Juru Bahasa Isyarat) plays an important role in the success of the teaching and learning process. The JBI bridges the gap between the teacher and the students in terms of communication. The students are helped by the JBI and the technologies, such as PowerPoint and websites. These combinations lead the students to be able to learn English as equal to other students.

Since the limitation of the study is in the participants and data, future research can develop the current study by elaborating more data and subject participants. This can be really insightful to have more data so that we can see the broader view of the translanguaging area and have richer references of learning strategies for the teacher and deaf students in learning English.

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