



The Effect of Translanguaging Strategy Towards Students' Writing Performance

**Cedhrik Wiandra Lean*

**English Department Faculty of English Language and Literature, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia*

*Correspondence: E-mail: cedhrikwiandra12@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The dominance of monolingual instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms often fails to address the diverse linguistic backgrounds and varying proficiency levels of students. This study investigates the effect of translanguaging strategy on students' writing performance using a quantitative quasi-experimental design. Data were collected through pretest and posttest writing assessments administered to both control and experimental groups. The results indicate a significant improvement in the writing performance of students exposed to translanguaging strategies compared to those taught through monolingual instruction. The strategy proved effective across different levels of second language (L2) proficiency, offering flexible linguistic support that enhances content understanding and language production. These findings suggest that translanguaging is not only pedagogically inclusive but also beneficial for developing academic writing skills in EFL contexts. However, the generalizability of the results remains limited due to the specific institutional context and sample size, warranting further research in broader settings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a foreign language or as a second language has, for a long time, been dominated by the monolingual approach where the target language is taken as the reference or the norm, and learners are expected to achieve linguistic competence closer to that of the native speaker (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). In western countries where English is used as the second or third language, it may not be a problem. However, in an Asian country like Indonesia, it may be difficult to implement since English is not commonly used in the society. Attempting to achieve these unrealistic goals of being able to speak and write like native speakers might cause a lot of stress on the part of language learners. According to Cenoz & Gorter (2022), this kind of curricular pressure often leads to a sense of failure and a lack of self-confidence as well as lower their motivation in language learning. This dilemma then makes the pedagogical practice of teaching using the first language one of the best solutions. Hence, translanguaging practice is the inevitable practice in teaching English, especially in Indonesia (Emilia & Hamied, 2023; Putrawan, 2022; Raja et al., 2022).

Translanguaging, originally introduced by Williams (1994), refers to the dynamic use of multiple linguistic resources in communication, learning, and meaning-making (García & Kleyn, 2016). Unlike traditional views of bilingualism, which separate languages into distinct systems, translanguaging emphasizes the fluid and interactive nature of language use. Research suggests that translanguaging helps multilingual students navigate their linguistic repertoires more effectively in academic settings (Baty, 2022; Liando et al., 2023; Makalela, 2018). It has increasingly been recognized as a valuable pedagogical approach in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Translanguaging-based instruction can positively impact student performance in multilingual contexts, particularly in rural schools where local languages are prevalent (Dollah & Abduh, 2024; Rasmin & Nur, 2023).

In her study, Tan (2024) investigates how L2 learners use translanguaging during English writing tasks and how language proficiency (higher vs. lower) affects the frequency and function of translanguaging. It aims to go beyond simply identifying that translanguaging occurs, by deeply examining why students translanguage, whether for cognitive support, self-monitoring, or emotional regulation, and how these functions differ based on their English language skills. The study analyzed translanguaging occurrences in 53 undergraduates' L2 writing processes. Translanguaging data were collected through think-aloud protocols, computer screen recordings, stimulated recall, and written drafts.

A framework was developed to categorize translanguaging into cognitive and metacognitive functions: Cognitive: Repetition, reasoning, idea generation; Metacognitive: Goal setting, monitoring (progress, vocabulary, grammar), evaluation. Data analyses yielded four main findings: (1) on average, learners of varied L2 proficiency levels translanguaged frequently during their L2 writing processes; (2) reasoning was the least frequently performed translanguaging function, while repetition was the most frequently performed translanguaging function; (3) the lower-level L2 students performed translanguaging significantly more often than did their higher-level counterparts; (4) the higher-level L2 students translanguaged for monitoring significantly less often than did their lower-level counterparts.

This study draws on Flower and Hayes' cognitive model of writing, which sees writing as a recursive process involving planning, translating ideas, and reviewing. Also, self-regulated learning theory, which includes strategies like planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own writing. Lastly, Translanguaging theory, which understands multilingual language use as dynamic, fluid, and strategic, not as interference. In this context, translanguaging is seen as a

support tool that helps learners to access deeper thinking, manage language-related stress, develop content ideas more effectively (Liu & Fang, 2022; MacSwan, 2019; Wei, 2018). It is interesting to discuss since this topic is rarely to be brought up to discussion and not many researchers conduct their study regarding this topic, not to mention in Indonesia EFL classroom.

Tan offers an important and timely contribution to second language acquisition research by exploring how translanguaging supports cognitive and metacognitive processes during English writing. The study is particularly strong in its integration of Flower and Hayes' cognitive writing model, self-regulated learning theory, and translanguaging theory, providing a rich interdisciplinary foundation. Tan's use of multiple data collection methods, think-aloud protocols, screen recordings, stimulated recall interviews, and draft analyses, strengthens the credibility and depth of the findings.

