

# Facilitating English Syntax Learning through Translanguaging: Insights from Indonesian University Students

**Ahmad Madkur<sup>1</sup>**

Universitas Islam Negeri Jurai Siwo Lampung, Indonesia  
[ahmadmadkur@metrouniv.ac.id](mailto:ahmadmadkur@metrouniv.ac.id)

**Aldi Permana Putra<sup>2</sup>**

Universitas Islam Negeri Jurai Siwo Lampung, Indonesia  
[aldipermana@metrouniv.ac.id](mailto:aldipermana@metrouniv.ac.id)

## Abstract

This study investigates the role of translanguaging in English syntax instruction within an Islamic university context in Lampung, Indonesia. Adopting a qualitative case study design, the research explores how students and lecturers utilize multiple languages primarily English, Bahasa Indonesia, Arabic, and local languages to facilitate the learning of complex grammatical structures. Data were collected through classroom observations, student interviews, and survey responses. Findings reveal that translanguaging serves as a valuable pedagogical strategy, enabling students to access prior linguistic knowledge, reduce anxiety, and enhance comprehension of abstract syntactic rules. Students reported increased comfort and confidence when allowed to express their ideas through a mix of languages, especially when dealing with challenging topics like relative clauses or auxiliary verbs. However, the study also highlights key challenges, including increased cognitive load, distraction, and the risk of overdependence on the first language. These findings underscore the importance of a context-responsive and adaptive use of translanguaging that supports language development while gradually transitioning learners into English-dominant instruction. The study contributes to the growing body of research on multilingual pedagogies in EFL contexts and offers practical implications for English language teaching in religious and multilingual settings.

**Keywords:** english syntax instruction; multilingual pedagogy; translanguaging

## INTRODUCTION

English syntax remains a formidable challenge for many Indonesian university students. Unlike Bahasa Indonesia, which follows a relatively flexible subject-verb-object (SVO) order with minimal morphological inflections, English has a more rigid syntactic structure and a complex system of tense, aspect, and agreement (Sneddon, 2003; Alwi et al., 2010). Prior research has consistently shown that Indonesian learners struggle with subject-verb agreement, word order, and the use of auxiliary verbs, which often leads to grammatical errors in both written and spoken English (Wijaya, 2018; Setiawan, 2020). Despite various instructional strategies employed in EFL classrooms, the challenges of teaching and learning English syntax persist, necessitating alternative pedagogical approaches.

One such approach is translanguaging, a dynamic pedagogical strategy that allows students to draw from their full linguistic repertoire including Bahasa Indonesia, English, Arabic, and local languages to facilitate comprehension (García & Li Wei, 2014). Translanguaging challenges the traditional monolingual paradigm in EFL instruction by promoting the flexible and strategic use of multiple languages in the classroom. Research has demonstrated that translanguaging can enhance students' cognitive engagement, scaffold their understanding of complex linguistic structures, and support deeper learning (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Kano, 2014). However, while translanguaging has been explored in various multilingual education contexts, studies specifically examining its role in English syntax instruction in Indonesian higher education settings remain limited.

This study seeks to fill this research gap by investigating how translanguaging is implemented by teachers in English syntax classes and how students perceive and experience this approach. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on general language learning, this research specifically examines the intersection of translanguaging and syntax acquisition, providing insights into its pedagogical effectiveness in an Indonesian EFL classroom. By incorporating both teacher practices and student voices, this study offers a novel contribution to the discourse on multilingual education and syntax instruction. The findings will provide empirical evidence on the benefits and limitations of translanguaging in addressing syntax-related challenges, contributing to the development of more context-responsive EFL teaching strategies in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative case study design (Creswell, 2013) to explore how translanguaging strategies are used in English syntax instruction at an Islamic university in Lampung, Indonesia. A case study approach is appropriate because the research focuses on a bounded system and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of their translanguaging practices in syntax learning. By examining this case through multiple data sources, the study aims to capture the complexities of multilingual pedagogy in an EFL context.

