Translanguaging in Multilingual Context: Graduate Students’ Voices From Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract
Translanguaging is crucial for fostering student learning in the twenty-first century because it takes a holistic view of language, multilingualism, and bilingual education. Learning what college students think about language use is important, yet previous studies have mostly focused on college students in other countries. The objective of this study is to investigate the perspectives on translanguaging held by graduate students who are bilingual or multilingual and attend a large university in Indonesia that is home to a wide variety of languages. This research was conducted at Yogyakarta State University. The design of this study was the qualitative approach. To be more specific, we used survey data to establish how participants view the overall practice of translanguaging, specifically for the goals of learning a foreign language for social purposes, and inside a higher education classroom setting. In this study, the perspectives of graduate students on translanguaging were analyzed. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the information gathered from a survey. The findings indicate that graduate students had positive perspectives on translanguaging, especially in classroom settings and when learning a foreign language. Moreover, this study yielded various implications for practice, policy, and research. The majority of respondents expressed that the utilization of translanguaging was advantageous and fundamental in the process of acquiring a second language.

Keywords: Translanguaging, Multilingual, Graduate Students
Introduction

Traditional multilingual education practices in Indonesia during the twentieth century served to separate the country's many languages. As a result, bilingual people often feel torn between two separate worlds, a phenomenon that Cummins labels "the two solitudes" (Eslami et al, 2016). According to García (2009), there has been a need for teachers in elementary, secondary, and tertiary institutions to acknowledge and make use of the first language (L1) in order to facilitate another language (L2) learning and idea achievement. Recent studies have shown that using a variety of languages in the classroom, including the strategic use of students' original languages, has no negative effect on language acquisition (García et al, 2017). 'Translanguaging' is one way that a student's L1 can be integrated into the classroom.

The term "translanguaging," which is synonymous with the term "translingualism," refers to the adaptable use of several languages as a resource that goes beyond the conventional understandings of each individual language (Anderson, 2018). Both of these phrases place an emphasis on the blurring of boundaries between named languages and are predicated on the notion that emergent bilinguals routinely draw from the entirety of their linguistic repertoires in order to make sense (Pacheco and Miller, 2016). The theory that underpins these approaches in education is that teachers can better help students comprehend new ideas and topics by employing the L1 as a scaffold to activate students' prior knowledge, which in turn reduces the amount of mental effort that is required of the students to learn. Researchers have hypothesized that teachers who engage in translanguaging understand, interpret, scaffold, and challenge their students' choice of linguistic resources effectively (Anderson, 2018), which improves students' ability to comprehend and remember newly acquired information. Additionally, translanguaging assists individuals who are bilingual or multilingual in accessing various language characteristics and realizing their full communicative potential.

The utilization of one's mother tongue during the acquisition of a foreign language is not a recent notion. In the pedagogical approach of Content Language and Integrated Learning (CLIL), learners are prompted to employ their primary language during the initial phases of acquiring a secondary language (Navés, 2009). To promote the transfer of literacy skills across languages, it is common practice to instruct reading and writing in the primary language (L1) (Cummins, 2000). Translanguaging has the potential to create a more equitable learning environment for both monolingual and bilingual individuals, setting it apart from other language learning approaches (Otheguy, 2015). In terms of showcasing their proficiency, individuals who speak only one language possess the capacity to employ all of their linguistic abilities. However, those who are bilingual are obligated to suppress half of their linguistic abilities, placing them at an inherent disadvantage (Otheguy, 2015). The utilization of translanguaging has the capacity to address this concern as it enables bilingual individuals to utilize all the linguistic resources available to them. This, in turn, enhances their ability to articulate intricate ideas, offer comprehensive justifications, persuade, debate, and exhibit their complete potential (García and Lin, 2017). The utilization of translanguaging has the potential to address this concern as bilingual individuals are able to exhibit their complete abilities more readily when they are permitted to utilize all of the features in their linguistic repertoire.