Moreover, the study's nuanced analysis of differences between high- and low-proficiency learners adds valuable complexity. However, certain limitations are evident. The participant pool, consisting solely of Chinese undergraduates, limits the generalizability of the findings across different sociocultural contexts. Additionally, the study relies heavily on self-reported data, potentially overlooking unspoken cognitive processes. Importantly, Tan does not directly link translanguaging practices to improvements in writing quality, leaving open questions about the practical benefits of translanguaging. Furthermore, while the study notes internalized monolingual ideologies, it does not deeply explore sociocultural influences on students' language attitudes.

Despite these limitations, the article makes a significant contribution by highlighting translanguaging as a valuable strategic tool in L2 writing, and it sets the stage for future research that could expand participant diversity and investigate the relationship between translanguaging and writing performance. Derived by those explanation, the researcher seeks to fill in the gaps in Tan's study whether there is a direct link between the implementation of translanguaging strategy and the improvement of students' writing performance. The researcher, in this study, seeks to explore the effect of translanguaging strategy towards students' writing performance.

2. METODE

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative approach utilizing a quasi-experimental design, specifically the randomized pretest-posttest control group design, to investigate the effect of translanguaging strategy on students' writing performance. This design allowed the researcher to compare two distinct groups, experimental and control, through both pre- and post-intervention assessments to examine the causality of the treatment applied. The experimental group received instruction using translanguaging strategies, while the control group used monolingual instruction in English. The structure of the research design is presented in Figure 1.

2.2 Data Collection Technique

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 10 Malang during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The target population comprised 72 tenth-grade students across two parallel classes. Through simple random sampling facilitated by the English teacher, 10 students were selected (5 for each group) based on voluntary participation. The study involved four instructional sessions, with two sessions allocated to each group.

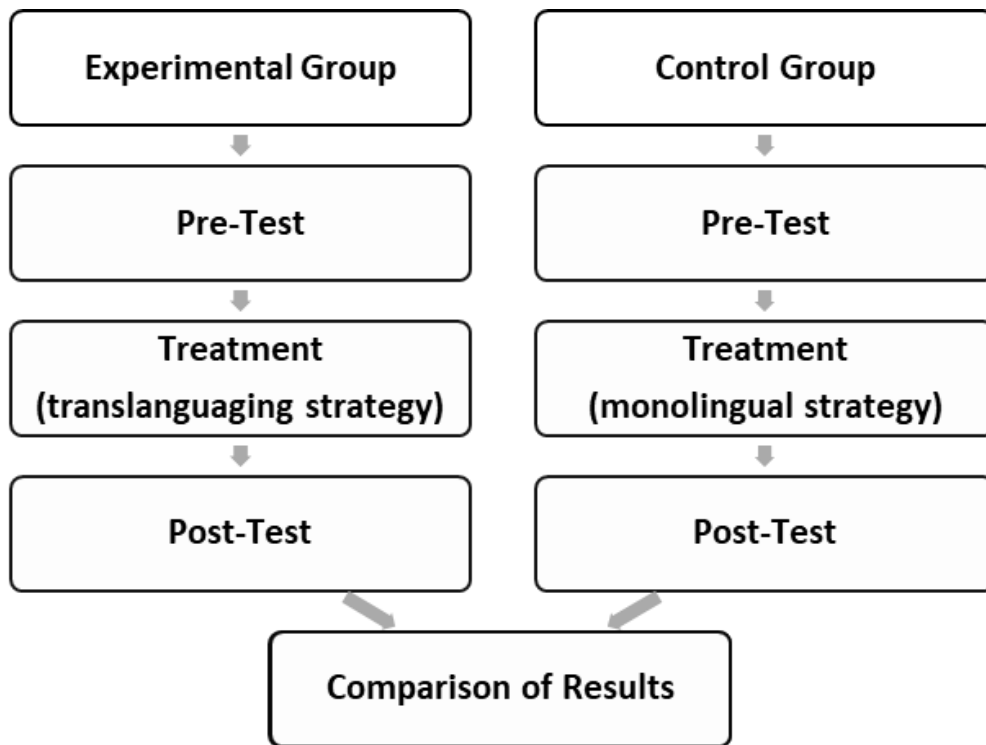


Figure 1. Research Procedure

Data collection involved written tests (pre-test and post-test) administered to both groups. The test topic aligned with the ongoing unit at the time, which was narrative writing. Students in the experimental group were allowed to apply translanguaging (using L1 and L2), while the control group was instructed to complete the tasks monolingually in English (L2 only).