### **Participants and Setting**

The study was conducted at an Islamic university in Lampung, Sumatra, Indonesia. The participants were 24 second-year undergraduate students enrolled in an English syntax course. The lecturer, who had extensive experience in teaching syntax and often utilized translanguaging in instruction, provided key insights into pedagogical strategies. The students, who had varying levels of English proficiency, contributed perspectives on the role of translanguaging in their learning experiences. To capture the multilingual backgrounds of participants, demographic data on gender and languages spoken other than English were collected and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Gender	Number of Participants	Percentage	Languages Spoken Other Than English	Percentage
Male	8	33%	Indonesian	34%
Female	16	67%	Indonesian & Javanese	47%
			Indonesian, Javanese & Lampung	2%
			Indonesian & Lampung	2%
			Indonesian, Javanese & Arabic	15%

**Data Collection**

Following a case study approach, this research employed multiple data sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of translanguaging practices in the classroom:

1. Classroom Observations – The researcher conducted participant observations in multiple syntax lessons to examine how the teacher and students used translanguaging in real-time interactions. Detailed field notes were taken, and audio recordings were made to capture language use patterns.
2. Semi-Structured Interviews – The teacher and selected students participated in semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insights into their experiences, beliefs, and challenges regarding translanguaging in syntax learning. All interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure clarity and comfort for participants, and they were later transcribed and analyzed.
3. Questionnaire – A Likert-scale questionnaire was distributed to all 24 student participants to gain a broader understanding of their perceptions of translanguaging in syntax instruction. The questionnaire included five-point Likert-scale items assessing three key aspects: benefits of translanguaging (e.g., facilitating comprehension, reducing cognitive load), Challenges (e.g., over-reliance on L1, reduced exposure to English), and expectations (e.g., preferred balance between L1 and English use in instruction). The responses provided quantitative insights that complemented the qualitative data from observations and interviews.
4. Document Analysis – Course materials, lesson plans, and student assignments were analyzed to identify translanguaging practices embedded in instructional design and assessment.

**Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), following a systematic process of coding, categorizing, and identifying patterns across the data. The analysis focused on recurring themes related to translanguaging strategies, students’ cognitive and affective responses, and institutional constraints affecting instructional practices. Given the case study approach, themes were interpreted within the specific instructional and institutional context to provide an in-depth understanding of translanguaging in syntax learning.

**Research Ethics**

This study adhered to ethical research principles. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality. Participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous, and pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings. Additionally, ethical approval was secured from the

university's research ethics committee to ensure compliance with academic and ethical standards.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Translanguaging as a Cognitive and Pedagogical Scaffold

Findings indicate that translanguaging serves as a cognitive and pedagogical scaffold that helps students comprehend complex syntactic rules in English. The lecturer strategically integrated Indonesian, Arabic, and local languages such as Javanese and Lampungnese to explain grammatical structures, clarify abstract concepts, and draw comparisons between English and students' languages.

Survey results further support this observation. When asked whether the use of multiple languages in the English syntax classroom helped them understand English sentence structures, a significant majority of students responded positively as shown in Figure 1.

