



## Students' Perspective on the Translingual Practice in Their English Writing

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores students' perspectives on translingual practices in English writing. Translingualism is a phenomenon that maximizes potential by using more than one language and considers the languages used as resources for creating meaning in communication. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with students of SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 students from SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya using an interview guide. The data were analyzed qualitatively thematically. The findings revealed that students' perspectives on using English in Their writing were positive. Some students viewed language mixing as a creative and useful way to convey ideas, while others considered it inappropriate in formal writing. Most students also showed limited awareness of this concept, although they unconsciously engaged in similar practices.

*Keywords: students' perspective, translingual practice, English writing*

## Perspektif Siswa tentang Praktik Translingual dalam Tulisan Bahasa Inggris Mereka

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi perspektif siswa terhadap praktik translingual dalam penulisan bahasa Inggris. Translingualisme dikenal sebagai fenomena yang memaksimalkan potensi dengan menggunakan lebih dari satu bahasa dan menganggap bahasa-bahasa yang digunakan sebagai sumber daya untuk menciptakan makna dalam komunikasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif terhadap para siswa SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan sepuluh siswa dari SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya menggunakan instrumen pedoman wawancara. Data penelitian dianalisis secara kualitatif tematik. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa perspektif siswa dalam menggunakan bahasa-bahasa dalam penulisan bahasa Inggris merupakan hal yang positif. Beberapa siswa memandang campuran bahasa sebagai cara kreatif dan bermanfaat untuk menyampaikan ide. Sementara siswa lain menganggapnya tidak pantas dalam penulisan formal. Sebagian besar siswa juga menunjukkan kesadaran yang terbatas terhadap konsep ini, meskipun mereka secara tidak sadar terlibat dalam praktik serupa.

*Kata kunci: perspektif siswa, praktik translingual, tulisan, bahasa Inggris*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Indonesian context, English has become one of the main Foreign Languages that are taught in the school. However, students face significant challenges in writing English, especially in the vocabulary (Bouchaala & Ghaouar, 2022; Wardana & Mahayanti, 2025). In addition to the challenges in vocabulary, other studies also show other problems in linguistic aspects, like grammatical features that must suit each word or sentence (Bulqiyah et al., 2021; Tambunan et al., 2022; Umam et al., 2023). Moreover, there is sentence structure for creating writing neatness that also becomes an issue in English writing (Agustinasari et al., 2022; Peter & Singaravelu, 2021). All of those are about students' problems and issues in writing, which means the problem can be discovered by previous studies because students' perspective became central in the study.

These problems show that writing is not only using language skill, but writing is a skill that is related with knowledge, either obtained and conveyed (Carter et al., 2014). Students get more challenges in writing using only English when practicing writing in English. In institutional policies, it is indeed required to only use English in foreign language classes (Copland & Neokleous, 2011; Debrel, 2016; Macaro & Lee, 2013). This situation reflects how English is often treated as a separate system and students have to master English like they are mastering their first language when practicing English writing.

Not only in Indonesia, these issues are also faced by other countries where English is taught as foreign language. English has become an international language, because both of native speaker or non-native speakers are using this language as their communication in several aspects. This means that people around the world are using English to communicate with other people from different countries. In the pedagogy field, English has become an intuitional language in academics such as India, Malaysia, Singapore (Rao, 2019; Zhang, 2013; Rodliyah, 2019). Also

some countries see English as a subject to learn as foreign language in school such as Indonesia, Russia, China and Brazil (Rozi, 2023). Such contexts show that students around the world constantly negotiate between languages they know and the language they are learning. However, the conventional view of English teaching often restricts this natural use of multiple languages, labeling it as interference rather than a resource for meaning-making. The exclusive use of English in the classroom has been categorized as a "monolingual" view in pedagogy and has been criticized (Brown et al., 2022). This strict monolingual approach has been widely criticized because it limits students' expression and ignores their linguistic potential.

