

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents an in-depth explanation of the theoretical framework utilized in this study. It covers the concepts of translanguaging, supported by the concept of multilingualism, and the distinction between pedagogical and spontaneous translanguaging. It also explores the role of translanguaging in meaning-making and the challenges of using translanguaging in EFL classrooms. Additionally, this chapter reviews relevant research to support the study. The theoretical framework and relevant previous research are discussed in the following section.

A. Translanguaging

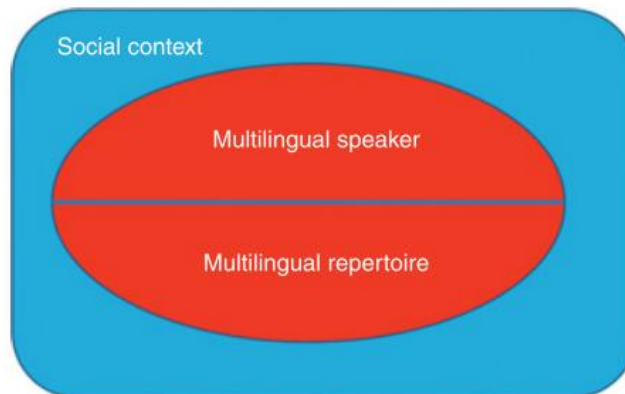
Translanguaging has been discussed by many scholars with different focuses on how multiple languages are used in learning. In addition, translanguaging has been studied across different language learning contexts, including both ESL settings, such as Mbambo (2025) and EFL settings, such as Madkur (2024), which the primary focus of the present study. This study adopts Cenoz and Gorter' (2021) framework of pedagogical translanguaging as the main analytical lens. This framework was selected because it specifically addresses translanguaging in educational contexts, highlighting its role in facilitating students' comprehension. In this study, the term "*understanding*" is used to refer to this notion of "*comprehension*." Furthermore, the framework provides a useful lens for identifying the forms of translanguaging, particularly pedagogical and spontaneous translanguaging, which are relevant to examining how instructors use translanguaging in EFL classrooms. The framework is also grounded in the concept of multilingualism, which views multilingual resources as pedagogical support that should be utilized according to learners' needs and the learning context. Accordingly, the three dimensions of multilingual speaker, multilingual repertoire, and social context are particularly relevant to the present study, as they explain how instructors and students draw on available multilingual resources to facilitate understanding within the context of freshmen students' transition to English-dominant instruction. Williams' (1994) original concept of translanguaging serves

as the theoretical foundation of the study, while Baker's (2011) discussion of translanguaging for meaning-making and understanding and García and Wei's (2014) concept of linguistic repertoire are used as supporting concepts. In this sense, these frameworks provide a comprehensive foundation for examining how instructors use translanguaging to facilitate freshmen students' understanding in EFL classrooms.

Translanguaging refers to teaching practices in Welsh bilingual education that combine Welsh as the first language and English as the target language to support students' understanding of meaning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). The term "*translanguaging*," which was first used in Welsh by Cen Williams (1994), was then defined by Baker (2001, as cited in Wei, 2018) as "*trawsieithu*," the use of two languages to foster knowledge and understanding, which was later translated into English as "*translanguaging*." Moreover, García and Wei (2014, as cited in Putrawan, 2022) argue that translanguaging does not view bilingual language practices as the alternation between separate language systems, but rather as the use of one integrated "*linguistic repertoire*." In other words, multilingual speakers flexibly draw on any part of their linguistic repertoire, including dialects, accents, and unique ways of speaking such as intonation and pace, to communicate meaning as clearly as possible. As a result, translanguaging is not only seen as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a reflection of adaptable and fluid ways bilinguals communicate in real life. This view is further reflected in Cenoz and Gorter (2021), the concept of multilingualism, which is organized into three dimensions: the multilingual speaker, the multilingual repertoire, and the social context. From this perspective, multilingual speakers strategically use their multilingual resources according to their needs and situations. Multilingual resources refer to the available languages used, including multilingual repertoire, such as English, Indonesian, and local languages, as well as linguistic resources, such as examples, intonation, and pace of speech, that instructors strategically utilize to facilitate students' understanding in EFL classrooms.

Figure 1

The three dimensions of focus on multilingualism (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021)



In existing research studies, translanguaging has frequently been discussed in relation to classroom instruction. As Mbambo (2025) explains, translanguaging is a practice employed by instructors who use two or more languages to foster the development of the students' less competent language. In this way, translanguaging serves not only as a teaching tool but also as a bridge that supports the gradual development of proficiency in the target language. Additionally, Mbambo (2025) further states that translanguaging is viewed as a resource to bridge the communication gap in academic spaces, ensuring that learning content becomes more accessible to students. In addition, Putrawan (2022) reports that translanguaging can reduce language learning anxiety by allowing students to rely on their first language to support understanding, while also increasing participation. This is further supported by Puspawati (2018, as cited in Setya Ningrum & Sahiruddin, 2023), who found that translanguaging fosters active participation and learner motivation, leading to a more positive classroom atmosphere. In a sense, translanguaging allows instructors to combine two or more languages in EFL classrooms as a strategy to support learning.

