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Comprehensibility of Indonesian teachers' translanguaging: Insights from higher education English classrooms

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ABSTRACT

The continuously refined definition of translanguaging potentially leads to classroom translanguaging practices whose benefits in EFL contexts are still debatable. Regarding translanguaging as a multilingual speakers' strategy to draw linguistic features from their full repertoire to convey meaning, this study examined multilingual English teachers' translanguaging practices in English classrooms and the comprehensibility of these practices. The teachers' translanguaging practices were described based on qualitative data analysis of classroom observations and V-SRIs involving two teachers from an English department at a university in Indonesia. The comprehensibility of the teachers' translanguaging practices was measured using a comprehensibility rating scale filled out by ten students who also noted down their responses to open-ended questions exploring factors contributing to their comprehension. The results showed that one teacher practiced translanguaging by drawing linguistic features from English and Indonesian, while the other drew from Javanese in their language repertoire. Three dominant translanguaging strategies were identified: alternating drawing in sustained speech, alternating drawing in minimal speech, and fluid drawing in sustained speech. The comprehensibility rating indicated that the teachers' translanguaging in the first strategy was more intelligible than in the second strategy, while in the third strategy it was the least intelligible. Students' judgments of the teachers' capability in using English, confusion regarding the contexts of the topics discussed, and (un)supportive learning environments contributed to the comprehensibility of the teachers' translanguaging practices. Hence, teachers' awareness of their translanguaging practices and their effect on students' comprehension of the material is urged.

Keywords: Comprehensibility; English classroom; intelligibility; translanguaging

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INTRODUCTION

Discussion on the benefits of translanguaging to facilitate university students in learning English encompasses many aspects, such as enhancing students' comprehension (Fang & Liu, 2020), improving students' engagement (Panezai et al., 2023), and assisting students cognitively, socially, and psychologically (Emilia & Hamied, 2022). Nevertheless, debates regarding the benefits of translanguaging persist (Renandya & Chang, 2022; Singleton & Flynn, 2022) as the conceptualization of translanguaging continues to be refined (Lewis et al., 2012a, 2012b). The debates may stem from differing goals and basic principles of the implementation of translanguaging in language classrooms.

Initially, translanguaging refers to a carefully planned use of students' first language (L1) and

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English to achieve balanced bilingual speakers who are equally fluent in two languages across various contexts (Baker, 2001; Williams, 2002). The attainment of balanced bilingualism is evaluated through learners' native-like competencies. The descriptors of English proficiency tests, such as TOEFL or IELTS, specify indicators of the students' success in language learning. These tests, ironically, pertain to monolingualism (McNamara, 2012). This initial concept of translanguaging emphasizes the deliberate use of students' home language and English alternatingly as the language of input and output. Hence, through careful pedagogical planning, translanguaging can only be performed by teachers and students who have a good grasp of both languages (Baker, 2001).

On the contrary, the recent concept of translanguaging perceives translanguaging as an inevitable language practice of bi/multilingual speakers to construct and convey meaning and to make sense of their bi/multilingual world, without watchful adherence to boundaries set by named language (García, 2009a, 2009b; García & Kleyn, 2016; Wei & García, 2022). In this concept, linguistic features in bi/multilingual speakers are not regarded as belonging to specific named languages. Instead, they are considered as a unitary language repertoire, an idiolect of a bi/multilingual speaker that is unique depending on the speaker's experiences with the languages (García & Kleyn, 2016). This concept extends the initial concept of translanguaging by accommodating spontaneous and unplanned translanguaging within classroom contexts. It also shifts the translanguaging goal, from reaching balanced bilinguals to reaching comprehensible communication among English users (Garcia, 2009b).

However, no specific indicators are yet available to measure the comprehensibility of communications among English users who perform translanguaging. Translanguaging theory requires the separation of language-specific performance and general linguistic performance (García & Kleyn, 2016). While indicators for the language-specific performance can be derived from the readily available construct of a named-language test, specific indicators for the general linguistic performance are still under explorations (Wei & Garcia, 2022). Some scholars suggest translanguaging as an assessment method for multilingual students (Cenoz, 2017; Cenoz & Gorter, 2019). In this respect, students' multilingualism is still assessed by their separate named languages (Hesson & Woodley, 2014; Shohamy, 2011). Some others relate translanguaging assessment to assessing multilinguals' language practices within English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) contexts (Harding & McNamara, 2018; Jenkins & Leung, 2016). In this manner, fundamental redefinition of language testing and reconstruction of the criteria for judging successful performance become the challenges (Harding & McNamara, 2018; McNamara, 2024).

In the broad sense of the term, comprehensibility and intelligibility are used interchangeably to mean ease of understanding in general (Levis, 2006), which is measured using listeners' scalar rating (Derwing et al., 2014; Isaacs et al., 2018). Intelligibility refers to word/practice recognition, whereas comprehensibility concerns word/practice meaning, which is interactional (Derwing & Munro, 1997). Research on intelligibility shows that native speakers' English in international communication was consistently among the least intelligible (Smith & Rafiqzad, 1979). Thus, sounding like a native speaker is an unrealistic goal for most adult learners (Isaacs et al., 2018). This notion resonates with the goal of the recent concept of translanguaging. Hence, Isaacs et al. (2018) developed a rating scale for university students with mixed language backgrounds to measure the comprehensibility of English speakers in international communication settings.