To assess students' writing performance, an analytical scoring rubric was applied, adapted from [Donovan \(2019\)](#). The rubric measured five key dimensions: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Each criterion was assigned a weighted score range, contributing to a total score of 100. Based on the cumulative score, student writing was categorized into four levels of proficiency: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. Prior to hypothesis testing, the dataset was subjected to assumption checks to ensure the appropriateness of parametric procedures: normality was assessed using both the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests, and homogeneity of variances was evaluated with Levene's test. After confirming that these assumptions were satisfied, an independent-samples t-test was performed to compare post-test writing scores between the experimental and control groups; all inferential decisions were made at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The descriptive statistical analysis of students' writing performance in both groups is presented in Table 1. In the pre-test phase, the control group achieved a higher mean score ($M = 84.75$) compared to the experimental group ($M = 78.69$). Similarly, in the post-test, the

control group maintained a higher mean ($M = 86.00$), while the experimental group recorded a mean of 81.47. Despite the differences in mean values, both groups demonstrated improvement from the pre-test to post-test, with the experimental group showing a wider score range (17.00) in the post-test compared to the control group (7.00). The standard deviations indicate consistent performance within both groups, with minor variations in distribution. These preliminary results suggest a performance shift that warrants further inferential analysis.

Table 1. Description of the data calculation

| | Pre-test | | Post-test | | Valid N (listwise) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | Experimental Group | Control Group | Experimental Group | Control Group | |
| N Statistic | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Range Statistic | 10.00 | 11.00 | 17.00 | 7.00 | |
| Min Statistic | 75.00 | 75.00 | 76.00 | 82.00 | |
| Max Statistic | 85.00 | 86.00 | 93.00 | 89.00 | |
| Mean Statistic | 78.6944 | 84.7500 | 81.4722 | 86.0000 | |
| Std. Deviation Statistic | 2.26551 | 3.59663 | 2.99987 | 2.76715 | |
| Variance Statistic | 5.133 | 8.999 | 12.936 | 3.971 | |

To ensure the validity of the inferential procedures, assumption testing was conducted. The normality test results are summarized in Table 2, using both the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk methods. All significance values across the four data sets exceeded the threshold of 0.05, indicating that the data for both pre- and post-tests in each group were normally distributed. These results confirm the suitability of using parametric statistical tests for hypothesis testing.

Table 2. Normality Test

| Groups | Komogorov smirnov | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------|------|--------------|-------|------|-------|
| | Statistic | Df | Sig. | Statistic | Df | Sig. | |
| The result of the students' experimental group | Pre-test | 0,162 | 5 | 0,082 | 0,949 | 5 | 0,098 |
| | Post-test | 0,139 | 5 | 0,076 | 0,952 | 5 | 0,120 |
| | Pre-test control group | 0,158 | 5 | 0,094 | 0,916 | 5 | 0,078 |

| Groups | Komogorov smirnov | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|-------|--------------|----|-------|
| | Statistic | Df | Sig. | Statistic | Df | Sig. |
| Post-test control group | 0,240 | 5 | 0,117 | 0,882 | 5 | 0.055 |

Next, a homogeneity of variances test was conducted to assess the equality of variances between the control and experimental groups. As displayed in Table 3 and Table 4, the Levene's Test for both the pre-test ($p = 0.099$) and post-test ($p = 0.086$) yielded significance values greater than 0.05. These results indicate that the variances between the groups were homogeneous, thereby satisfying the assumption required for conducting an independent samples t-test.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Variances

| Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| 2,789 | 1 | 70 | 0,099 |

According to the table above, the pre-test homogeneity score is more than $\alpha = 0.05$. The p-value (0.099) $> \alpha = 0.05$, indicating that the data is homogeneous.

Table 4. Homogeneity Test Variances

| Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| 3,029 | 1 | 70 | 0,086 |

According to the table above, the post-test homogeneity score between is more than $\alpha = 0.05$. The p-value (0.086) $> \alpha = 0.05$, indicating that the data is homogeneous.

Following the confirmation of normality and homogeneity assumptions, an independent sample t-test was performed to assess whether the difference in writing performance between the two groups was statistically significant. The results, as shown in Table 7, indicate a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group scores ($p = 0.043 < 0.05$).

Table 7. Result of Hypothesis Analysis Using T-test

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Description |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------|----------------|-----------------|--------|----|-----------------|------------------------|
| Pai r 1 Experimental Group Scores | 5 | 84,88 | 3,35327 | 0,55888 | -1,625 | 7 | 0.043 | Significant Difference |
| Pai r 2 Control Group Scores | 5 | 86,05 | 2,70391 | 0,45065 | -1,625 | 7 | 0.043 | |