Despite the obvious advantages of translanguaging, many schools and universities still adhere to monolingual philosophies, which encourage a reductionist approach to the local language (Doiz and Lasagabaster, 2016; Garcia et al, 2011). Numerous educators remain reluctant to use translanguaging due to their perception that it implies a deficiency in their professionalism. In addition, certain instructors assert that they do not engage in translanguaging, hence creating
challenges for students in comprehending their courses. Although participants acknowledge the value of translanguage as a skill, past research have shown that they are hesitant to actively integrate it into their professional activities or openly teach it in the classroom. Although there have been several studies conducted on the perception of translanguage among students at international universities, none have explicitly focused on graduate students from Indonesia and their experiences with several languages.

The objective of this study is to investigate the perspectives on translanguage held by graduate students who are bilingual or multilingual and attend a large university in Indonesia that is home to a wide variety of languages. To be more specific, we used survey data to establish how participants view the overall practice of translanguage, specifically for the goals of learning a foreign language for social purposes, and inside higher education. In the following parts, we will first conduct a literature study on translanguage, followed by the presentation of our findings and a subsequent discussion of those findings.

Translanguage in University Classrooms: Perceptions

A limited number of academic inquiries (Adamson and Coulson, 2015; Rivera and Mazak, 2017) have explored the attitudes of tertiary-level students towards the practice of translanguage. A survey and year-end reflection were conducted by Adamson and Coulson (2015) among university students in Japan to assess their perspectives on translanguage within an English language preparation course. According to the findings of a survey, a significant proportion of students concurred that the practice of translanguage was beneficial in terms of enhancing classroom management and promoting clarity in assignments. According to research, the utilization of translingual writing has proven to be beneficial for students with limited proficiency in English, as it has enabled them to effectively complete writing tasks. Additionally, students with advanced English proficiency have employed this technique to conduct comparative analyses of resources published in both Japanese and English languages (Adamson and Coulson, 2015). The study's participants generally expressed a consensus regarding the usefulness of translanguage in their preparatory course. However, the authors omitted any details regarding the language study backgrounds of the participants, which could have potentially impacted their perspectives.

Carstens (2016) utilized a comparable methodology, utilizing a semi-structured questionnaire, to examine the responses of South African undergraduate students who were pursuing a degree in construction engineering to the implementation of translanguage pedagogy. Based on the gathered data, a significant majority of participants reported that the practice of translanguage facilitated their understanding of overarching concepts, as well as aided in the comprehension of intricate topics and the acquisition of the English language (Carstens, 2016). Conversely, a small group of students held the view that the utilization of translanguage resulted in an increased level of complexity when dealing with unfamiliar topics. According to the students, the various dialects of Afrikaans were identified as a contributing factor to the lack of success in translanguage. According to some individuals, the utilization of English ought to be limited to the field of engineering, while the employment of Afrikaans should be disapproved. (Carstens, 2016). The discoveries prompt a series of compelling inquiries, notably including how the effective integration of translanguage can be achieved in classrooms with a diverse range of linguistic backgrounds, and to what extent deeply entrenched beliefs regarding the dominance of the English language can be contested within STEM fields.
A study was conducted by Rivera and Mazak (2017) to investigate the impact of students' pre-existing attitudes towards language on their perceptions of translanguaging in an advanced psychology course. According to the survey results, a significant proportion of the respondents believed that translanguaging was a suitable mechanism for promoting classroom discourse and perceived it as a conventional and socially acceptable practice among individuals who are proficient in more than one language (Rivera and Mazak, 2017). In response to inquiries regarding the level of professionalism associated with translanguaging, roughly 50% of the respondents indicated that it was a somewhat or entirely unprofessional approach. This was documented in a previous study (Rivera and Mazak, 2017). A significant proportion of the participants held the view that translanguaging was either somewhat disrespectful or disrespectful. Additionally, more than 50% of the respondents expressed the opinion that translanguaging did not aid in the clarification of the course content. These findings were reported in a previous study. The results of this study indicate that although the respondents express a belief in the inherent usefulness of translanguaging, they exhibit reluctance to fully embrace it in a professional context. Analogous to the research conducted by Adamson and Coulson, an analysis of the antecedent language acquisition encounters of the subjects would have been advantageous in comprehending the genesis of these ideologies. Further inquiry is warranted regarding the observation that translanguaging did not appear to be efficacious in promoting comprehension of academic subject matter.