The comprehensibility of English speakers in international communication contexts, where English may not be the speakers' first language, is not the speaker's or listener's sole responsibility. Instead, it is interactional between the speaker and the listener (Smith & Nelson, 2019). In classrooms where English is not the first language of the teacher and students, comprehensibility should not solely be judged from the teacher's point of view. Students' voices should be actively heard to determine the comprehensibility of classroom communications. In this manner, explorations on indicators describing the comprehensibility of translanguaging can be carried out to identify potential descriptors to assess students' success in being multilingual English speakers.

Several studies in university classroom contexts have used students' active participation as a descriptor for the success of classroom translanguaging. For example, translanguaging is considered to build classroom rapport that is connoted to promoting meaningful communication and facilitating meaning-making among class members (Fang & Liu, 2020; Panezai et al., 2023). Translanguaging is also believed to improve students' active participation since students can construct effective collaborative dialogue in completing tasks, thus facilitating their comprehension of the teaching materials (Emilia & Hamied, 2022). Students' active participation in a translanguaging classroom is also related to their free and creative ways of expressing their emotions once multiple linguistic and semiotic resources are allowed (see Zhang, 2021). However, none of the studies actively involved students in assessing and exploring the comprehensibility of their teachers' translanguaging.

The active involvement of students in describing the comprehensibility of the teachers' translanguaging is crucial because students' language development can be hindered and limited when translanguaging is not intelligible (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). Furthermore, despite the many studies about translanguaging in English classrooms that explored the benefits of translanguaging (e.g., Emilia & Hamied, 2022; Fang & Liu, 2020; Panezai et al., 2023; Zhang, 2021), research on teachers' translanguaging and its comprehensibility in translanguaging classrooms is underexplored. Explorations on the intelligibility of teachers' translanguaging, particularly from the perspective of students, is crucial because clear and purposeful translanguaging facilitates students' comprehension of advanced vocabulary and intricate teaching materials (Wong & Tian, 2025; Yuan & Yang, 2023), helps students articulate complex ideas (Wong & Tian, 2025), and activates students' multilingual and multimodal resources (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022).

To fill the gap, this study aims to examine the teachers' translanguaging and the comprehensibility of the translanguaging for their students by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do the teachers practice translanguaging in their classrooms?
2. How are the teachers' translanguaging practices comprehensible to their students?

METHOD

This research employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches for data collection and analysis. The qualitative approach described the teachers' translanguaging through classroom observations and video-stimulated recall interviews (V-SRIs), while the quantitative method rated the comprehensibility of the teachers' translanguaging.

Participants

his article focuses on two classes taught at the English department of an Indonesian university in Malang, East Java, Indonesia, as part of a larger research project. The classes are Introduction to Research Method (IRM), taught to second-year students, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFL), taught to third-year students. The two classes were selected because the two teachers showed opposing strategies in performing classroom translanguaging during casual observations in the preliminary study. The teacher in the IRM class performed translanguaging primarily by consistently alternating between English and Indonesian in his utterances. On the contrary, the teacher of the TEFL class performed translanguaging by blending linguistic features from more than two languages within single utterances. The two teachers voluntarily participated in this study by providing their consent. In addition to the two teachers, only five students from each class voluntarily and consistently joined the research. All participants were multilingual (see Table 1), and their consent was gained before data collection. For ethical considerations, all names are pseudonyms.

Table 1
Information about the participants

Participants	Teacher's ITP TOEFL Score/ CEFR level	Language(s)
Abdul (Teacher)	570/B2	Madurese, Javanese, Indonesian, English
Fiana		Javanese, Indonesian, English
Elis		Banjarese, Javanese, Indonesian, English
Nana		Javanese, Indonesian, English
Mira		Javanese, Indonesian, Arabic, English
Adriana		Javanese, Indonesian, English
Fitri (Teacher)	533/B1	Javanese, Indonesian, English
Iman		Indonesian, Javanese, Mandarin Chinese, English
Martin		Javanese, Indonesian, English, French
Ryan		Indonesian, English
Bunga		Minang language, Indonesian, English
Dewi		Batak language, Indonesian, English

The participants' linguistic repertoire in Table 1 is written based on the position of each language in the participants' repertoire. For example, Abdul has Madurese as his L1. He has two second languages (L2): Javanese and Indonesian. He also has English as one of the subsequent languages in his repertoire. It has to be noted that, Malang, where the research took place, has a complex linguistic ecology in which most of the society speaks Indonesian and Javanese. Some people also speak other languages such as Chinese, Madurese, Arabic, English, and other languages since the city is crowded with students from all over Indonesia. However, there was no clear information about each participant's proficiency in each language in their repertoire, except for the teachers' English.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

This study collected data in three stages: classroom observations using Spada's (2019) Communicative

Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Part B observation scheme, Verbal Self-Repetition Interactions (V-SRIs) based on Gass & Mackey's (2017) framework, and a comprehensibility rating scale adapted from Isaacs et al. (2018). A total of ten video-recorded classroom meetings (5 meetings from the IRM course and five from the TEFL course) were used as the primary data source. To get a clearer picture of the data collection procedure, Figure 1 is presented, followed by more detailed explanations of each data collection stage.

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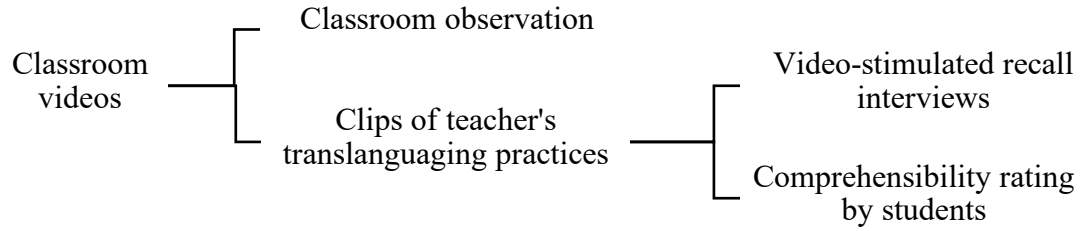
Figure 1
Data collection procedure



First, the researchers recorded each classroom meeting in a video. To avoid the Hawthorne effect (Fernald et al., 2012; Fry, 2018), the researchers set the recording devices at the back of the class before the class started and ensured the teacher had put on an active clip-on microphone to record the teacher's voice. Once everything was ready, the researchers started recording and left the classroom. After the class, the researchers uploaded the video to a private YouTube channel to ensure secure access and protect participants' privacy during further data collection.