The mean score of the experimental group was 84.89 (SD = 3.35), while the control group scored slightly higher with a mean of 86.06 (SD = 2.70). Despite the control group having a marginally higher average, the statistical analysis confirmed that the implementation of translanguaging strategy had a significant impact on students' writing performance. These findings suggest that the translanguaging strategy employed in the experimental group influenced students' ability to construct written texts effectively. The results also demonstrate that even a small sample size, when paired with structured implementation and rigorous analysis, can yield significant outcomes.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that the implementation of the translanguaging strategy exerts a significant and positive impact on students' writing performance in EFL classrooms. The observed improvement in the experimental group's scores from pre-test to post-test indicates that allowing students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire, specifically by integrating their first language (L1) while composing in a second language (L2), can enhance their ability to construct written texts. This finding supports the broader theoretical perspective that translanguaging is not merely a compensatory strategy for learners with lower L2 proficiency, but rather a dynamic process that facilitates meaning-making, cognitive engagement, and metalinguistic awareness across all levels of proficiency (Ossa Parra & Proctor, 2021; Pacheco et al., 2019; Robillos, 2023).

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on translanguaging in EFL contexts by addressing a specific gap that had not been fully examined in prior research. While previous studies such as Tan (2024) identified the presence of translanguaging practices, especially among low-achieving L2 learners, they did not directly connect these practices to improvements in measurable writing performance. By adopting a quasi-experimental design and incorporating pre- and post-assessments, this study establishes a causal relationship between translanguaging strategy and enhanced student outcomes in writing tasks. The improvement in the experimental group, although modest, provides empirical evidence that translanguaging can serve not only as a cognitive scaffold but also as a pedagogical intervention that actively supports performance outcomes (Charamba & Zano, 2019; Pinho Feller, 2022).

The integration of translanguaging allowed students in the experimental group to plan, organize, and express their ideas more fluently. The opportunity to access prior knowledge, clarify concepts in L1, and then articulate them in L2 enabled students to construct more coherent texts. These processes align with recent findings in applied linguistics, which argue that translanguaging enhances students' agency and self-regulation by offering linguistic flexibility and reducing cognitive overload (Chell et al., 2021; Mori et al., 2021). Furthermore, the results suggest that translanguaging creates an inclusive classroom environment where students' diverse linguistic backgrounds are recognized as assets rather than obstacles to learning.

In contrast, students in the control group were restricted to monolingual practices, which may have limited their ability to access complex ideas or express them effectively, particularly under testing conditions. Although their average performance was slightly higher in both pre- and post-tests, the difference was not statistically meaningful in terms of the magnitude of improvement. This suggests that while monolingual strategies might sustain performance levels for students already confident in their L2 abilities, they may not significantly elevate outcomes in comparison to more flexible, inclusive strategies like translanguaging.

The implications of these findings extend beyond the confines of writing instruction. From a pedagogical standpoint, this study reinforces the need for language policies and classroom practices that legitimize the use of students' full linguistic resources. Translanguaging should not be perceived as a deficiency-oriented practice, but rather as a transformative strategy that aligns with contemporary views of multilingual competence. For educators, this means rethinking rigid language boundaries and embracing instructional designs that integrate students' linguistic identities into the learning process (Canagarajah, 2015; Kibler et al., 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, the study validates the view that translanguaging is closely tied to sociocultural theories of learning, particularly those that emphasize interaction, contextual meaning-making, and scaffolding. It also aligns with process-based theories of writing that frame composition not merely as a product but as an iterative, cognitively demanding task in which language serves both as a tool and as a medium for thought (Bowen & Van Waes, 2020; Hafner & Ho, 2020). By allowing students to mediate their writing processes through L1, the translanguaging strategy enhances idea generation, textual organization, and linguistic accuracy.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that translanguaging is a viable pedagogical strategy for improving writing performance in EFL classrooms. It supports the growing consensus that multilingual practices should be integrated into language teaching frameworks, not only as a means of inclusion but also as a catalyst for improved learning outcomes. The findings contribute new empirical evidence to the field and point toward practical innovations in EFL writing instruction, while also highlighting areas for future inquiry and development.

4. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that the use of translanguaging strategies has a positive and significant impact on students' writing performance in EFL contexts. The improvement observed in the experimental group's post-test scores demonstrates that allowing learners to access their first language during writing tasks can support idea development, language accuracy, and overall composition quality. These findings offer a direct contribution to ongoing debates in applied linguistics by validating translanguaging as an effective pedagogical tool, particularly in L2 writing instruction where learners benefit from cognitive and linguistic flexibility.

Nonetheless, several limitations must be acknowledged. The small number of participants restricts the generalizability of the findings, especially across diverse educational levels and cultural contexts. Additionally, the participants' prior exposure to translanguaging strategies may have influenced their performance and reduced the contrast between treatment and control conditions. Future studies should involve larger, more diverse populations and consider varying degrees of familiarity with translanguaging to obtain more comprehensive insights. Longitudinal designs are also recommended to assess the sustained impact of translanguaging on writing development across time and contexts.

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