Due to the monolingual norms that interfere with linguistic potential, Translingualism has spread in the education field who sees language diversity as not being an interference, but as a resource for making meaning in communication (García & Wei, 2014a; Horner et al., 2011).

Language diversity doesn't mean to be a challenge, interference, and obstacle, but it can be a resource in making new meaning when communicating, so it gives freedom to someone who is mastering many languages. Translingual Practices is known as a theoretical paradigm in making new structural language, which is giving freedom to people to communicate without worrying about their limitation in language proficiency (S. Canagarajah, 2018).

Communication is referred to convey ideas effectively using different ways such as oral, written, and also nonverbal communication in multiple forms and contexts. Writing is part of communication, and this form is defined as a process to cultivate the ideas creatively without any limitation (Kummin et al., 2025; Syamsuddin et al., 2021). In English writing, this implies that learners might consciously or unconsciously leverage linguistic resources from their L1 to construct meaning, articulate ideas, or navigate cognitive and linguistic challenges inherent in



writing in a second language. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), translanguaging challenges the idea that good English writing must follow a single language system and shows that mixing languages can help students build confidence and creativity in expressing their thoughts. Therefore, understanding how students view translanguaging practice is important for developing more inclusive writing instruction.

Based on the background of this study that highlights translanguaging practices as a solution for students who are struggling and don't have good enough skill in English writing. Before implementing translanguaging practice, this study wants to reveal students' perspective on Translanguaging practice using this research question : What are students' perspectives on translanguaging practices in their English writing?

With this research question, the objective of this study is to explore students' perspectives on translanguaging practices in English writing in the Indonesian context. So, it reveals students' perspectives toward translanguaging practices in linguistic aspects without implementing it. The students' perspective that emerges in this study aims to provide insights into English writing in the context of pedagogy that can be developed to bridge the complex linguistic realities of students and recognize their translanguaging repertoire as an important resource rather than a distraction.

The results of this study are expected to give meaningful insights for English teachers and researchers :

- 1. For teachers**, understanding students' perspectives can help design writing instruction that values linguistic diversity and encourages learners to use their full language repertoire.
- 2. For researchers**, this study contributes to discussions about language ideology and writing pedagogy by showing how translanguaging awareness can bridge the gap between classroom policy and real

communication practices.

This study uses a translanguaging theoretical framework, which shifts the view of language as separate monolingual systems to an awareness that language is an important and dynamically interconnected resource that individuals use to communicate in various contexts (García & Wei, 2014b; Yuvayapan, 2019). Opposite to the monolingual perspective that prioritizes linguistic purity and separation, translanguaging views language practice as a dynamic and mixed action, involving the combination, shift, and borrowing from an individual's entire linguistic repertoire (A. S. Canagarajah, 2013). Translanguaging in the field of writing strongly opposes the view that effective English writing must follow monolingual rules that only use English as the source language and ignore other languages mastered by the writer.

In translanguaging cases, students' perspectives have given many views in demonstrated translanguaging practices. Translanguaging in some studies can be used as a tool in enhancing or increasing students' skill or critical thinking. Like in Sun (2023) study discusses increasing students' critical thinking through translanguaging practices using various semiotics resources in meaning making. Otherwise, Rustipa (2025), Putrawan (2022), and Zein (2019) state that study uses translanguaging practice in order to enhance their students' academic writing and critical thinking. Some previous studies also give broad views about the implementation of translanguaging practice in different levels (Im, 2025; Prilutskaya, 2020; Quist, 2023; Sun & Feng, 2025; Sun & Lan, 2024). Some previous studies also state students' perspectives to translanguaging practices after they did it. Most of the study reveals students' perspectives in a positive way like it helps engage the reader and convey desired atmosphere, it makes English learning more accessible and connected to their lived linguistic experience, and reduced class time for meaning-making and facilitated quicker exchanges of information. Otherwise, this study investigates students' perspectives to translanguaging

practices before they implement the translingual practices. It has a different flow to know the difference between students' perspective before and after implementing.