Moreover, translanguaging is often compared with code-switching and even code-mixing, leading scholars to highlight the importance of differences among these concepts. As Ezech et al. (2022) explain, code-switching and code-mixing originate from structural approaches to bilingualism that conceptualize languages as separate systems in which communication takes place. Furthermore, Ezech et al.

(2022) describe code-switching as the juxtaposition of two languages in communication, whereas code-mixing involves the insertion of structural elements from one language into another. In contrast, translanguaging views bilingual communication as an integrated process of meaning-making rather than as the alternation between distinct language systems. Furthermore, Canagarajah (2011, as cited in Rasmin et al., 2024) believe that translanguaging is a naturally occurring process that may be carefully used for pedagogical purposes. In this way, translanguaging is seen as a more intentional and pedagogically focused strategy. However, in classroom practices, it may appear to be code-switching or code-mixing, and from a translanguaging perspective, these practices can be interpreted as one of the meaning-making resources (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). In this sense, code-switching and code-mixing can be observed as language practices, whereas translanguaging functions as a theoretical lens for understanding bilingual meaning-making, particularly in a pedagogical context.

B. Pedagogical and Spontaneous Translanguaging

In bilingual and EFL classroom contexts, translanguaging can take different forms depending on how it is implemented during instruction. Some practices are intentionally designed by teachers to support learning objectives, while others emerge naturally from classroom interaction. As Cenoz and Gorter (2021) categorize translanguaging as pedagogical translanguaging and spontaneous translanguaging, as presented in Figure 2. Pedagogical translanguaging refers to teacher-designed instructional strategies that intentionally integrate two or more languages to support learning. Additionally, it is rooted in the original concept of translanguaging in Welsh bilingual education, which aimed to develop both language proficiency and academic skills by implementing activities that used two languages within the same lesson (Williams, 1994, as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). In contrast, spontaneous translanguaging occurs naturally when teachers or students draw on their linguistic repertoire to negotiate meaning, respond to confusion, or maintain communication flow during classroom interaction without prior planning.

Figure 2

Pedagogical and spontaneous translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021)



C. Translanguaging for Meaning-Making

The practice of translanguaging emphasizes meaning-making in multilingual communication by viewing bilingual practices as an integrated process rather than a mere switching between separate language systems. The goal of translanguaging, according to García and Wei (2014, as referenced in Putrawan, 2022), is to use two or more languages to create meaning, gain knowledge, and understanding. In this way, translanguaging becomes a technique where students control their language resources to build understanding and communicate thoughts more confidently. According to Canagarajah (2011), translanguaging is a process in which multilingual speakers flexibly use many language resources to construct and convey meaning. This view highlights that languages are utilized as interconnected resources that facilitate expression and understanding. Moreover, Cenoz and Gorter (2021) emphasizes that learning multiple languages can leads to a deeper understanding of lessons. As a result, translanguaging can be viewed as a tool that integrates multilingual resources to facilitate students' understanding.

Moreover, translanguaging facilitates meaning-making through instructional clarity and material understanding. Classroom instruction, complex material explanation, and task guidelines may become sources of misunderstanding when communicated solely in English, especially for students with different proficiency levels. According to Efendi and Syafryadin (2024), when teachers give instructions in complete English, students may not understand what is required of them. In this context, translanguaging serves as a strategy to prevent misinterpretation rather than to replace exposure to English. Cenoz and Gorter (2021) further explain that

translanguaging as pedagogy supports instructional strategies that combine two or more languages in the classroom to enhance understanding. The use of translanguaging in classroom instruction can facilitate students in fully understanding guidelines and task requirements (Efendi & Syafradin, 2024). Through clarifying procedural information, instructors create a structured and supportive learning environment. This approach prevents students from struggling with basic instructional interpretation, allowing them to direct their attention more fully toward completing the assigned tasks. As a result, students are more likely to understand the lesson better and complete tasks correctly with greater confidence.

D. Challenges of the Use of Translanguaging

Although translanguaging has been widely recognized for its potential to strengthen as a support for students' understanding in EFL Classrooms (Robillos, 2023, as cited in Rahmawati, 2025), translanguaging also presents several challenges. In many EFL settings, including those described, one persistent barrier is the belief that the use of students' first language may hinder English acquisition. As a result, many instructors remain hesitant to adopt translanguaging, adhering instead to using translanguaging that positions first language as a barrier rather than a pedagogical resource. On the other hand, instructors also struggle to find an appropriate balance between providing linguistic support through multiple languages and ensuring appropriate English exposure as the target language (Rasmin et al., 2024). These concerns are further compounded by students' varying proficiency levels, which makes it difficult for instructors to decide when and how to employ translanguaging in the classroom.