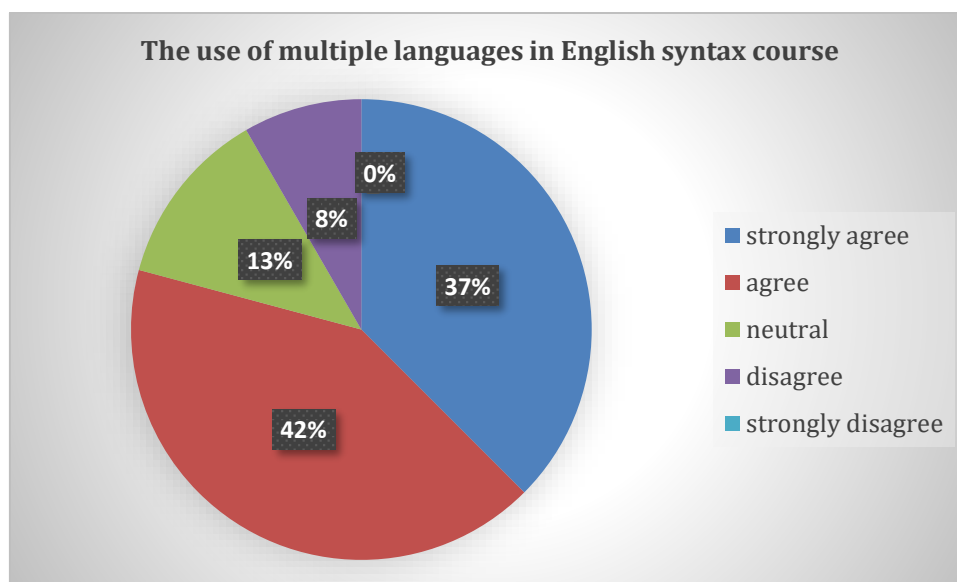


Figure 1. The use of multiple languages in English syntax course

These responses suggest that 79% of students found translanguaging beneficial for understanding English syntax. The use of familiar languages allowed students to draw linguistic parallels, reduce cognitive load, and develop a clearer grasp of complex grammatical structures. During classroom observations, the lecturer frequently used Bahasa Indonesia to explain sentence structures, such as the difference between dependent and independent clauses. In some cases, Javanese and Arabic terms were introduced to establish conceptual links with students' prior linguistic knowledge. For example:

*Lecturer (explaining noun clauses): "Jadi kalau dalam bahasa Arab, ini mirip dengan jumlah ismiyyah, yang memiliki muftada' dan khobar. Nah, dalam bahasa Inggris, ini disebut subject dan predicate."*

*(So in Arabic, this is similar to jumlah ismiyyah, which consists of mubtada' and khobar. In English, these are called the subject and predicate.)*

Similarly, a student interview reinforced this perspective:

*'Kalau dijelaskan pakai Bahasa Indonesia dulu, saya lebih paham konsepnya. Kalau langsung pakai bahasa Inggris semua, saya sering bingung dan akhirnya hanya menghafal tanpa mengerti.'* (Student 1)

*(If it's explained in Bahasa Indonesia first, I understand the concept better. If it's entirely in English, I often get confused and end up memorizing without truly understanding.)*

However, while most students acknowledged the benefits of translanguaging in scaffolding comprehension, a small proportion (13%) remained neutral, and another 8% disagreed. Some students in the interviews suggested that overuse of the first language might limit their exposure to English, affecting their confidence in using the language independently. This finding highlights that translanguaging, when used strategically, can be an effective pedagogical tool in syntax instruction. However, careful balance is required to ensure that students remain engaged in English use while benefiting from linguistic scaffolding.

### **Translanguaging for Classroom Interaction and Participation**

Another key finding highlights how translanguaging facilitates classroom interaction and student participation. Both teacher and students frequently switched between English, Indonesian, Arabic, and sometimes local languages to ensure clarity, encourage engagement, and build a more inclusive classroom environment. Observations revealed that students felt more comfortable expressing their thoughts in a mix of languages, particularly when discussing complex syntactic rules. For example, in a group discussion about relative clauses, a student initially struggled to explain in English but gained confidence when the lecturer allowed responses in Indonesian first:

Student B: *"Ehm... kalau yang pakai 'who' itu untuk... eh... orang, kan? Jadi kayak... 'The man who is standing there' itu sama kayak 'Laki-laki yang berdiri di sana,' ya?"* (Uh... if we use 'who,' it's for... uh... people, right? So like... 'The man who is standing there' is the same as 'Laki-laki yang berdiri di sana,' right?)