The research was held in the Indonesian EFL setting, specifically in SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya where English has been learned as a foreign language. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, to ensure that they fit the objectives of the study. The selection criteria included: Senior high school students currently studying English as part of their curriculum, Students with prior experience in writing English texts in academic contexts, willingness to voluntarily participate in an interview. This research selected ten students based on criteria, also divided in two different grades which are 4 participants in 10th grade and 6 participants in 11th grade in SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and audio recorded. This method was chosen because it provided flexibility to explore students' perspectives while maintaining focus on the research objectives. The interviews were conducted using Indonesian and each interview lasted approximately 5 minutes. The interview guide included open-ended questions designed to explore students' perspectives toward translingual practices in their writing. It reveals students' perspective through translingual practice only in the linguistic aspect as a main objective and also some supporting findings.

This study use inductive thematic analysis for analyze the data that have collected from interview with the students. This approach allows themes to emerge directly from the data rather than being based on pre-existing theories or assumptions . It start from all interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis. After the interviews were written down word for word, the researcher read them several times to understand the overall meaning. Then, it will categorize by the interview question which answers are related to main finding and which

answers that are related to support finding. Through this process, the researcher was able to trace patterns, similarities, and differences among the participants' perspectives, which later became the basis for identifying the main themes in the analysis.

## RESULT

### 1. Students' Perspective toward Translingual Practice in Linguistic Aspect

Students' perspective toward translingual practices reveal how they view the legitimacy and function of language mixing in English writing. Understanding their views is crucial to knowing how linguistics plays a role in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), where English is often recognized as a superior and "authentic" language, distinct from the local linguistic repertoire. The interview results revealed that students' views varied greatly on whether translingual practices supported or hindered the improvement of their English writing skills. Some view language mixing as a creative and practical tool that provides freedom in meaning formation, while others see it as an indication of linguistic incompetence or a source of ambiguity. These opposing views reveal a strong ideological tension between the monolingual norms embedded in English language education and the multilingual awareness experienced by students in Indonesia.

#### 1. Students' Positive Perspective

Several students expressed positive attitudes toward translingual practice, emphasizing its potential to aid comprehension and self-expression. For instance, student 1, student 2, and student 4 described in English writing using other languages can help students in writing and make them comfortable. when they aren't confident.

Student 1 state that using more one language and mix them would make him more comfortable : *"Kalau bisa campur sih, jujur aja saya campur bakal lebih nyaman, jadi kita waktu nulis aja lebih ngalir otaknya gitu"* (if possible, i mix it, honestly



*i feel more comfortable mix them, so when i write my brain just flow better) - Student 1*

Student 2 states that he agrees that in English writing, students can use another language in order to make writing and express ideas easier:

*“Saya setuju, karena kan pasti biar lebih mempermudah cara mengekspresikan dengan cara menulis” (I agree, because it definitely makes it easier to express yourself through writing) - Student 2*

Instead, student 4 states that he lacks abilities in English, so using another language in writing English would help him in writing :

*“Kalau menurut saya pribadi, mungkin saya akan menggunakan dua bahasa karena saya sendiri tidak terlalu bisa mengerti bahasa Inggris.” (Personally, I think I would use two languages because I don't really understand English very well.) - Student 4*

Student 5 also gives positive responses, especially to students who can write using more than one language. It is considered a strength in learning a language :

*“Ya nggak apa-apa, berarti dia memang punya kelebihan yang keren gitu menurutku. Soalnya kan satu bahasa tuh udah sulit, apalagi kalau ditambah bahasa yang lain gitu dicampur itu keren sih menurut aku” (Yeah, it's okay. I think it means he/she has a cool advantage. Because one language is already difficult, let alone when you add another language to the mix. I think that's cool) - Student 5*

In other side student 6 give opinion about positive response in case of reader, it state that mixing languages can help the reader understand better :

*“Karena mungkin lawan bicara aku tuh ada yang kurang memahami dengan bahasa Inggris yang aku pakai... jadi mungkin pakai bahasa lain, contohnya bahasa Indonesia itu lebih mudah dimengerti buat mereka.” (Because maybe some of my conversation partners don't fully understand the English I use... so maybe using another*

*language, for example Indonesian, would be easier for them to understand.) - Student 6*

These students view translanguaging practice as a useful tool for communication. They see language as flexible and helpful for expressing meaning, not something fixed or limited to one code. This finding supports Canagarajah (2013), who argues that multilingual writers use all their linguistic resources to make meaning, and Li (2018), who describes translanguaging as using the “whole linguistic repertoire” to communicate effectively.

