

## The Use of Translanguaging in Bilingual Class: A Study of Perception on the Students at An Islamic Junior High School

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### Abstract

While translanguaging is increasingly recognized as a pedagogical tool, its implementation in the specific context of Islamic bilingual junior high schools remains under-explored, particularly from the students' perspective. This study investigates how students at SMP IT Al-Biruni Mandiri Jipang perceive and interpret translanguaging in their bilingual classrooms. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered through three days of classroom observations and in-depth interviews with six seventh-grade students, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994). The findings reveal that students perceive translanguaging as a vital "cognitive bridge" that facilitates the understanding of complex material, reduces foreign language anxiety, and promotes active participation. Specifically, students identified a preference for strategic language switching that differentiates between social interaction and formal teacher-led instruction. Although students acknowledge the pedagogical benefits of L1 support, they also emphasize the need for judicious implementation to prevent over-reliance and maintain sufficient English exposure. These findings highlight the importance of designing responsive bilingual teaching strategies that incorporate student voices to optimize foreign language acquisition.

**Keywords:** *EFL Speaking; Communicative Competence, L1 Interference; Mother Tongue Use; Translanguaging*

## 1. Introduction

In the discourse of global language education, particularly in contexts where learners study foreign languages, translanguaging has transformed from a mere linguistic phenomenon into an academically recognized pedagogical strategy (Abduh et.al., 2022). This concept is no longer viewed as a deficit in competence, but rather as a dynamic process in which individuals utilize their entire linguistic repertoire in an integrated manner to communicate and construct meaning. In line with the views of García and Wei (2014) and Amar et.al. (2023), translanguaging in the classroom functions as a bilingual discursive practice as well as a structured instructional strategy that enables students to access complex academic concepts. By positioning the mother tongue as a cognitive asset rather than an obstacle, this approach fosters active participation and deep engagement in the learning process.

The linguistically heterogeneous context of Indonesia makes this practice highly relevant, particularly in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). At the junior high school level, a gap often exists between curriculum demands and students' actual language proficiency. To bridge this gap, teachers engage in strategic translanguaging to clarify instructions and reduce cognitive load. However, a primary challenge remains: how to balance the use of the first language (L1) as a scaffolding tool while maximizing exposure to English.

The success of implementing translanguaging as a learning strategy greatly depends on how the strategy is received by students. Student perceptions are a crucial indicator because they are the main subjects in the learning process (Ariyani et.al., 2023). According to Walgito (2004), perception is a process that begins with the sensing of stimuli, which are then interpreted by individuals to give meaning based on their previous experiences and knowledge. In this study, student perceptions determine whether

translanguaging acts as a facilitative bridge or a distraction to language acquisition. Positive perceptions can bolster motivation, whereas negative views may lead to over-reliance on the L1 and hinder confidence in using English (Azzahara et.al., 2023).

A number of previous studies have examined translanguaging in various dimensions. Rasman (2018) found that in the context of EFL in Indonesia, translanguaging functions effectively as a pedagogical tool that supports the development of linguistic abilities through collaborative interaction. In an international context, Guo (2022) highlights that young students use translanguaging for expressive purposes and content comprehension. However, Yuvayapan (2019) revealed a gap between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices, which are often influenced by external pressures. Despite these insights, most existing studies focus predominantly on teacher perspectives or functional language use. There is a significant empirical gap regarding in-depth student perceptions within bilingual classroom environments, which possess unique dynamics compared to regular EFL settings. Furthermore, research specifically situated within the cultural and pedagogical framework of Islamic junior high schools remains scarce.

To address this gap, the present study comprehensively investigates how students in an Islamic bilingual junior high school perceive and interpret translanguaging practices. The central research question is: How do students view the use of translanguaging during lessons in their bilingual classrooms?. By placing student voices at the center of the analysis, this study contributes to EFL pedagogy by providing evidence-based insights for designing responsive bilingual teaching strategies that optimize language acquisition without marginalizing the students' linguistic identity.