The classroom observation reveals how allowing students to use their first language (L1), in this case Indonesian, can facilitate deeper understanding and confidence when grappling with complex grammatical concepts like relative clauses. The student's utterance, which compared "The man who is standing there" with "Laki-laki yang berdiri di sana," shows how translanguaging helped them map English syntactic structures onto familiar L1 constructions. This not only supported comprehension but also empowered the student to engage more actively in the discussion. Such moments reflect the sociocultural perspective of learning, particularly Vygotsky's concept of mediation, where the use of L1 acts as a tool to bridge understanding and extend the learner's Zone of Proximal Development.

This is in line with the survey responses (chart 2 below), with 88% of students agreeing and strongly agreeing that translanguageing made them feel more confident participating in syntax discussions.

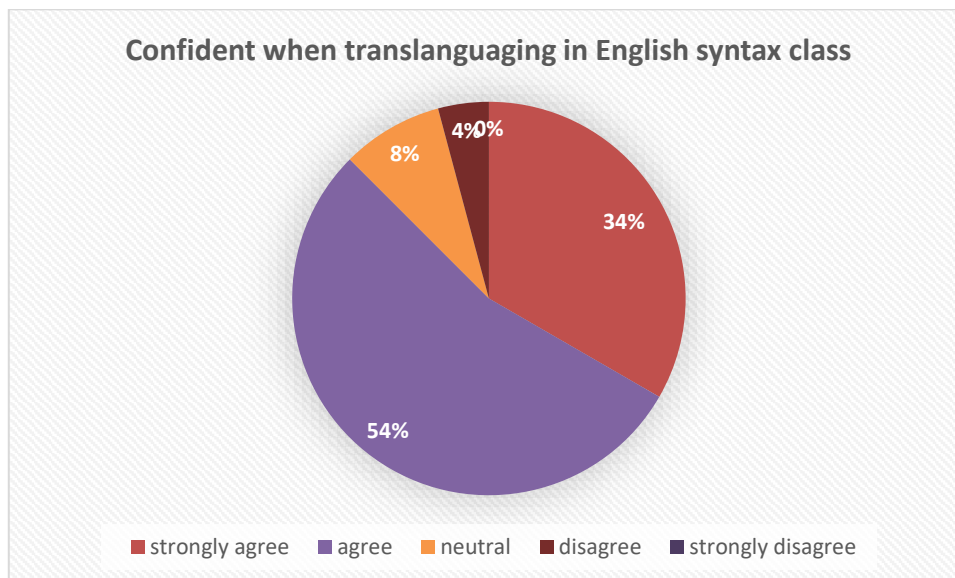


Figure 2. Confident when translanguageing in English syntax class

This high level of agreement indicates that the majority of students perceive the accommodation of their existing languages in English classroom as beneficial for their learning process, particularly in a subject as structurally demanding as syntax. The comfort derived from translanguageing is not merely emotional but also cognitive—it allows students to process complex concepts in a familiar linguistic framework before attempting to express them in English.

This quantitative result is also further reinforced by qualitative data from student interviews. A student articulated a common experience:

*“Kalau saya dipaksa langsung ngomong Inggris, saya takut salah dan jadi diam saja. Tapi kalau boleh mix dulu, saya bisa pelan-pelan coba pakai bahasa Inggris.”* (Student C)

(If I’m forced to speak English immediately, I’m afraid of making mistakes and stay silent. But if I can mix languages first, I can gradually try using English.)

This statements highlight a key insight: the pressure to perform in English-only settings can inhibit participation, while the option to begin in the first language lowers the barrier to entry and encourages gradual engagement. The student’s remark underscores the role of translanguageing not just as a practical strategy for expression but as a stepping stone that fosters linguistic risk-taking, self-efficacy, and the gradual internalization of English syntax. Together, the survey and interview data suggest that translanguageing plays a crucial role in creating a more inclusive, responsive, and effective learning environment for students navigating the challenges of syntax learning.