Then, non-participant classroom observation was carried out through the video-recorded classroom meeting. Spada's (2019) COLT Part B observation scheme was employed to record named languages used in the teachers' speech and kinds of speech (sustained, minimal, ultra-minimal) in which translanguaging occurred. A sustained speech refers to teachers' speech consisting of multiple sentences or clauses, minimal speech refers to shorter practices that consist of a single phrase or few words, and ultraminimal speech refers to the shortest possible practices, such as single words (Spada, 2019). The COLT was selected as it can be used to investigate narrowly focused classroom observations to record the quantity and quality of teachers' use of different languages in language classrooms (Spada, 2019). The unit of analysis in COLT is a teaching activity along with the verbal interactions (Spada, 2019). In this study, each unit of teachers' translanguaging was determined by an instructional activity in which translanguaging was performed by the teacher (e.g., a teacher explanation of a topic and languages used during the explanation, or a teacher-student interaction for a particular purpose and languages used during the interaction). The data were recorded in a matrix comprising transcripts of teachers' utterances, language choices, and types of speech.

Next, the V-SRI stage was prepared. The researchers carefully re-checked each translanguaging unit identified in the classroom observation and provided a timestamp. This timestamp served as a video clip of the teacher s' translanguaging. Once all video clips of the teacher s' translanguaging in a classroom meeting were set, a V-SRI session was ready to be conducted.

The V-SRI with the teachers was conducted individually. At the onset of an interview session, a video clip of one of the teachers' translanguaging was played. Then, a semi-structured interview was conducted to explore the teacher's translanguaging. Next, the second video clip was played, followed by another semi-structured interview. The process continued until all the video clips were played or the time was up.

The V-SRI with the students was conducted as a group interview. All students from each class got together at a specific time, which was collectively agreed upon. A video clip of their teacher's translanguaging was played at every onset of the V-SRI session. Then, the students filled out the comprehensibility rating scale. The comprehensibility rating scale was adapted from Isaacs et al.'s (2018), developed for English-medium institutions and intended for use with university students from mixed language backgrounds. This background suits this study in that the users of the rating scale were university students with mixed

language backgrounds who also had English as a medium of instruction in their classrooms. The adaptation was done by eliminating the UR (Unable to rate) point in Isaacs et al.'s (2018) scale. The UR point is assigned when no speech is produced. Since this study situated students to rate the comprehensibility of teachers' translanguaging as shown through some video clips, they could not encounter the UR point. Hence, this study changed the use of a 6-point Likert scale in Isaacs et al.'s (2018) work into a 5-point Likert scale. The point scale ranges from 0 (completely incomprehensible) to 4 (effortlessly comprehensible) translanguaging.

Next, the students responded to the two open-ended questions about factors facilitating and challenging their comprehension. The researcher followed up with semi-structured interviews to confirm students' answers and get further exploration of their answers. Once the interview was over, the second video clip of their teacher's translanguaging was played, and the same procedure was repeated.

This whole V-SRI procedure was conducted less than 48 hours after the classroom meeting was over to justify the reliability of the recall, which can reach 95 per cent accuracy (Gass & Mackey, 2017). Consequently, some interviews were conducted offline, while others were online due to time and place constraints. Each interview lasted variably from 20 to 90 minutes, depending on the clips or the time availability of the participants. The interviews were conducted using language that allowed the participants to express their thoughts best. All the V-SRIs were recorded for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research involves a continuous, non-linear, and iterative process of interpretation (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Researchers repeatedly move back and forth between collecting data, analyzing it, and interpreting the findings to develop a more in-depth understanding of the researched topic (Croker, 2009). This notion happened in this study. During data collection in the classroom observation stage, data analysis was performed by identifying the teachers' translanguaging unit, the teachers' language choices, and the type of speeches the unit belongs to. This analysis was recorded in a matrix comprising a transcript of teachers' utterances in a unit of translanguaging, language choices in the translanguaging, and types of speech in the translanguaging.

This study's simultaneous data collection and analysis process led to the identification of teachers' translanguaging strategies. The strategies are characterized by how the teachers drew linguistic features from their language repertoire to perform translanguaging and in which type of speech (sustained, minimal, and ultraminimal) the translanguaging occurred. This process resulted in the categorization of translanguaging strategies. The researchers performed the whole process of simultaneous data collection and analysis. No external validators were involved. Following Bryman (1988), validity in a qualitative study is not guaranteed by mitigating or regulating personal biases through tests, as is the case with quantitative research. Qualitative studies are grounded on the belief that individuals construct a unique world view, bringing about different conceptualizations and interpretations of reality (Croker, 2009). The primary emphasis of qualitative research is to examine the participants in a natural setting, considering the different interpretations of individuals. Thus, generalizability of the findings is not the aim of qualitative research (Croker, 2009; Phakiti et al., 2018). Further, a recursive process happened in this study when the researchers continuously checked and re-checked the teachers' translanguaging to create a video clip used as a stimulus in the stimulated recall interviews.