To the best of our knowledge, a singular study has been conducted regarding the attitudes of professors towards translanguaging. In their study, Mazak and Herbas-Donoso discovered that science professors at a Puerto Rican university perceived translanguaging in instruction as having three primary objectives: (1) rendering essential scientific terminology from Spanish to English to acquaint students with English, which is considered the "language of science." Two strategies for bilingual instruction include integrating English textbook information with Spanish instructor explanations and facilitating class discussions that build upon information presented in both languages. In general, akin to the research conducted by Carstens, the educators in this study acknowledged being influenced by the ideology of English-only. Consequently, it can be posited that the utilization of translanguaging is subject to contextual factors that exert a noteworthy influence on its reception among academic audiences, particularly those within the STEM disciplines.

The Rationale of the Present Study

Based on the reviewed literature, it can be inferred that there is a general consensus among university students and educators regarding the utility of translanguaging. However, there appears to be some reluctance to fully embrace this approach as a universally valid pedagogical method. The efficacy of translanguaging in enhancing students' learning outcomes is contingent upon the specific languages that are being employed. The utilization of translanguaging may pose a greater challenge than benefit for students who speak languages with a multitude of dialects. Empirical research on the perceptions of translanguaging among students from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in Indonesian colleges is scarce. Except for Mazak and Herbas-Donoso, the studies examined in our analysis were primarily concerned with the perspectives of students within the same field of study, neglecting to consider the viewpoints of students from diverse fields regarding translanguaging.

The current investigation utilizes a survey tool to investigate the perspectives on translanguaging among postgraduate students at a significant, publicly funded university located in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The researchers chose to employ a quantitative approach for
various reasons. Due to the limited number of empirical studies conducted on translanguaging (Adamson and Coulson, 2015; Rivera and Mazak, 2017), the researchers aimed to gain insight into the prevailing perceptions of individuals from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, while also avoiding any potential influence on the graduate students' responses. Therefore, a quantitative methodology was employed. Scholars acknowledge the restricted capacity of quantitative data to impact perceptions yet aspire to employ it as a basis for forthcoming qualitative investigations on translanguaging within the context of post-secondary education.

The present study employed a diverse sample of graduate students from various fields of study, thereby ensuring that the language and ethnic diversity of the graduate student population at institutions was accurately represented. The recruitment process did not target a specific field of study or class. Through this approach, it will be possible to collect data regarding the perceptions of translanguaging among individuals with diverse age groups, native language backgrounds, and varying levels of prior language learning experience.

**Theoretical Framework**

The present investigation is underpinned by Garcia's translanguaging theory as its theoretical framework. According to this theoretical perspective, individuals do not possess multiple linguistic systems; rather, distinct languages are formed because of societal regulations and constraints (Garcia, 2017). The state of being bilingual is a dynamic procedure that prioritizes the utilization of language in the establishment and comprehension of social circumstances (Garcia, 2017). According to Garcia (2017), there is a limitless potential for the generation of knowledge. Pedagogical employment of translanguaging and encouragement of creative utilization of linguistic repertoires among students can facilitate the development of critical thinking through collaborative efforts between teachers and students. The present study draws upon translanguaging theory to inform our examination of graduate students' viewpoints regarding language and its utilization within the academic setting.

**Method**

The present study utilizes a qualitative methodology. The present study seeks to investigate the viewpoints of graduate students who are proficient in two or more languages regarding their educational practices, language learning, and higher education. The researchers employed a self-designed survey to gather information, which was subsequently subjected to descriptive statistical analysis to obtain responses to the posed inquiries.

1. How do graduate students who are bilingual and multilingual perceive the practice of translanguaging?
2. How do bilingual and multilingual graduate students view translanguaging for L2 learning?
3. How do bilingual and multilingual graduate students view the implementation of translanguaging in higher education?

**Procedures and Instruments**

The methodology employed for data collection involved the utilization of a survey that is conducted through an online platform. The employed method for selecting participants in this study is purposive sampling. The act of participating in the questionnaire is completely voluntary, and there is no provision for the remuneration of students. The collection of
personally identifiable information is contingent upon the participants' voluntary completion of a brief interview, during which they furnish their names and email addresses.