### Translanguaging as a Comprehension Aid

A significant number of students found the use of multiple languages highly beneficial in understanding English syntax, particularly when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary or complex grammatical structures. Several students explicitly stated:

*"Sangat membantu karena ada beberapa kosakata dalam bahasa Inggris yang belum saya ketahui artinya, jadi saya lebih menyukai kelas sintaksis dengan berbagai bahasa termasuk bahasa Indonesia." (Student D)*

*(Very helpful because there are some English words I don't yet know the meaning of, so I prefer syntax classes that use multiple languages, including Indonesian.)*

*"Membantu karena terkadang ada kata atau kalimat bahasa Inggris yang belum diketahui." (Student E)*

*(Helpful because sometimes there are English words or sentences that I don't yet understand.)*

These responses highlight how translanguaging functions as a cognitive and linguistic support system, especially when learners face lexical gaps or complex constructions in English. Rather than halting the learning process due to unfamiliar terms, the strategic use of Indonesian allows students to access the intended meaning and stay engaged with the lesson. This approach also supports metalinguistic awareness, as students are able to compare and contrast structures across languages, which deepens their understanding of syntax. Importantly, these insights reinforce the idea that translanguaging is not a sign of weakness or lack of proficiency, but a practical and empowering strategy that enables learners to navigate linguistic challenges and develop a stronger command of English grammar. For many students, the integration of multiple languages creates a more inclusive and accessible learning environment, making syntax instruction not only more understandable but also more motivating.

Students also noted that translanguaging helped them grasp difficult concepts by providing comparisons across languages, making abstract grammar rules more relatable:

*"Menurut saya itu membantu pembelajaran bahasa Inggris karena menggunakan banyak bahasa di kelas sintaksis bisa membantu menjelaskan konsep yang sulit dan memberi perbandingan agar lebih paham." (Student F)*

*(I think it helps English learning because using multiple languages in syntax class can explain difficult concepts and provide comparisons to understand better.)*

This reflection emphasizes how students use linguistic comparison as a tool for making sense of abstract grammatical rules. By drawing parallels between English and their existing languages, learners are able to anchor new information in familiar linguistic structures, which makes complex ideas more accessible. This finding aligns with existing research on translanguaging as a form of cognitive scaffolding. The strategic use of familiar languages in target language learning supports students' ability to process, internalize, and apply syntactic knowledge without undermining their engagement with English. Rather than acting as a crutch, translanguaging functions as a bridge that helps students move from surface-level understanding to deeper grammatical awareness. Moreover, such comparisons not only aid



comprehension but also foster metalinguistic skills, as students become more attuned to the structure and function of both English and their own language(s). Thus, translanguaging contributes not only to language learning but also to the development of analytical and comparative thinking skills in the context of English syntax instruction.

Furthermore, the insights from the students suggest that translanguaging not only reduces linguistic anxiety but also plays a foundational role in scaffolding comprehension and supporting accuracy in syntactic learning. It allows beginners to bypass immediate language barriers and focus on mastering the structural patterns of English without being hindered by vocabulary gaps or fear of misunderstanding. Furthermore, this finding reinforces the idea that translanguaging can promote equitable participation in the classroom, ensuring that students with varying levels of English proficiency can engage meaningfully with academic content. In essence, for students like Student D, translanguaging is not merely a temporary support but a necessary and strategic tool for long-term language development.

### ***The Need for a Balanced Approach***

While many students found translanguaging beneficial, some raised concerns about potential overuse of other languages. They felt that excessive reliance on Indonesian or local languages might reduce their English exposure, making them less accustomed to thinking in English. One student remarked:

*"Tapi kalau keseringan menggunakan bahasa Indonesia, membuat kurang terbiasa sama bahasa Inggris dan jadi terlalu bergantung sama bahasa ibu. Jadi, yang paling oke itu pakai bahasa lain secukupnya sebagai alat bantu, tapi tetap utamakan latihan pakai bahasa Inggris." (Student G)*  
*(But if Indonesian is used too often, it makes us less accustomed to English and too dependent on our first language. The best approach is to use other languages as a supporting tool, but still prioritize practicing English.)*