Data from the V-SRIs were analysed using Gass and Mackey's (2017) 4-step stimulated recall analysis to reveal the teachers' rationales underlying their translanguaging. The 4-step process consists of sampling the recall data, preparing the data for coding, developing a coding scheme, and triangulation (Gass & Mackey, 2017). In sampling the data, data extraction of the main discussion was done. Segments of the interviews where participants deviated from the topic were excluded. Then, the data were timestamped and transcribed to prepare for data coding. First, a coding scheme was developed for the data collected from the interviews with the teachers to characterize the teachers' decision to conduct translanguaging. Then, another coding scheme was developed for the data collected from the interviews with the students to describe the factors contributing to their comprehension of the teachers' translanguaging. Analyses of all data were performed by employing both the transcription and the video of the V-SRIs to catch the possible non-verbal cues, such as backchannel, body language, and intonation that may alter the meaning obtained from the analysis of the transcription (Gass & Mackey, 2017). The interview analyses were triangulated with the classroom observations to achieve comprehensive results.

Finally, the comprehensibility of the teachers' translanguaging strategy was measured through the students' responses to the comprehensibility rating scale. First, the data were categorized based on the teachers' translanguaging strategies. Then, the mean score of each category was calculated and compared to identify the most comprehensible translanguaging strategy. The higher the mean score, the less effort the students put into understanding the speech (Isaacs et al., 2018). In this study, the higher the mean score, the more comprehensible the teachers'

translanguaging is for the students. Then, factors contributing to students' facility and challenges to understanding their teachers' translanguaging were analyzed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the teachers' language choice and speeches during their translanguaging resulted in three patterns: fluid strategy in sustained speech, alternating strategy in sustained speech, and alternating strategy in minimal speech. The comprehensibility rating scale indicated that the first strategy is the least comprehensible, while the second strategy is more intelligible than the third strategy. The subheadings present detailed findings and their discussion.

The Teachers' Translanguaging Strategies

The teachers' translanguaging in this study is characterized by three aspects: 1) named languages from which the teachers drew linguistic features used in their translanguaging; 2) the way the teachers used the linguistic features to form translanguaging; and 3) types of speech in which the translanguaging occurred.

The classroom observation data showed that English and Indonesian dominated the teachers' (Abdul and Fitri) translanguaging, with Javanese detected only in some of Abdul's translanguaging. English is the language taught in the classrooms. Indonesian is the national lingua franca for the teachers and students, and Javanese is an indigenous language spoken by most people in the area. Regarding the teachers' language repertoire (see Table 3), Javanese is not Abdul's L1. From the V-SRI, Abdul explained that he has Madurese as his L1 because he only started to acquire Javanese when he moved to Malang, the city where Javanese is one of the main languages spoken by the community, in his teenage years. Previously, he lived on Madura Island, where Madurese is spoken daily as the L1 of the community. While for Abdul, Javanese is his L2, for Fitri, it is her L1. Fitri was born and raised in Tuban, a city in Central Java, where Javanese is the language spoken by the community.

From the classroom observations, none of the teachers drew any linguistic features from their L1. Fitri did not use Javanese in her translanguaging, and Abdul did not use his Madurese. The absence of linguistic features from both teachers' mother tongues is interesting, as translanguaging, which to some people is understood simply as the use of L1 in teaching English (Renandya & Chang, 2022), is not evident in this study. Instead, the teachers used Indonesian, their L2, to translanguage. This finding may suggest that, regardless of the cognitive, social, and psychological benefits of L1 (Emilia & Hamied, 2022), multilingual speakers' L1 may not always be involved in translanguaging performed by multilingual speakers because they have another choice of language that may serve them better than their L1, which is in this case, Indonesian.

The classroom observation also showed that the teachers performed translanguaging by blending or alternating the linguistic features drawn from their language repertoire. Blending linguistic features in multilingual speakers' translanguaging may indicate that they fluidly draw linguistic features from their unitary language repertoire. García & Kleyn (2016) illustrated this unitary repertoire as a box that contains all linguistic features of bi/multilingual individuals. Therefore, when bi/multilingual speakers perform translanguaging, they can fluidly draw any linguistic features from their repertoire to make and convey meaning without strictly following the rules and boundaries associated with specific named languages (Garcia, 2009a, 2009b; García & Kleyn, 2016; Wei & García, 2022). Differently, the alternating use of linguistic features in multilingual speakers' translanguaging could reflect that their language repertoire is not unitary. Instead, it is compartmentalized based on the named languages. The boundaries between the compartments can be opened or closed based on the speakers' intentions. Once the boundaries of specific named languages are opened, the linguistic features of the languages can be freely drawn through translanguaging. In this manner, bi/multilinguals have a unitary linguistic repertoire from which linguistic features are freely drawn to communicate and make meaning (Wei & Garcia, 2022). However, when the boundary of a named language is closed, none of its linguistic features are accessible. This makes the language completely absent from bi/multilinguals' language practice, like what happens to the teachers' L1.

The analysis of the classroom observation data also found that the teachers' translanguaging occurred mainly in sustained speeches. At the same time, few were noticeable in minimal speeches, and none were detected in ultraminimal speeches (see Table 2).

Table 2
Teachers' Translanguaging Strategies

Teacher	Language choice	Speech		
		Sustained	Minimal	Ultra-minimal
Fitri	English, Indonesian	v	v	x
Abdul	English, Indonesian, Javanese	v	v	x

From these findings, it can be learned that the teachers drew linguistic features from some rather than all languages in their repertoire, alternatingly or fluidly, to create translanguaging in sustained or minimal speeches. Further analysis indicated that the teachers' alternating drawing occurred in sustained and minimal speeches. Nevertheless, the fluid drawing only occurred in sustained speeches. Therefore, three translanguaging strategies were identified: alternating drawing in sustained speech, alternating drawing in minimal speech, and fluid drawing in sustained speech.