### ***1.1 Translanguaging***

The concept of translanguaging has developed significantly since it first appeared in the bilingual education landscape. The term was originally introduced in Wales in the mid-1990s by Cen Williams as *trawsieithu*, which was later popularized into English as translanguaging by Colin Baker. Fundamentally, Baker (2001) defines translanguaging as the process of meaning-making, experience-building, and gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages. This definition marks a paradigm shift from the traditional view of language as separate entities to a more fluid understanding in which language functions as an integrated cognitive tool. In its development, Garcia and Wei (2014) expanded this concept by defining it as a bilingual discursive practice and pedagogical strategy that flexibly utilizes the entire linguistic repertoire of students to facilitate the teaching of complex content and academic language. This approach rejects the notion that the use of the mother tongue is a deficiency, but rather an asset that can be maximized in the learning process.

In a pedagogical context, translanguaging differs fundamentally from code-switching, even though both involve the use of more than one language. While code-switching is often viewed as a shift between separate language codes, translanguaging sees these languages as a single, integrated linguistic repertoire system possessed by the speaker. Al-Hadal (2020) and Nurrahmi et.al. (2022) notes that translanguaging offers a more contemporary and flexible theoretical framework for second or foreign language teaching, in contrast to traditional methods that tend to be rigid in their separation of languages. As an instructional strategy, translanguaging allows teachers and students to navigate difficult subject matter more effectively (Sakkir et.al., 2022; Sakkir, Syamsuddin, 2023). This practice emerges naturally in bilingual classrooms as an attempt at meaning construction, where learners use their productive and receptive skills to bridge gaps in understanding.

The application of translanguaging in the classroom provides a number of strategic benefits for student development. Baker (2001) outlines four main advantages of this practice: promoting a deeper understanding of subject matter, helping to develop weaker languages, facilitating cooperation between home and school, and developing students' second language skills alongside content learning. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia, Rasman's (2018) and Trisnawati et.al.'s (2023) research shows that translanguaging serves as a valid pedagogical tool that supports the development of students' multilingual competence through collaborative interaction, rather than hindering it. This is supported by the findings of Sapitri et.al. (2018), which confirm that the use of Indonesian or local languages by teachers helps clarify complex concepts, thereby reducing student anxiety and increasing class participation. Thus, translanguaging is not merely a linguistic phenomenon,

but an empowering strategy that allows students to access academic knowledge without losing their linguistic identity.

### **1.2 Bilingual**

The term bilingualism covers a broad spectrum of linguistic phenomena and is not limited to the balanced mastery of two languages. Haugen (1956) defines bilingualism inclusively as a condition in which a person is no longer monolingual, meaning that the individual has the ability to use more than one language to a certain degree. From a more practical perspective, Grosjean (2010) describes bilinguals as individuals who use two or more languages in their daily lives. This definition is highly relevant to the social context, where language use is not always equal in terms of frequency or fluency, but is adapted to specific functional domains such as education, work, or family communication. Garcia (2008) emphasizes that bilingualism is not a binary condition, but rather a continuum in which individuals have varying experiences and competencies in each of their languages.

In the context of education in Indonesia, the phenomenon of bilingualism has become very prominent in line with curriculum policies and the social dynamics of a diverse society. In general, students in Indonesia are bilingual or even multilingual, where they master their regional language as their mother tongue and Indonesian as the national language, before then learning English as a foreign language at school. Astika (2015) notes that the trend of bilingual education in Indonesia, including through the piloting of International Standard Schools (SBI) in the past, has encouraged the mixed use of English and Indonesian in the delivery of subject matter. The aim is to maximize students' exposure to the target language. However, challenges arise when instruction is given entirely in a foreign language without the support of the mother tongue, which can potentially cause students to become passive and experience cognitive difficulties.