This perspective reflects a desire for balance, recognizing the value of translanguaging as a scaffolding tool while also emphasizing the importance of immersive English practice. It suggests that while the use of students' home languages can aid comprehension and reduce anxiety, it should not overshadow the main goal of building English proficiency. For these students, successful language learning involves a strategic blend: using translanguaging to facilitate understanding, especially in complex topics like syntax, but gradually shifting toward increased use of English to build fluency and confidence. This insight highlights the importance of intentional pedagogical decisions in managing translanguaging practices—ensuring they are supportive but not overly dominant, thus maintaining a productive tension between accessibility and challenge in the EFL classroom.

Another student suggested that using only two languages (English and Indonesian) might be more effective:

*"Membantu kalau hanya pakai 2 bahasa (Eng-Indo)." (Student H)*  
*(Helpful if only two languages are used (English-Indonesian).)*

This perspective underscores the need for clarity and focus in multilingual instruction. Rather than incorporating multiple local or regional languages, which could potentially fragment



understanding or overwhelm learners, a bilingual approach may provide sufficient scaffolding while maintaining consistency and cohesion in instruction.

This view was also supported by classroom observations, which revealed that students tended to follow explanations more effectively when lecturers alternated between English and Indonesian, rather than switching among three or more languages. In group discussions where only English and Indonesian were used, students appeared more engaged and demonstrated greater confidence in experimenting with English, possibly because they could rely on Indonesian for clarification without becoming distracted or confused by additional language inputs.

Moreover, another student elaborated on how translanguaging is most helpful during the early stages of learning but may need to be scaled back as understanding improves:

*“Di awal, translanguaging sangat membantu. Tapi kalau sudah paham, saya ingin lebih banyak latihan pakai bahasa Inggris supaya terbiasa.” (Student I)*  
*(At the beginning, translanguaging helps a lot. But once I understand, I want more practice using English to get used to it.)*

This reflection reinforces the idea that students often view translanguaging not as a permanent instructional method but as a transitional scaffold. It serves as a valuable tool to reduce initial cognitive load, clarify difficult grammar, and lower affective barriers. However, once foundational understanding is achieved, students express a clear desire for increased English use to build fluency and confidence.

Taken together, these insights highlight the importance of a context-responsive translanguaging approach, where instructors make intentional decisions about which and how many languages to include. Rather than applying translanguaging indiscriminately, effective practice involves using students’ first language strategically to support comprehension, while also fostering an environment that encourages active engagement with English. This balanced approach respects students’ linguistic backgrounds without compromising their exposure to and development in the target language.

### Challenges of Translanguaging in Syntax Instruction

While students generally found translanguaging beneficial, some challenges emerged, particularly related to **vocabulary comprehension, cognitive load, and unfamiliar language exposure**. These challenges highlight the nuanced effects of translanguaging in an English syntax classroom.

### Difficulty in Understanding Unfamiliar Vocabulary

While translanguaging was generally perceived as helpful, several students identified specific challenges particularly regarding the use of unfamiliar languages in class. One notable issue was the difficulty in understanding new vocabulary when the lecturer used languages that were not part of the students’ linguistic repertoire. For instance, one student remarked,

*“Jika dijelaskan menggunakan bahasa Arab mungkin akan menjadi tantangan terbesar sebab saya tidak mengerti bahasa tersebut” (Student J)*  
*(If the explanation is in Arabic, it might be the biggest challenge because I don't understand that language)*

While another noted simply,

*“Saat dosen menggunakan bahasa yang unfamiliar” (Student K)*  
*(When the lecturer uses an unfamiliar language).*