The present study employed a survey instrument that was designed by Rivera and Mazak (2017) to investigate individuals' dispositions toward the practice of translanguaging among university educators. The current study required the participants to respond to a total of 25 questions. The initial set of five comprises demographic information, encompassing the profiles of students, their ethnic backgrounds, and linguistic data. The respondents are requested to evaluate the statements using a Likert scale that ranges from one to five, where one denotes "strongly disagree" and five denotes "strongly agree" for the remaining 20 inquiries.

**Setting and Participants**

The research is conducted at an academic institution located in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The present investigation seeks to enlist the involvement of postgraduate (both master's and doctoral) and professional students, with a particular emphasis on those enrolled in the English Department. Our guiding principle is that the amalgamation of graduate students' professional experiences and their undergraduate coursework completion will offer a more comprehensive outlook on the perceptions of translanguaging in higher education compared to that of undergraduate students.

**Data Analysis**

The researchers performed a descriptive analysis on the survey data that has been collected. The statistical measures of mean, standard deviation, and variance have been reported for each element of the research queries. The arithmetic mean is determined by dividing the sum of all responses by the total count of responses. The variance is computed as four times the squared deviation of the mean from the mean, while the standard deviation is obtained by taking the square root of the variance. The survey topics have been categorized into three distinct groups to facilitate the reporting of students' perceptions and to gain a better understanding of their perspectives. Scores falling within one standard deviation from the mean are regarded as neutral. Perceptions are deemed neutral when falling within the range of 2.5 to 3.5. Scores below 2.5 are indicative of negative perceptions, while scores exceeding 3.5 suggest positive perceptions.

**Results**

The subsequent section presents the outcomes of the survey to ascertain the perspectives of students regarding translanguaging in diverse contexts and for various objectives. The findings have been systematically arranged based on our research inquiries and furnish insights into the attitudes of students towards translanguaging as a means of communication, specifically for second language acquisition, in communal contexts, and in tertiary education.

The study presents mean scores of various survey items to address four research questions. These scores depict (1) the general perception of translanguaging as a practice, (2) its perceived effectiveness as a language learning tool, and (3) the acceptability of its use in higher education. Overall, the statement indicating that translanguaging is a natural practice for bilingual individuals yielded the highest mean score (M=4.10, SD=0.77), while the statement suggesting that translanguaging is a disrespectful practice resulted in the lowest mean score (M=1.99, SD=0.88). The data exhibits a satisfactory degree of variability, as evidenced by the
range of variance falling between 0.70 and 1.35. In general, the standard deviations seem to be distributed within a range of three standard deviations from the mean.

**Perceptions of Translanguaging as a Practice**

Regarding the initial inquiry, which pertains to the perception of translanguaging practice among graduate students who are bilingual or multilingual, our findings indicate that most responses were either neutral or positive, with a mean score of 3.54. The study's findings indicate that the respondents held favorable attitudes towards translanguaging, considering it a common phenomenon among individuals who are proficient in two or more languages (mean score=4.87). The study's findings indicate that the participants maintained a neutral stance regarding the avoidance of translanguaging (M=2.95), its potential to cause confusion (M=3.28), and its perceived level of disrespectfulness (M=2.87). Collectively, these results suggest that students perceive translanguaging as a typical language tool that does not impede effective communication. Notwithstanding the predominantly affirmative and impartial reactions, the pupils maintained favorable attitudes towards the notion that translanguaging implies an insufficiency in L2 linguistic competence (mean score=3.68).

**Perceptions of Translanguaging for L2 Learning**

The results pertaining to our second research inquiry, which examines the perspectives of bilingual and multilingual postgraduate students on the application of translanguaging in L2 acquisition, were predominantly affirmative, particularly with respect to the effectiveness of translanguaging in facilitating the acquisition of a supplementary language (mean score=4.13). The study's participants expressed a high level of agreement regarding the importance of translanguaging in L2 learning, with a mean score of 4.62. However, they held a neutral stance towards the notion that translanguaging by a language instructor would hinder the acquisition of an L2, as indicated by a mean score of 3.33. The study's participants maintained a neutral stance towards the assertion that "translanguaging is solely permissible during the process of acquiring a new language," with an average score of 3.31. The study findings indicate that the participants held favorable attitudes toward translanguaging as a means to facilitate second language acquisition and to facilitate communication beyond the confines of the language learning environment.