Deliberation of each strategy is presented in the following sub-sections. When a segment of what happened in classroom meetings is provided, it is written as an extract. hen participants' statements in the V-SRIs are referred to, they are translated into English and written as a direct quotation. Indonesian expressions are written in italics, while Javanese expressions are in bold. English translation is provided in square brackets.

Alternating Drawing in Sustained Speech

The data analysis from classroom observations found that Abdul performed translanguaging by alternatingly using linguistic features drawn from English and Indonesian in sustained speeches to explain a concept in his teaching. For example, in the first meeting of the IRM class, Abdul introduced the course to the students using an alternating translanguaging strategy in sustained speeches as presented in Extract 1.

> **Extract 1.**
> Abdul: Good morning, everyone. This is the introduction to research methods. At the end of your study, later, when you're like in the eighth semester or the seventh semester, you will write a final paper indicating that you are about to finish your studies in this department. *Rekan-rekan, disini kita akan belajar tentang* research methods. *Semester ini di buat untuk memang mempersiapkan rekan-rekan untuk bisa dan mampu melaksanakan riset atau penelitian sebelum nanti sebagai salah satu syarat kelulusan yang harus dilalui oleh setiap anak di jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris.* [Dear students, we are going to learn about research methods. This semester is designed to equip you with competence and ability to conduct research or studies before later you have to do it as one of the graduation requirements mandated to every student in the English Education Department].

In Extract 1, English was used first, followed by a re-statement or summary of the same points in Indonesian. This alternating strategy in sustained speeches aimed to ensure students' comprehension of the discussed topic. In a V-SRI session, Abdul explained:

> It (the alternating translanguaging strategy in sustained speech) is better for comprehension. Because I did it by not breaking down the communication. I was still maintaining the communication flow, and the switching to Indonesian was aimed to highlight the discussion that I had delivered in English previously.

The statement shows Abdul's deliberate efforts to integrate translanguaging seamlessly into the communication flow so that it will not distract students' focus on comprehending the content. It resonates with García and Kleyn's (2016) scaffolding translanguaging stance that perceives translanguaging as a strategy to improve students' comprehension. However, Abdul's alternating use of English and Indonesian in his translanguaging is not the same as in the original concept of translanguaging. In the original concept of translanguaging, the alternation between the languages was done as input and output language (Baker, 2001; Williams, 2002). Differently, Abdul alternately used English and Indonesian as the languages of input.

Classroom observation in Fitri's class revealed that she barely performed the alternating translanguaging strategy in sustained speech. The rare occurrence was when Fitri introduced a group of students to deliver their group presentation, as presented in Extract 2.

> **Extract 2.**
> Fitri : Today, group 5 will present a lesson plan of one of their members, Arcenia. She is going to present kinds of lesson plans. I think it is time for you to present. *Berapa semuanya* [how many are they]? (pointing at the PPT slides shown on the laptop)
> Student2 : *Cuma ada Sembilan* slides, *ma'am* [There are only nine slides, ma'am].
> Fitri : OK. *Bisa bergantian ya karena yang saya nilai presentasinya* [Please take turn because I will assess the presentation].
> Student2 : All right, ma'am.
> Fitri : You can introduce your group and start explaining.

Fitri's translanguaging reflects a spontaneous rather than pedagogically intentional translanguaging. Garcia (2009a) referred to such a practice as the readily observable communications of multilingual speakers in their natural settings.

This unplanned translanguaging is not accommodated in the original concept of translanguaging (Baker, 2001; Williams, 1994, 2002) because systematic alternation between languages and careful planning of language use are not performed. In contrast, Garcia (2009a, 2009b) argued that such spontaneous and unplanned translanguaging should be acknowledged in a classroom setting because their occurrences are inevitable regardless of how rigid the teacher plans for the language use. During the stimulated recall interviews, Fitri explained: "*I have my own standard that, in teaching, we have to be flexible and comfortable. All languages can be used as long as we can comprehend them.*" Fitri's statement informs that her translanguaging seems to emerge from personal comfort, not from pre-planned translanguaging objectives. This practice is irrelevant to the extended concept of translanguaging with its pedagogical translanguaging framework (Garcia et al., 2017; García & Kleyn, 2016) that suggests intentional translanguaging manifested through explicit translanguaging objectives.

The teachers' translanguaging strategy by alternating the drawing of English and Indonesian used in sustained speech is revealed to be the most comprehensible for the students, as it has the highest mean score compared to the other two translanguaging strategies (see Table 4). In addition, teachers' intentional translanguaging contributes to students' better comprehension. This result enriches the previous studies which found that teachers' intentional translanguaging design potentially leverages students' language repertoire (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020, 2022; Tang et al., 2024).

Alternating Drawing in Minimal Speech

Classroom observation data found that Abdul's translanguaging in minimal speech showed the alternating strategy. Extract 3 illustrates this strategy when Abdul established rapport with the students by recalling the 3-day event with the students.

Extract 3.

Abdul :*Ternyata* **kekeselen rek**, *ya tiga hari* [It turned out very tiring, three days]. **Prasaku sing paling rame** *kemarin itu ya* [I think I was the loudest at that time]. **Wes**, *habis* **wes** [Yeah, I have no energy left].

Student2 : *Istirahat, Pak* [Have some rest, Sir].