Effective bilingual education requires an understanding that integrating students' native languages can serve as a bridge to mastery of the target language. Research shows that in bilingual classrooms, teachers often use translanguaging strategies or alternate between two languages to ensure conceptual understanding. However, teachers often face difficulties in balancing the proportion of language use to avoid excessive dependence on the first language. Nevertheless, the presence of bilingual individuals who are able to switch between languages flexibly provides unique pedagogical opportunities. The ability to navigate these two language systems, as described in the concept of dynamic bilingualism, allows students to utilize all of their linguistic resources to achieve more complex academic and communicative goals.

### **1.3 Perception**

Perception is a fundamental psychological process that determines how individuals interpret and respond to their environment, including in the context of classroom learning. Qiong (2017) defines perception as a process that is preceded by sensation (sensory process), namely the reception of stimuli by individuals through the senses, which is then followed by a process of interpretation to give meaning to those stimuli. In line with this, Robbins (2013) describes perception as a process in which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. In the context of education, student perception is not merely passive reception, but rather an active construction influenced by past experiences, expectations, and prior knowledge. How students perceive teaching methods, such as the use of translanguaging, will greatly affect their motivation, attitudes, and learning success.

The process of perception involves systematic stages. Qiong (2017) outlines three main stages in the perception process: selection, organization, and interpretation. In the selection stage, the individual's brain selects certain stimuli from the environment that are considered relevant and ignores others. In a bilingual classroom situation, students may selectively focus on the teacher's explanations using the language they understand. The next stage is organization, where the selected information is arranged into meaningful patterns. Finally, there is interpretation, which is the process of attaching meaning to the patterns that have been arranged, which is highly subjective and differs for each individual even though the stimulus is the same. Understanding this process is important for educators to realize that what is conveyed in class may be received and interpreted differently by each student.

Furthermore, perceptions are formed from complex interactions between various psychological components. Rahayu (2018) identifies three main components that shape perceptions and attitudes: cognitive, affective, and conative components. The cognitive component relates to an individual's beliefs, understanding, and knowledge of an object, for example, students' belief that translanguaging helps them understand the material. The affective component relates to emotional aspects, such as feelings of pleasure or anxiety when teachers use certain languages. Finally, the conative or behavioral component relates to behavioral tendencies, such as students' willingness to ask questions or participate in class in response to the teaching strategies applied. Analysis of these three components provides a comprehensive picture of how students actually view and respond to the use of translanguaging in their learning.

There are two dimensions of perception: First, the physical dimensions of perception: The mechanism of perception of all humans is almost the same. It has sensory organs like eyes, ears, and nose, which allow humans to feel the environment. This is a sensory organ that receives stimuli. Then it is transferred through the nervous system to the brain, where it is created with the structure, stability, and meaning that is associated. Second, the physiological dimension of perception : In this phase, humans provide interpretations of certain stimuli and have unique personal touches in the outside world. Values, attitudes or motives of people (psychological dimensions) and not the sense organs (physical dimensions) that determine what stimuli will attract people's attention and therefore accept meaning. Intrinsic motivation is motives that become active or functioning do not need to be stimulated from the outside, because in every individual there is already an urge to do something.

## **2. Methods**

### ***2.1 Research Design***

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design with a case study approach to investigate students' perceptions of translanguaging in bilingual classrooms. In line with Creswell (2012), a case study allows researchers to investigate a real and contemporary limited system through in-depth data collection. This method was chosen to explore real phenomena through various sources of information, providing a detailed description of themes within the case.

#### ***1.2 Participants and Setting***

The research was conducted at SMP IT Al-Biruni Mandiri Jipang. The participants were six seventh-grade students selected using purposive sampling techniques to represent various academic abilities. The study also obtained necessary ethical clearances and informed consent from participants to ensure ethical standards in the research process.

#### ***1.3 Data Collection***

Data collection was conducted interactively through classroom observation and in-depth interviews. Observations were carried out over three days to record the frequency and context of translanguaging use by both teachers and students. An observation checklist was used to verify translanguaging practices, while semi-structured interview guidelines explored students' subjective perspectives. To ensure data validity, the researcher used source triangulation by comparing observation notes with interview transcripts.