**Perceptions of Translanguaging in Higher Education**

The ultimate inquiry for this investigation pertained to the perceptions of translanguaging utilization in higher education among graduate students who are bilingual or multilingual. The survey items that were exclusively focused on translanguaging by university instructors were received favorably by students, with an overall mean score of 4.09, except for a single item. The utilization of translanguaging was found to be positively perceived by participants who spoke two or more languages (mean=4.53) and were situated in higher education contexts (mean=4.55). Specifically, participants reported favorable perceptions of translanguaging during conversational exchanges with colleagues (mean=4.40) and as a means of promoting mutual comprehension (mean=4.53). The graduate students exhibited favorable attitudes towards the implementation of translanguaging in academic tasks at the university level, as evidenced by their mean scores of 3.99 and 4.02 for assignments and assessments, respectively. Notwithstanding, the participants' responses indicated a tendency to perceive the use of translanguaging by an instructor as unprofessional (M=3.67) when asked about its appropriateness.
Discussion

In summary, the results of our study indicate that graduate students hold a strong belief that translanguaging is a natural practice for bilingual individuals, with an average score of 4.87. Additionally, bi- and multilingual individuals perceive translanguaging as a useful tool in acquiring a second language and advocate for its implementation in language learning classrooms, with an average score of 4.53. Lastly, the use of translanguaging in higher education was positively perceived, with an average score of 4.55. According to Carroll and Mazak (2017), there is a growing trend among individuals who are proficient in two or more languages to reject the notion of using only one language, and this has led to universities worldwide adopting a more receptive approach towards translanguaging pedagogy. Although some scholars may view the notion of "translanguaging" as a passing trend or a new phenomenon, the findings of this study suggest that individuals who are bilingual or multilingual reject the structuralist perspectives of language and are receptive to engaging in translanguaging activities (Canagarajah, 2018). In the following section, a detailed analysis of our findings will be presented in relation to the research questions.

Perceptions of Translanguaging as a Practice

The majority of the participants regarded translanguaging as an inherent phenomenon and did not consider it to be perplexing. The present study's results are in opposition to Carstens' research, wherein individuals who spoke different Afrikaans dialects expressed their belief that the use of translanguaging in the classroom was perplexing and unproductive for educational purposes (Carstens, 2016). It is possible that the individuals involved in Carstens' research adhered to a structuralist perspective on language. Nonetheless, this discrepancy warrants additional examination.

The study's participants did not express any perception of translanguaging as a disrespectful practice, which is in contrast to the results reported by Rivera and Mazak (2017). Approximately 50% of the student participants at a university in Puerto Rico expressed negative attitudes towards translanguaging, per the findings of the research. In contrast, less than 7% of the participants in our study reported similar sentiments. The study conducted by Rivera and Mazak suggests that the utilization of translanguaging may be more widely accepted in diverse linguistic contexts, such as Indonesian universities.

According to the findings of the current research, the respondents expressed a favorable perception that the practice of translanguaging is indicative of inadequate mastery of the second language, with a mean score of 3.68. This finding is significant when compared to the predominantly favorable responses to translanguaging in other contexts. It can be postulated that certain graduate students who are proficient in two or more languages may inadvertently adhere to notions of linguistic supremacy, whereby the primary language is regarded as a hindrance that should be abandoned upon achieving complete fluency in the secondary language (Canagarajah, 2018). Although it may seem unexpected in light of the survey results, this perspective is not rare among other individuals who are bilingual or multilingual, particularly those who work in the field of education (Martinez et al, 2015). It is common for universities to implement rigorous language separation protocols that significantly impact the perspectives of both educators and learners, even if such policies are not overtly articulated in written form (Carroll and Mazak, 2017).
Perceptions of Translanguaging for L2 Learning