Abdul : *Masih* **nggliyeng sak jane**, *tapi karena* recording, *jadi harus hadir* [I still have a headache now, but I have to attend the class because it is being recorded] (pointing at the camera).

Excerpt 3 shows that Abdul performed spontaneous translanguaging using linguistic features drawn from Indonesian, English, and Javanese in his repertoire. It indicates that translanguaging is an inevitable language practice in a multilingual reality (Garcia, 2009a). Unlike his alternating translanguaging strategy in sustained speech, Abdul's alternating translanguaging strategy in minimal speech consists of a phrase (e.g., **Prasaku sing paling rame** *kemarin itu ya*) or a few words (*Ternyata* **kekeselen rek**) that are combined to make a sentence conveying a complete idea. This practice reflects that translanguaging is a bi/multilingual speaker's way to construct and convey meaning and to make sense of their bi/multilingual world, without watchful adherence to boundaries set by named language (Garcia, 2009a, 2009b; García & Kleyn, 2016; Wei & García, 2022).

The stimulated recall interview revealed that Abdul did not plan his translanguaging. Abdul stated: "*If it is the teaching materials, I always plan it; that I need to discuss this and that. But, for the delivery, it really depends on the classroom situation. So, it (translanguaging) was never planned.*" However, he consistently associates English with formal contexts and discussions of teaching materials, while Indonesian and Javanese are associated with less formal contexts. Thus, Javanese was never used when he explained teaching materials. Abdul also demonstrated strategic use of different languages for different pedagogical purposes, which resonates with Garcia et al.'s (2017) description of translanguaging pedagogical strategies. However, this alternating strategy in minimal speech was less comprehensible to Abdul's students than Abdul's alternating strategy in sustained speech (see Table 4)

The classroom observations in Fitri's class also recorded that she alternately drew English and Indonesian words in her minimal speeches, as exemplified in Excerpt 4.

Extract 4.

Student1 : *Permisi, Bu. Kami mahasiswa pindahan* [Excuse me, Ma'am. We are the transfer students.]

Fitri : *Kelompok berapa? Sudah* joined any group? [Which group? Have you joined any group?]

Student2 : *Saya sudah dapat kelompok, Bu.* [I have already joined a group, Ma'am.]

Fitri : *Oh, sudah.* [Oh, you have got a group]. Please sit *sama kelompoknya* [with your group.]

The practice "*Oh, sudah*. You can sit sama *kelompoknya.*" expressed two ideas: confirming that the students had already joined a group and directing them to sit with their group. The first idea was expressed through Indonesian words (*Oh, sudah*), while the second idea was expressed through a combination of English words (You can sit) and Indonesian words (*sama kelompoknya*). This practice shows an alternating strategy in translanguaging in which an idea is expressed in one language and another. This alternating strategy occurred in Fitri's minimal speeches and seems more comprehensible to her students than her fluid translanguaging strategy in sustained speeches (see Table 4).

Fluid Drawing in Sustained Speech

An example of the teachers' fluid translanguaging strategy in a sustained speech is Excerpt 3, where Fitri explains how students should prepare a lesson plan.

Extract 5.

Fitri : So, syllabus *itu kurikulum yang dipakai di sekolah* [is curriculum that is used at school]. *Jadi* [So] you have to check the syllabus *kira-kira apakah topik yang Anda berikan itu dipakai dalam kelasnya* [to predict if the topic that you provide will be used in the class]. *Maksudnya,* [it means that,] young learners *itu kelas berapa, itu yang bahasa Inggris di* [in which grade is the one taught in English in] elementary? *Mulai kelas empat kalau ga salah ya?* [It starts from the fourth grade if I am not mistaken, right?] *Kelas empat atau lima enam gitu sudah masuk* [Grade four or five six it is]. *Kalau SMP sama ya* [If it is j unior h igh school, it is the same, right], compulsory subject, *jadi kalau Anda mereka-reka sendiri itu juga* [so if you create it by yourself, it is also] impossible because you have to get in touch with the real curriculum.

Extract 5 portrays Fitri's translanguaging strategy that employs a fluid drawing of linguistic features from English and Indonesian in sustained speech, which occurs in sentences such as "So, syllabus *itu kurikulum yang dipakai di sekolah* [is a curriculum that is used at school]." English words (So, syllabus) and Indonesian words (*itu kurikulum yang dipakai di sekolah)* were fluidly drawn to construct an idea within a sentence. This action rapidly happened in other sentences that constructed a sustained speech. From the classroom observation, this strategy dominates Fitri's translanguaging. However, this strategy does not seem to facilitate students' comprehension because it gained the lowest mean score compared to the other two strategies rated by students through the comprehensibility rating scale (see Table 4) discussed in the following subheading.

During the stimulated recall interviews, Fitri explained that she was unaware of her language practice, including translanguaging, because it happened spontaneously and unplanned. In one of the interview sessions, she stated: "*I did not realize when the languages are mixed. It was spontaneous. Using Indonesian feels liberating to me. Sometimes I don't know how to say some Indonesian terms in English. So, translanguaging happened.*"This statement indicates that terminology also signals Fitri to shift her language, aligning with Garcia et al.'s (2017) description of translanguaging shifts to address content and language needs that may not be explicitly outlined in the lesson plan. Fitri's translanguaging demonstrates a pragmatic orientation, centering on practical considerations of personal comfort. However, this strategy does not facilitate students' comprehension because it gained the lowest mean score compared to the other two strategies (see Table 4). The teachers' strategies, as multilingual speakers, to make sense of their multilingual reality may vary from one speaker to another since the complexities of the considerations underlying their translanguaging may depend on their point of view. The varied strategies in this study can be seen from the dissimilar strategies employed by Fitri and Abdul in their translanguaging. Fitri employed mainly a fluid strategy in sustained speeches involving linguistic features drawn from English and Indonesian. At the same time, Abdul employed mainly an alternating strategy in his sustained speeches by drawing linguistic features from English, Indonesian, and Javanese.