## 2. Students' Negative Perspective

Other students expressed their discomfort with the Translanguaging Practice in their English writing, as they believed it could hinder the certainty of meaning and the rigor of academic writing. They stated that it would be more efficient to use one language consistently and continuously in their writing to ensure continuity, professionalism, and suitability for formal writing. Their arguments give some concern in English writing but also using other language in it.

Student 7 believed that using other languages in their English writing can damage the purity of English writing. He felt that using more than one language makes the text messy and lowers its quality:

*“Kurang tepat ya, soalnya karena jika dicampur bahasanya jadi berantakan. Dan tidak murni. Sehingga bahasa Inggrisnya dapat diragukan.” (“It's not quite right, because mixing languages makes it messy. And it's not pure. So the English can be questionable.”)- Student 7*

Student 8 being opposite with student 6 that said using more than one language can help readers understand the content. He strongly opposed using other language in their English writing because he viewed it as confusing and grammatically disruptive:

*“Saya sangat menentang sekali kalau misalnya ada tugas bahasa Inggris gitu disuruh pakai bahasa Inggris tapi dicampur-campur sama bahasa lain... nanti malah jadi aneh dibacanya*

*juga.” (“I strongly oppose it if, for example, there is an English assignment that requires the use of English but is mixed with other languages... it will sound strange when read.”) - Student 8*

Student 9 has the same perspective that using more than one language in their English writing can make readers uncomfortable to read. He emphasized that the combination of English and Indonesian feels unnatural :

*“Ya tentunya gak nyaman, apalagi kalau misalkan tulisannya itu kecampur-campur bahasa Indonesia, bahasa Inggris itu kayak gak enak dibaca aja.” (“Yes, obviously it’s uncomfortable, especially if the writing is mixed with Indonesian and English, it’s just unpleasant to read.”) - Student 9*

Unlike other students who strongly disagreed with translingual practice in their English writing, student 3 expressed slight disagreement, preferring to write in English alone for efficiency, but willing to do so if asked :

*“Enggak, aku tetap pakai bahasa Inggris saja, menulis teksnya... kalau misalnya emang disuruh menulis dengan dua bahasa, saya menulis dengan dua bahasa.” (“No, I just use English to write ..., But if I asked to write in two languages, I’ll write in two languages.”) – Student 3*

Those Statements reveal different but related motivations: maintaining clarity, formality, and following classroom rules. This situation is influenced by the monolingual ideology that is very dominant in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), which considers language mixing to be a sign of low linguistic competence (Horner et al., 2011). Their reasoning explains the institutional norms and classroom policies that exclusively prioritize English and shape students’ perceptions of what constitutes good, structured, pure, and error-free English writing.

Although all the students can give their opinion about translingual practice clearly, most participants demonstrated limited awareness of what translingual practice means, although some showed partial understanding through examples or

context. When asked directly, several students admitted that they had never heard of the term translingual practice before the interview. Here some answer from several students :

*“Kamu tau nggak tentang Translingual Practice? Nggak, nggak tau.” - Student 6*

*“Tau tentang Translingual Practice nggak? Nggak tau.” - Student 7*

*“Translingual Practice tau nggak? Gak tau. Gak apa-apa.” - Student 5*

*“Kamu tau gak tentang Translingual Practice? Kurang tau saya mas” - Student 1*

Unexpectedly student 2 was the only student who gave a more informed guess about the term, showing partial awareness, that shows students could infer the meaning from its linguistic form, even without prior theoretical knowledge :