The collective average for the items that pertained to translanguaging in the context of second language acquisition was 4.13, indicating a predominantly favorable inclination towards utilizing linguistic tools to facilitate the acquisition of language and subject matter. The study’s participants expressed a belief in the efficacy of translanguaging as a tool for acquiring a new language and recommended that educators incorporate translanguaging practices into their instruction (M=3.63). It is plausible to hypothesize that translanguaging pedagogies may already be present in universities of other nations (Doiz and Lasagabaster, 2016; Makalela, 2016), thereby potentially impacting the perspectives of the participants in our research, who predominantly hail from international contexts. The discovery has significant ramifications for language policies in higher education. Translanguaging can be viewed as a mechanism to optimize instructional efficacy and enhance students’ comprehension of advanced concepts (Carroll and van den Hoven, 2016; Groff, 2016).

Perceptions of Translanguaging in Higher Education

The results of the survey indicate that most respondents (M = 4.09) perceived positively seven out of the eight questions pertaining to the utilization of translanguaging in the context of higher education. The aforementioned convictions could have arisen from previous encounters with translanguaging pedagogy, which has been posited by scholars to foster a secure environment for students with limited second language proficiency (Carroll and Sambolin Morales, 2016), alleviate the apprehension linked to communicating in a non-native tongue in an unfamiliar milieu (Makalela, 2016; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016); Pujol-Ferran, 2016; Motlhaka and Makalela, 2016), and provide support for novel concepts (Carroll and van den Hoven, 2016; He et al, 2016). The results of our study align with the research conducted by Adamson and Coulson, indicating that Japanese university students consider translanguaging as a valuable tool for managing classroom activities and enhancing task comprehension. Carstens (2019) found that South African university students perceived that the use of translanguaging by instructors aided in comprehending the broader context (Carstens, 2019, p. 11).

Our research outcomes regarding the professionalism of translanguaging in the context of higher education exhibit a degree of similarity in comparison to the findings of Rivera and Mazak (2017). According to the findings of our study, the general perception of Puerto Rican university students towards translanguaging was that it is an unprofessional practice for instructors. This aligns with a previous study which reported similar views among the students. The mean score for the unprofessional nature of translanguaging was 3.67, indicating a generally positive response toward this perception.

Conclusion, Limitations, and Implications

This research contributes to the extant body of literature by investigating the perspectives of graduate students in Indonesia who are proficient in two or more languages, regarding the practice of translanguaging in diverse settings. The findings of our study indicate that graduate student participants exhibit a predominantly favorable attitude towards the utilization of translanguaging as a means of facilitating second language acquisition, perceiving it as an inherent and organic bi- and multilingual phenomenon. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents expressed their willingness to embrace the concept of translanguaging in the context of tertiary education. However, they demonstrated a proclivity towards the perception that translanguaging was suggestive of inadequate second language
proficiency. The aforementioned discovery is somewhat disconcerting, given that scholarly investigations indicate that individuals who use language have a tendency to utilize their linguistic resources and repertoires in a strategic manner to achieve various objectives and results. Additional investigation is required to ascertain the underlying reasons for students’ unfavorable attitudes toward the correlation between translanguaging and second language proficiency.

Similar to any research, this study is subject to various limitations. The present study is limited to quantitative data analysis, thereby precluding an in-depth investigation into the underlying rationales for the participants' translanguaging perceptions. The present study could have potentially gained advantages from a comprehensive qualitative comprehension of perceptions. Further investigation by future researchers may be necessary to ascertain the effects of being raised in an environment predominantly composed of monolingual individuals on educational policies.

This study yielded various implications for practice, policy, and research. The majority of respondents expressed that the utilization of translanguaging was advantageous and fundamental in the process of acquiring a second language. Therefore, it may be advisable for L2 educators to permit and promote the practice of translanguaging in their instructional settings. In addition, it is recommended that policymakers, administrators, and curriculum designers in both K-12 and higher education abandon the notion of linguistic segregation and instead explore effective methods for integrating translanguaging into instructional practices. The present study can serve as a valuable reference for future researchers who aim to design a translanguaging intervention study with the purpose of delving deeper into the perceptions of university students.

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