Nevertheless, both teachers practiced alternating strategies in their minimal speeches by drawing only linguistic features from English and Indonesian. Their varied translanguaging strategies attest that multilingual speakers have broader options of linguistic and semiotic resources to make and convey meaning than monolingual speakers can draw upon (Garcia, 2009a; García & Wei, 2014). Therefore, further investigation focusing on the point of view of students, as the teachers' interlocutors, was conducted to verify whether the speakers' intentions were accepted, which was indicated by the intelligibility and comprehensibility of their translanguaging to their interlocutors.

Comprehensibility of the Teachers' Translanguaging Practices

Comprehensibility ratings of Fitri's and Abdul's translanguaging strategies were performed by students' ratings on their teachers' translanguaging samples taken from each of the five classroom meetings, respectively. Random sampling was done due to the number of teachers' translanguaging in

each classroom meeting and the students' limited time availability. This process resulted in varied numbers of translanguaging rated in every meeting, as presented in Table 3. Table 3 informs that Fitri's total translanguaging sample is 14, which consists of 10 practices belonging to the fluid strategy in sustained speech, three practices belonging to the alternating strategy in minimal speech, and one practice belonging to the alternating strategy in sustained speech. Abdul's translanguaging sample is 21, consisting of four practices belonging to the fluid strategy in sustained speech, eight to the alternating strategy in minimal speech, and nine to the alternating strategy in sustained speech.

Then, five students from each class rated each translanguaging strategy using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 4. A score of 0 is given when the students do not know what the speaker is saying. A score of 1 is given when they think they know it, but it is hard to understand the practice. A score of 2 is when they think they know what the speaker is saying; however, it is pretty hard to understand the practice. A score of 3 is when they know what the speaker is saying; it is easy to understand the practice. Finally, a score of 4 is when they know what the speaker is saying, and it is really easy to understand the message. Further, the comprehensibility of the 14 occurrences employing fluid strategy in sustained speech, 11 practices employing alternating strategy in minimal speech, and 10 practices employing alternating strategy in sustained speech (see Table 3) was examined using the mean scores (see Table 4).

Table 3
The Number of Teachers' Translanguaging Strategies Rated in Every Meeting

Teacher	Meeting	Translanguaging strategy			Total
		Fluid strategy in sustained speech	Alternating strategy in minimal speech	Alternating strategy in sustained speech	
Fitri	1	0	1	0	1
	2	3	0	1	4
	3	2	0	0	2
	4	4	0	0	4
	5	1	2	0	3
	Total	10	3	1	**14**
Abdul	1	0	1	1	2
	2	3	0	3	6
	3	1	0	1	2
	4	0	5	1	6
	5	0	2	3	5
	Total	4	8	9	**21**

Table 4
The Mean Score of the Translanguaging Strategies

Translanguaging strategy	N	Score	Mean
Fluid sustained speech	70	179	2.55
Alternating minimal speech	55	164	2.98
Alternating sustained speech	50	178	3.56

Table 4 presents that the fluid strategy in sustained translanguaging speeches has the lowest mean score compared to the other two strategies. It means that this strategy is the least comprehensible for students. The students' responses to the open-ended questions indicated that the teachers' way of stating a word or phrase in English and continuing to use Indonesian to make a point caused a distraction during the students' effort to understand the meaning. It made the students think that the teacher was less capable of using English to explain the point. When this distraction happens repetitively, the students feel annoyed, uninterested, and bored. This boredom affects their comprehension as they lose focus. These findings indicate that accommodating spontaneous translanguaging in classrooms, as signalled by Garcia (2009b), may not benefit students' learning when teachers do not carefully observe students' reactions during the learning process. Garcia (2009a) signified that translanguaging can be done by any bi/multilingual speaker, regardless of language proficiency. However, the finding of this study suggests that teachers' translanguaging should be performed by proficient bi/multilingual language teachers when it comes to language learning classroom contexts. This study agrees with Williams' (2002) and Baker's (2001) argument that translanguaging should be done by bi/multilingual individuals with a certain level of language proficiency.

Table 4 also showed that the alternating strategy in minimal speech was more comprehensible to students than the fluid strategy in sustained speech. This might indicate that using a language to express a complete idea before following it with another idea expressed in another language is more easily understood than

comprehending an idea expressed using more than one language. The students mentioned in their responses to the open-ended questions that the teachers' use of more than one language to express an idea can sometimes confuse them, as they are confused about the context of the discussion. They are distracted by whether to understand the discussion in English or Indonesian contexts. This notion resonates with Mahboob and Dutcher's (2014) idea of shared linguistic code and shared contextual knowledge as the key components of communicative flexibility on which language proficiency should be based. He posited that individuals' ability to communicate with their interlocutors is affected by their understanding of the linguistic practices of their interlocutors. However, communication is an interactive activity that aims to reach a mutual understanding, and its success is linked to the context in which it takes place (Mahboob & Dutcher, 2014). This study indicates that the alternating strategy in minimal speech is more comprehensible than the fluid strategy in sustained speech. However, this strategy is less comprehensible than the alternating strategy in sustained speech. This might be caused by the limited context provided in minimal speech.