#### ***1.4 Data Analysis***

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994). This process included three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Through these stages, the researcher compiled a complete narrative description of the dynamics of student perception regarding translanguaging in their English language learning environment.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Results

##### 3.1.1 Frequency and Usefulness of Translanguaging

Based on observations conducted over three days, translanguaging was used significantly by both teachers and students. Teachers utilized this practice as a consistent pedagogical strategy across various functions, including explaining lessons, asking questions, and providing feedback. Quantitative data recorded the frequency of teacher translanguaging as follows: a) day 1: 41 instances, primarily for asking questions (15 times) and providing clarification (8 times), b) day 2: 37 instances, and c) day 3: 36 instances.

On the students' side, translanguaging served as a vital communicative tool that facilitated participation, particularly during group discussions and when answering teacher inquiries. The frequency of student usage was recorded at 22 instances on the first day, 26 on the second, and 18 on the third.

In addition to quantitative data, interviews with students provided a more in-depth picture of the frequency and usefulness of translanguaging from their perspective.

Student 1 stated that translanguaging was often used, especially when the teacher explained difficult concepts or when students did not understand certain vocabulary. He explains:

**Extract 1 Student 1 (ACAF 24/06/2025)**

*“Lebih senang pakai bahasa Indonesia, karena pada dasarnya itu adalah bahasa ibu kami, jadi kami sudah paham. Kalau bahasa Inggris, ada beberapa kosakata yang kami tidak tahu, jadi ketika berbicara, kami mendeskripsikan apa yang ingin kita sampaikan, jadinya agak susah.”*

“I prefer to use Indonesian because it is basically our mother tongue, so we already understand it. In English, there are some words that we don't know, so when we speak, we describe what we want to say, which makes it a bit difficult.”

This statement shows that translanguaging serves as a bridge of understanding when students encounter linguistic obstacles in the target language.

Student 2 also confirmed the high frequency of translanguaging use, especially in the context of teacher discussions and explanations. He added that teachers usually allow the use of translanguaging, especially if the material being taught is part of a bilingual class program. He emphasized:

**Extract 2 Student 2 (MDA 24/06/2025)**

*“Biasanya diizinkan, selalu diizinkan. Karena juga biasa disuruh usahakan pakai bahasa Inggris... tapi kalau lagi nggak tahu... bisa menggunakan bahasa Indonesia.”*

“It is usually allowed, always allowed. Because we are also usually told to try to use English... but if we don't know... we can use Indonesian.”

Student 3 provided a similar perspective, emphasizing that translanguaging is often used when teachers want to ensure student understanding, especially when answering questions or discussing. She revealed:

**Extract 3 Student 3 (KLRF 24/06/2025)**

*“Kadang mulai pakai bahasa Inggris pada saat jawab soal.... Misalnya kalau ada pertanyaan, disuruh jawab oleh guru biasanya menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Kalau menggunakan bahasa Indonesia, terkadang pada saat kami tidak mengerti apa maksud dari soal tersebut... kami minta tolong ke guru.”*

“Sometimes we start using English when answering questions... For example, if there is a question, the teacher usually asks us to answer in English. If we use Indonesian, sometimes when we don't understand what the question means... we ask the teacher for help.”

From these three statements, it can be concluded that translanguaging is used flexibly and situationally, with the frequency adjusted to the complexity of the material and the students' comprehension needs. This practice is not only monopolized by teachers, but also adopted by students as a communication and learning strategy.

### 3.1.2 Positive Perceptions of Students Towards Translanguaging

In general, students expressed positive perceptions of the use of translanguaging in bilingual classrooms. They considered this practice useful for improving understanding, reducing anxiety, and creating a more inclusive learning environment

Student 1 mentioned that translanguaging helped him and his friends understand the questions in the book. He explained:

#### **Extract 4 Student 1 (ACAF 24/06/2025)**

*“Ada manfaatnya. Jadi siswa bisa lebih tahu arti dari soal pertanyaan yang ada dalam buku. Ketika kami bertanya kepada guru, maka akan lebih cepat mengerjakan soal. Bisa buat sendiri, daripada harus dibantu terus.”*

“It's useful. So, students can better understand the meaning of the questions in the book. When we ask the teacher, we can work on the questions faster. We can do it ourselves, instead of always needing help.”