The difficulty instructors face in deciding when and how to employ translanguaging in the classroom largely stems from a lack of professional training that provides the theoretical understanding and practical skills needed for its proper implementation (Rahmawati, 2025). Without sufficient preparation, instructors often rely on personal judgment or improvised strategies, such as selectively switching languages to clarify complex concepts or explanations to support students' understanding (Rasmin et al., 2024). As Rahmawati (2025) further explains, well-implemented translanguaging requires instructors to develop an

understanding of the ability to design learning activities that strategically incorporate two or more languages. In this sense, strengthening these competencies is essential for developing the quality of translanguaging practices in EFL classrooms.

E. Study of Relevant Research

Several studies have demonstrated the role of translanguaging in facilitating students' learning in higher education contexts (Madkur, 2024; Pham & Nguyen, 2024; Santoso, 2020; Xin & Teng, 2025; Arthur et al., 2024). First, a relevant study conducted by Madkur (2024), explored translanguaging in an English syntax course at an Islamic university in Lampung, Indonesia, involving second-year higher education students as participants. The findings revealed that translanguaging helped students reduce anxiety, build confidence, and support comprehension of complex grammatical structures. However, the study also pointed out challenges, including greater cognitive load, possible distraction, and the risk of overdependence on the first language. Additionally, Madkur (2024) explains that translanguaging offers practical value for English teaching in multilingual educational settings, but its use should be carefully balanced to avoid limiting exposure to the target language.

Next, a relevant study by Pham and Nguyen (2024) examined how non-English major students, both freshmen and sophomores, perceived the practice and implications of translanguaging in EFL classrooms at a university in Vietnam. The results revealed that the majority of Vietnamese students held positive perceptions of translanguaging as it deepened their understanding of the target language, encouraged active participation, and empowered their learning autonomy. This study plays an important role in multilingual teaching and learning in higher education since it offers insightful information about how students view translanguaging as a tool that bridges linguistic and cultural understanding.

Afterward, Santoso (2020) carried out a relevant study examining the perspectives of translanguaging practices in a language assessment course among sixth-semester English Education students at a university in Jakarta, Indonesia. This study identified that students engaged in translanguaging to stimulate creativity,

develop critical use of the English language, and enhance classroom engagement, in addition to support their comprehension of complex materials. Moreover, students actively used their entire linguistic repertoire to create meaning and communicate ideas with greater clarity, demonstrating positive views toward the use of translanguaging.

Then, the study conducted by Xin and Teng (2025) emphasizes the role of translanguaging as both a supportive tool and a strategic instructional strategy in English courses at Yunnan Agricultural University. This study explored undergraduate English students across different semesters and instructors at the same university. This finding noted that the mother tongue can serve as a valuable resource for enhancing comprehension and reducing students' anxiety. Moreover, this study indicates that a judicious balance of first language and English not only helps students develop English proficiency but also supports their transition into more complex language tasks, encourages autonomous learning and higher-order thinking, making it a crucial strategy for students in diverse educational settings. Then, Xin and Teng (2025) highlight that translanguaging should be implemented in a balanced way to support both critical thinking and language comprehension in diverse educational settings.

Furthermore, Arthur et al. (2024) examined language learning anxiety among first-semester students in the English Education Study Program using a questionnaire-based quantitative approach. The study focused on three types of anxiety: communication anxiety, which refers to fear and tension when speaking in English; test anxiety, which relates to nervousness when facing English assessments; and fear of negative evaluation, which involves concern about being judged negatively by teachers or peers. The results indicated that freshmen in the English Education Department showed higher levels of communication anxiety compared to the other two types, with most students demonstrating medium to high levels of anxiety overall. This anxiety was attributed to several factors, including the gap between their current language skills and academic requirements, lack of fluency in English, and high expectations from their environment. These findings suggest that the transition from high school to higher education is a critical period

for freshmen English Education students, as they must simultaneously adapt to a new academic system while significantly improving their English language skills.

According to these relevant studies, translanguaging plays an important role in enhancing students' understanding, engagement, and confidence in the classroom. However, although most of these studies were conducted in EFL classroom settings involving English Language Education students as participants, they did not specifically focus on freshmen. Furthermore, their focus remained on various learning outcomes such as comprehension, participation, creativity, and critical of the English language use, rather than on students' perceptions specifically highlighted their transition phase from Indonesian-dominant to English-dominant instruction. Furthermore, neither of these studies addressed how freshmen English Language Education students perceive translanguaging in facilitating their understanding of complex materials and task instructions. This is crucial to investigate because freshmen English Language Education students are still adapting from a high school environment to higher education, particularly in the English Education Department, meaning that how they perceive translanguaging may significantly impact their future understanding of materials and instructions shaped by language use in the classroom. To address these gaps, this study explores how freshmen English Education students perceive instructors' translanguaging to facilitate their understanding of complex materials and task instructions during their transition to English-dominant instruction in EFL classrooms.