Lastly, the alternating strategy in the teachers' sustained translanguaging speeches is the most comprehensible for the students. Students admitted that they might not get all of what the teachers elaborate on using English. Still, the teachers' restatement or conclusion provided in Indonesian facilitates them in getting a more precise understanding and confirming what they have understood. They also added that this strategy can help them evaluate their comprehension and how they process information because they can learn what points they have understood correctly and what points they still made mistakes at without worrying about being judged. It creates a safe zone for them to learn from their mistakes. These findings relate to the benefit of translanguaging, which can provide emotional support, reduce anxiety, and create safe spaces (Zhang, 2021). The students also mentioned that in the alternating strategy in sustained speeches, the teachers explain a topic in English and provide examples in Indonesian. Providing Indonesian examples helps them relate the topic to its realisation in the Indonesian context. This practice helps students understand the subject matter and familiarises them with English as a learned language. It relates to the benefits of translanguaging to mediate meaning (Emilia & Hamied, 2022).

The teachers' selection of specific languages (English and Indonesian) as the linguistic codes they share with their students reflects their efforts to be comprehensible. It resonates with Smith and Nelson (2019), positing that mutual comprehension among English users is likely to be enhanced by their familiarity with the English spoken by the speech community where they are staying. This familiarity tags along the shared linguistic code among interlocutors (Mahboob & Dutcher, 2014), which is underscored as one of the fundamental criteria to redefine language proficiency in multilingual settings where language proficiency should be considered a dynamic rather than a static notion (Mahboob & Dutcher, 2014). However, this study showed that using the shared linguistic codes could result in dissimilar comprehensibility when used in different strategies. This indicates that strategies for employing the shared linguistic code in practice contribute to ease of comprehension. Although comprehensibility is not the sole work of speakers or listeners because it should result from the interaction between interlocutors (Smith & Nelson, 2019), teachers need to seek the best strategy to maximize their students' comprehension.

Comprehensibility among multilingual interlocutors could be challenging without shared contextual knowledge (Mahboob & Dutcher, 2014). Thus, shared contextual knowledge becomes another criterion essential to redefining language proficiency in multilingual contexts (Mahboob & Dutcher, 2014). Translanguaging practiced by the teachers in this study indicates the teachers' efforts to equip students with context by providing explanations and examples (see Excerpt 3, 5, and 6) using translanguaging so that the flow of the explanation is not interrupted (see Excerpt 1). This practice facilitates students' understanding of the topic, as discussed. Nevertheless, it is crucial to plan translanguaging strategies that enhance students' familiarity with English as the target language. It should be highlighted that it is not the native-speaker's English that students need to be familiar with. Instead, it is the English that they will likely encounter in their real life as a means of communicating their ideas to other English speakers. These findings should contribute to the explorations of criteria for translanguaging assessment that was still very limitedly explored as learned from Lu et al's. (2025) systematic review of research in translanguaging. While previous studies have argued that classroom translanguaging strategies can foster multilingual learners' language and literacy development (David et al., 2022; Li & Qu, 2024; Wawire & Barnes-Story, 2023), more empirical research on translanguaging-oriented assessment is needed to characterize the effectiveness and impact of these approaches.

The multi-method and contextually grounded approach to researching translanguaging employed in this study is aimed to get a better point of view in understanding classroom translanguaging practices and its comprehensibility measure. This is found to be relevant to the recent studies on classroom translanguaging that increasingly used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods (Lu et

al., 2025). Common quantitative tools include pre- and post- test and performance-based tests (Lu et al., 2025) to measure learning gains and understanding. Qualitative measures such as interviews and classroom observations are used to capture perception of comprehensibility and the nuanced way students leverage their full linguistic repertoire (Fei & Weekly, 2022; Wangdi & Rai, 2024; Wong, 2024). This multi-method approach can facilitate researchers to get a comprehensive understanding of translanguaging as a dynamic and contextual practice, as an effort to respond to the growing needs of assessment that moves beyond monolingual standards.

CONCLUSION

This study examines teachers' translanguaging strategies and their comprehensibility to their students. It was conducted in two courses taught at the English department of a university in Indonesia. Each course was represented by one teacher and five students recruited voluntarily. Data were collected from ten classroom meetings, ten sessions of V-SRIs with the teachers, and 5-point Likert scale comprehensibility rating sheets filled out by students. Data pertinent to teachers' translanguaging strategy were collected and analyzed using Spada's COLT Part B (Spada, 2019), focusing on teachers' language choice and speech during their translanguaging practices, and Gass & Mackey's (2017) stimulated-recall interview analysis procedure.

The analyses revealed that the teachers' language choice is affected by their consideration of their students' potential understanding, which led them to draw linguistic features from English and Indonesian. However, one of the teachers occasionally included Javanese in his translanguaging to make a joke. In their translanguaging, the teachers can fluidly draw linguistic features from the chosen languages to complete an idea. On other occasions, a language is used to express an idea, followed by another idea expressed in another language. This alternating strategy occurred in sustained or minimal speech, while the fluid strategy only occurred in sustained speech. Further, the students' comprehension of their teachers' translanguaging strategies, examined through the mean score, showed that the alternating strategy in sustained speech has the highest mean score, followed by the alternating strategy in minimal speech and the fluid strategy in sustained speech. It means that the alternating strategy in sustained speech is the most comprehensible, followed by the alternating strategy in minimal speech, and the fluid strategy in sustained speech is the least comprehensible. These findings implied that the recent concept of translanguaging, which accommodates spontaneous, unplanned translanguaging within classroom contexts, may not always benefit students' learning. One of the motives of the recent concept of translanguaging is to reach comprehensible communication that is not defined by native-speakerism. However, its implementation in language classrooms needs to be further investigated to maximize its benefits for students' success in learning.

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