These comments highlight an important limitation of translanguaging: it is only effective when it draws on languages that students are already familiar with. When unfamiliar languages are introduced regardless of the instructor’s intention to enrich explanations or connect with certain students—others may feel confused or excluded. This is especially critical in syntax instruction, where understanding specific terminology and structural nuances is essential. The added cognitive load of processing unfamiliar vocabulary in an unfamiliar language may hinder rather than help comprehension. Therefore, while translanguaging offers pedagogical flexibility, it must be used judiciously. These findings suggest the need for linguistic alignment between instructors and learners, ensuring that the additional languages used truly serve as scaffolds rather than barriers. Instructors should remain sensitive to students’ language backgrounds and avoid assuming that multilingual exposure always translates into multilingual comprehension. A context-responsive approach involves selecting support languages that are widely understood by the learners and ensuring that translanguaging remains a tool for clarification not a source of confusion.

#### **Increased Cognitive Load and Processing Time**

Although translanguaging was generally viewed as beneficial for comprehension, some students reported that it added cognitive strain during learning, especially when it involved frequent switching between languages. One student shared,

*“Sejujurnya, agak susah saat translanguaging. Saya seperti berpikir dua kali untuk menerjemahkan bahasa Indo-English dan sebaliknya juga” (Student L)*  
*(Honestly, it’s a bit difficult when translanguaging. I feel like I have to think twice to translate from Indonesian to English and vice versa).*

Another student added,

*“Memikirkan apa arti kata tersebut dalam bahasa Indonesia” (Student M)*  
*(Thinking about what the word means in Indonesian)*

These responses suggest that while translanguaging facilitates understanding by connecting new knowledge to students’ existing linguistic resources, it may also slow down real-time processing and hinder fluency. The constant internal translation can become taxing, particularly during cognitively demanding tasks such as analyzing complex syntax structures. In this context, students are not only learning syntactic rules but also juggling cross-linguistic meaning-making, which can result in longer processing times and potential fatigue.

This challenge underscores the need for balanced and purposeful use of translanguaging. Instructors should be aware that while translanguaging can serve as a scaffold, overuse or poorly timed language switching especially during explanation of abstract or dense content may overwhelm students. Therefore, a strategic and learner-sensitive application of translanguaging is crucial, ensuring it enhances rather than impedes students’ cognitive engagement with syntax learning.

### Potential Distraction and Loss of Focus

While many students appreciated the use of translanguaging in learning syntax, a few voiced concerns that navigating multiple languages during lessons sometimes led to distraction. One student remarked,

*"Mencari arti kata yang diucapkan dosen dan mungkin membuat mahasiswa jadi gagal fokus"*

*(Looking for the meaning of words spoken by the lecturer might make students lose focus).*

This suggests that instead of aiding comprehension, the use of unfamiliar or multiple languages might divert cognitive attention away from the lesson's core content. For some learners, particularly those still developing their linguistic awareness or less fluent in certain languages, the effort to decode or mentally translate what the lecturer says can become overwhelming. As a result, their focus shifts from engaging with syntactic analysis to simply trying to understand individual words or expressions. This cognitive detour can lead to fragmented learning, where students miss the broader structural or conceptual points being taught.

These insights point to a key limitation of translanguaging: if not implemented judiciously, it may unintentionally hinder rather than support learning. Instructors need to manage translanguaging practices with sensitivity to students' linguistic backgrounds and processing abilities. For example, relying too heavily on less familiar local or heritage languages, or frequently switching without clear purpose, can lead to confusion and disengagement. Thus, translanguaging should be seen as a strategic pedagogical tool—one that must be balanced with clear instructional pacing, consistent language cues, and targeted scaffolding to maintain student attention and maximize its benefits.

### Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the pedagogical value and potential challenges of translanguaging in the context of teaching English syntax. Consistent with previous research (García & Wei, 2014; Creese & Blackledge, 2010), translanguaging emerged as a useful scaffold that allows learners to draw on their full linguistic repertoire when grappling with complex grammatical rules. In particular, the strategic use of learners' first language and other familiar languages helped lower affective barriers, fostered classroom participation, and facilitated comprehension of abstract syntactic concepts. From a sociocultural perspective, this supports Vygotskian views of learning as a mediated process in which tools such as language play a crucial role (Vygotsky, 1978; Swain et al., 2015).