A similar benefit was also expressed by Student 2, who emphasized the role of translanguaging in facilitating the understanding of difficult vocabulary. He said:

#### **Extract 5 Student 2 (MDA 24/06/2025)**

*“Ada manfaatnya. Supaya lebih paham, jika terdapat kosa kata yang sulit dimengerti, guru biasanya membantu untuk translate ke bahasa Indonesia agar lebih mudah dipahami maknanya.”*

“It is beneficial. In order to understand better, if there are words that are difficult to understand, the teacher usually helps to translate them into Indonesian so that their meaning is easier to understand.”

Student 3 added that translanguaging not only helps understanding but also builds comfort and confidence in the classroom. She said:

#### **Extract 6 Student 3 (KLRF 24/06/2025)**

*“Sebenarnya lebih senang menggunakan kedua bahasa baik itu bahasa Inggris maupun bahasa Indonesia... Cuma, karena biasanya sudah nyaman menggunakan bahasa Indonesia... cuma jika diharuskan menggunakan bahasa Inggris, kami masih tetap merasa nyaman.”*

“Actually, I prefer to use both languages, English and Indonesian... However, because I am usually more comfortable using Indonesian... but if I am required to use English, I still feel comfortable.”

A positive perception also came from Student 4, who sees translanguaging as an effective tool for explaining material, especially when there are students who do not understand. She stated:

#### **Extract 7 Student 4 (ANR 24/06/2025)**

*“Kalau lagi menjelaskan... terus ada siswa yang kurang paham, biasanya pakai bahasa Indonesia. Kalau lagi bertanya tentang presentasi juga biasanya pakai bahasa Indonesia.”*

“When explaining... and there are students who don't understand, I usually use Indonesian. When asking questions about the presentation, I also usually use Indonesian.”

Student 5 provided a broader perspective by mentioning that translanguaging in the form of a mix (combination of languages) is actually better because it can accommodate the diversity of students' language abilities. He argued:

#### **Extract 8 Student 5 (NRF 24/06/2025)**

*“Kalau mix jauh lebih baik... bisa saja. Misalnya kalau siswa tidak bisa atau kurang lancar ketika berbahasa Inggris maka bisa mix.”*

“Mixing is much better... it's possible. For example, if students cannot speak English or are not fluent, then they can mix languages.”

Finally, Student 6 highlighted the psychological aspect of translanguaging, where this practice reduces pressure and facilitates the discussion process. He acknowledged:

***Extract 9 Student 6 (ADF 24/06/2025)***

“Sejujurnya, lebih mudah menggunakan bahasa Indonesia di kelas bilingual. karena pada saat belajar, terkadang kami mengerti terhadap apa yang dikatakan oleh guru, tapi disaat yang bersamaan kami tidak bisa mengucapkannya. jadi dalam situasi itu saya menggunakan translanguaging.”

“Honestly, it is easier to use Indonesian in bilingual classes. When studying, sometimes we understand what the teacher is saying, but at the same time we cannot say it. So, in that situation, I use translanguaging.”

From the various statements above, it can be concluded that students view translanguaging as a supportive, adaptive, and humane strategy. They do not consider it a form of incompetence, but rather a legitimate pedagogical adjustment mechanism in the context of bilingual learning.

### *3.1.3 Students' Preference for Translanguaging Usage*

Although students generally support the use of translanguaging, they have diverse preferences regarding the extent to which and in what situations this practice should be applied. These preferences reflect their awareness of the importance of balancing material comprehension and English language competency development.