*“Kamu tau nggak translingual practice itu gimana? Seperti menggunakan dua bahasa dalam satu tulisan” (“Do you know what translingual practice is? It’s like using two languages in one piece of writing.”) - Student 2*

Despite the lack of conceptual understanding, many students described experiences or opinions that reflect translingual behavior. For example, Jeihan and Rayhan admitted to mixing English and Indonesian in casual writing or online communication, showing practical engagement with translingual practice in everyday contexts:

*“Kalau pembelajaran dan tugas-tugas sih nggak, tapi kalau misalkan ngomong sama temen atau lagi chatting-an sama temen, iya.” (Not for studying and assignments, but if I’m talking to friends or chatting with them, then yes.) - Student 5*

*“Kalau cuma bahasa sehari-hari atau kita chatting-an sama temen, ya nggak masalah untuk digabung.” (“If it’s just everyday language or chatting with friends, then it’s okay to mix them.”) - Student 1*

These responses show that students may not be familiar with the term “translingualism,” but they actually use it every day. This is because in Indonesian schools, English is usually taught separately from their local language. As a result,



students rarely have the opportunity to reflect on how they naturally mix and use different languages in their daily lives from a more reflective and academic perspective.

The data shows that students naturally recognize the use of mixed or alternating languages. They often switch or mix languages unconsciously to facilitate communication, especially when talking with friends. This supports Canagarajah's (2013) view that language flexibility arises from social interaction rather than just formal education. Similarly, García & Wei (2014) describe translanguaging as an aspect of bilingual thinking, in which learners use language spontaneously and flexibly to communicate effectively.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, it reveals various responses by the students that were interviewed. Some students had opinions that translanguaging practice in mixing language is a positive thing in writing, because it helps students write and express their ideas easier in written form, and also it makes students more comfortable in writing because of their lack in language ability. This is in line with Canagarajah's (2013) study that multilingual writers have awareness to use more than one language in their writing to make new meaning. On the other hand, the rest of the students were not in positive responses, instead they rejected the translanguaging practice in their writing. It is because these students felt that using other languages in their English writing can make their writing less organized, informal and make readers confused when reading their works. This attitude is related to Horner et al. (2011) that these students refer to monolingual ideology, this is the belief that English should be kept "separate" and "pure," especially in academic settings. At the same time, some students are open to mixing languages in their English writing when certain conditions allow it. They do this while still respecting class rules that emphasize the use of standard English..

Most students do not have a clear understanding of what translanguaging means, although some naturally practice it in their everyday communication. Several participants admitted that they had never heard the term before, while student 5 and student 1 shared that they often switch between English and Indonesian in casual conversations. This finding supports García & Wei's (2014) idea that translanguaging is a natural and flexible use of language, not something explicitly taught in classrooms. However, since English teaching in Indonesia tends to follow a monolingual model, students are seldom encouraged to view the use of multiple languages as a valuable learning strategy. The combination of limited awareness and mixed attitudes suggests that students' perspectives are shaped both by their multilingual experiences and by classroom norms that prioritize English-only instruction. Encouraging translanguaging awareness in EFL classrooms can help students appreciate their linguistic abilities more fully, recognizing them as creative and meaningful resources for learning and expressing ideas.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides an overview of the diversity of responses and lack of awareness among students at Al-Falah Ketintang High School in Surabaya regarding translanguaging practice in their English writing. Some students expressed the view that using other languages in their English writing could help them express their ideas and creativity more freely. In addition, students felt that it helped them in writing, and they also believed that translanguaging practice helped readers understand their writing. However, there were also students who thought that this actually made the writing unworthy of being called English writing and also confused the writer and readers. This study also shows that students are not aware that they have engaged in translanguaging practice, even in informal situations. These findings can be used as a reference for further research that seeks to explore

students' responses to translingual practice more broadly. This study contributes to building awareness among students about translingual practice. Future research could explore how explicit integration of translingual pedagogy influences students' writing performance, motivation, and identity development over time.

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