Scholars have emphasized that translanguaging encourages deeper cognitive engagement by allowing students to make sense of difficult material in linguistically accessible ways (García & Kleyn, 2016). In syntax instruction, where abstract rules and unfamiliar vocabulary often pose significant challenges, translanguaging can serve as a metacognitive tool that supports learners' internal processing and meaning-making. This aligns with Canagarajah's (2011) view of translanguaging as a negotiated, agentive practice where students actively manage multiple linguistic resources to construct understanding and express ideas more confidently.

However, the study also revealed challenges associated with translanguaging, particularly regarding cognitive load and linguistic over-reliance. While switching between languages can aid comprehension, it may also lead to increased processing time and mental fatigue (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). This reinforces the need for deliberate and responsive pedagogical planning. Overuse of L1 may reduce students' exposure to English, potentially impeding their development of automaticity in the target language (Turnbull, 2019). This finding aligns with Macaro (2009), who cautioned against excessive L1 use in foreign language classrooms, advocating instead for judicious and purposeful integration based on learners' needs and proficiency levels.

Another concern raised in the literature is the risk of using unfamiliar third languages during instruction, which can alienate or confuse learners if not all students share the same linguistic background (Leung & Valdés, 2019). Therefore, for translanguaging to be effective, it must be contextually responsive—drawing on students' existing language knowledge while avoiding cognitive overload or linguistic marginalization.

Taken together, these findings suggest that translanguaging should not be viewed as a fixed methodology but rather as a flexible and adaptive pedagogical stance (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). Instructors must remain attuned to learners' linguistic identities, proficiency levels, and affective needs. A balanced approach—one that leverages the affordances of multilingual repertoires without compromising target language development—is key to ensuring that translanguaging supports, rather than hinders, syntax learning.

## CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pedagogical value of translanguaging in English syntax instruction, particularly within multilingual educational settings such as Indonesian Islamic universities. The findings indicate that strategic translanguaging especially between English and Indonesian can enhance comprehension, reduce anxiety, and promote student participation in discussions of complex grammatical structures. Drawing on sociocultural and translanguaging theories (Vygotsky, 1978; García & Wei, 2014), the study supports the idea that allowing learners to access their full linguistic repertoires serves as a cognitive and affective scaffold for language learning. However, the benefits of translanguaging must be considered alongside its limitations. Overuse of the first language (L1) may reduce learners' exposure to English, potentially impeding language immersion. Additionally, some students reported cognitive strain and distraction when too many languages were introduced or when unfamiliar languages (such as Arabic) were used. These challenges point to the need for a context-responsive and adaptive approach to translanguaging one that scaffolds understanding without compromising the development of English proficiency (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Macaro, 2009).

While this study offers valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in a specific cultural and institutional context—an Islamic university in Indonesia—where Arabic, Indonesian, and English coexist in unique ways. This limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings. Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported data through interviews and observations, which may be subject to

participant bias or social desirability effects. Third, the focus was mainly on students' perceptions; less attention was paid to measuring actual learning outcomes or long-term impacts on syntactic competence.

Future studies could address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs that track students' syntactic development over time, allowing researchers to evaluate whether and how translanguaging influences measurable language gains. It would also be valuable to conduct comparative studies across different educational contexts (e.g., secular vs. religious schools, urban vs. rural settings) to explore how translanguaging functions in varied sociolinguistic environments. Additionally, incorporating teachers' perspectives and classroom interactions through video analysis could offer a more comprehensive understanding of translanguaging as an interactive pedagogical practice. Finally, further research should explore how digital tools and media often multilingual by nature can be integrated into translanguaging-based syntax instruction to support Gen Z learners more effectively.

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