Student 1 tends to support the limited and purposeful use of translanguaging. He argues that although it is useful, the use of English should still be prioritized to hone their bilingual skills. He said:

***Extract 10 Student 1 (ACAF 24/06/2025)***

“Iya. Biar bilingual nya terasah, biar kita bisa lancar bahasa Inggris nya, tidak terbata-bata. Kalau saya sendiri masih terbata-bata.”

“Yes. So that our bilingualism is honed, so that we can speak English fluently, without stuttering. Personally, I still stutter.”

Student 2 has a slightly different view. He is more inclined towards the full use of English in bilingual classes, given the status of his class as bilingual. However, he acknowledges that translanguaging is still necessary as a form of support. He explains:

***Extract 11 Student 2 (MDA 24/06/2025)***

“Bagusnya pakai bahasa Inggris. Karena kan kelas kami juga ICP (International class program). Jadi supaya lebih terpakai bahasa Inggris nya. Jadi harusnya pake bahasa Inggris.”

"It's good to use English. Because our class is also an ICP (International Class Program). So that English is used more. So, we should use English."

On the other hand, Student 3 argues that Indonesian should not be used at all in bilingual classes. She sees the potential for dependency, which can hinder the development of English language skills. She states:

***Extract 12 Student 3 (KLRF 24/06/2025)***

“Harusnya sih tidak boleh, karena kan pada dasarnya kelas kami beda dengan kelas reguler. Kelas kami adalah kelas bilingual, jadi seharusnya tidak boleh menggunakan bahasa Indonesia.”

"It shouldn't be allowed, because our class is different from regular classes. Our class is a bilingual class, so we shouldn't use Indonesian."

Student 4 agreed with the use of translanguaging, but with the caveat that it must be done wisely and not excessively. She emphasized the importance of context and learning objectives. She said:

**Extract 13 Student 4 (ANR 24/06/2025)**

*“Pakai bahasa Inggris sebenarnya...”*

“Using English is actually...”

This statement indicates that the use of English remains a priority, but translanguaging can be inserted if necessary.

Student 5 is more flexible in her preferences. She sees that mixing English and Indonesian is a realistic option, given the varying abilities of students. She argues:

**Extract 14 Student 5 (NRF 24/06/2025)**

*“Bisa-bisa saja. Misalnya kalau siswa tidak bisa atau kurang lancar ketika berbahasa Inggris maka bisa mix.”*

"It's possible. For example, if students cannot speak English or are not fluent, then they can mix the two languages."

Student 6 suggests dividing language use based on the type of interaction. He proposes:

**Extract 15 Student 6 (ADF 24/06/2025)**

*“Kalau menurut saya, alangkah lebih baik jika pada saat ngobrol bersama teman boleh menggunakan bahasa Indonesia, tapi kalau ngobrol sama guru harus memakai bahasa Inggris.”*

“In my opinion, it would be better if students were allowed to use Indonesian when chatting with friends, but had to use English when talking to teachers.”

The students' preferences reveal complex nuances in their views on translanguaging. On the one hand, they recognize its practical benefits; on the other hand, they are aware of the importance of exposure to the target language. The majority of students seem to want a balanced approach, where translanguaging is used strategically not as a substitute but as a complement to the English language learning process.

### 3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study provide an empirical basis for discussing the role of translanguaging in the context of bilingual classrooms in Indonesia. This discussion highlights three main aspects:

#### 3.2.1 Frequency and Usefulness of Translanguaging

Observational data and interviews consistently show that translanguaging is used frequently and across various learning situations. This aligns with the views of García and Wei (2014), who define translanguaging as a bilingual discourse practice that utilizes the entire linguistic repertoire of students. The intensive use of this strategy at SMP IT Al-Biruni reflects a pedagogical awareness to tailor instruction to heterogeneous student needs.

In this context, translanguaging functions as linguistic scaffolding, allowing students to access complex academic content without being hindered by language barriers. As stated by Student 1, using Indonesian is essential when English vocabulary is not understood. This confirms Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, where optimal learning occurs when students are helped to reach a level of understanding slightly above their independent abilities. Furthermore, the prevalence of translanguaging in group discussions suggests it has become a communicative norm among students. Rather than passively accepting it, students actively use language alternation to negotiate meaning and collaborate, supporting the concept of translanguaging as a social practice.

However, the high frequency of L1 use raises concerns regarding long-term English proficiency. As noted by Student 2, excessive Indonesian use can reduce necessary exposure to the target language. Therefore, teachers must transition from reactive to strategic "planned translanguaging."

where language switching is intentionally designed for specific goals like introducing new concepts or metacognitive reflection.

### 3.2.2 *Positive Perceptions of Students Towards Translanguaging*

The positive perceptions revealed in this study reinforce the affective and cognitive benefits of language alternation. Students reported feeling more comfortable and confident when teachers used translanguaging. This aligns with Yuvayapan (2019), who found that such practices reduce foreign language anxiety and increase participation. From an educational psychology perspective, this "psychological safety" is a prerequisite for deep cognitive engagement. By validating the mother tongue, teachers send an inclusive message that students' linguistic identities are valued, a form of culturally sustaining pedagogy relevant to the Indonesian context.

At the cognitive level, students' claims that translanguaging helps them clarify difficult topics indicate support for "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1985). Linking new concepts to L1 knowledge helps build integrated mental schemas through "conceptual transfer" (Cummins, 2007). Nevertheless, this optimism must be tempered with critical awareness. There is a risk that students may become overly dependent on L1 explanations, potentially hindering their "tolerance of ambiguity" in foreign language processing. Teachers must, therefore, apply the principle of "fading" in scaffolding—gradually reducing L1 support as proficiency improves.

### 3.2.3 *Students' Preference on Translanguaging Usage*

The diversity of student preferences reflects a mature awareness of the dual objectives of bilingual classes: content mastery and language development. These preferences exist on a continuum, from monolingual-oriented students (Student 3) to flexibly bilingual ones (Student 5). These variations are likely influenced by individual confidence, proficiency levels, and previous multilingual experiences.

Student 6's proposal to differentiate language use based on the interlocutor (Indonesian with friends, English with teachers) offers valuable insights into student metalinguistic awareness. They realize that context and audience dictate language choice. The pedagogical implication is the need for a negotiated approach rather than rigid "English-only" policies. Teachers should collaborate with students to design language allocation policies that specify when full English is required and when translanguaging is permitted for problem-solving. This approach aligns with translanguaging pedagogy, which actively designs activities—such as researching in L1 and presenting in L2—to utilize the student's entire linguistic repertoire.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that translanguaging is a complex practice touching on cognitive, affective, and identity aspects. Its success is measured by how it is designed and aligned with an empowering bilingual education vision. However, it is important to acknowledge that this study's findings are limited by its small sample size (n=6) and single-school context, which may affect the generalizability of the results to other Islamic junior high schools. Additionally, the presence of the researcher as an observer may have introduced a degree of observer bias in the recording of classroom interactions.

## 4. Conclusion

Overall, students at the Islamic junior high school perceived the use of translanguaging in bilingual classrooms positively. This practice is viewed as an effective cognitive bridge that facilitates the understanding of complex English material, reduces foreign language anxiety, and fosters active classroom engagement. However, students also expressed a critical awareness regarding the need for balanced implementation, emphasizing that translanguaging should remain a strategic support rather than a primary substitute for English exposure. In essence, they perceive the mother tongue as a facilitative aid that creates a more inclusive and supportive learning environment when used judiciously.

The pedagogical implications suggest that teachers should move beyond rigid language policies and instead adopt a negotiated approach, where L1 use is intentionally designed to scaffold difficult concepts while gradually being phased out as students' proficiency grows. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies or larger-scale investigations across diverse bilingual contexts in Indonesia to

further validate these perceptions and identify the most effective ratios for balanced translanguaging usage.

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