

# Investigating Translanguaging in English Classroom Interaction at Elementary Private School in Medan using Rabbidge Framework

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**Abstract.** Classroom interaction plays an important role in learning experience. Through interaction, learners are able to develop their comprehension related to learning material. In English learning classroom interaction, language plays important rule to develop language skill and understand subject matter. This article utilizes translanguaging perspective in capturing classroom interaction at elementary private school in Medan. Translanguaging perspective views languages as one unified repertoire in which all linguistics resources are available and active in communication interaction. This article aims to investigate translanguaging practices in elementary private school in Medan using descriptive analysis and Rabbidge framework in analyzing teacher and student's utterances using translanguaging. Data collecting from classroom interaction was done using audio recording. The findings showed that translanguaging was used in lesson learning phase within IRF turn. Weak Classification was seen in the classroom interaction with strong framing from teacher as the dominant actor of interaction. This article showed in holistic view how translanguaging done English learning classroom interaction.

**Keywords:** Translanguaging, Classroom Interaction, English Learning, EFL Elementary Students

## 1 Introduction

Classroom interaction played important role in learning experience [1]. Interaction between educator and learners encourages classroom discussion and build learners curiosity related to the learning topic. Through interaction, learners should be able to develop their comprehension about the subject of the study and reflected it into the real world. Through interaction, participant can be bridged between theory and practice. Walsh [1] emphasizes that understanding interactional processes is key points to have a better learning opportunity.

Most classroom interactions are dominated by teacher centered approach, where the dominant characteristic are question and answer routines. Lynch [2] elaborates that teacher centered approach purposes in classroom interaction are used as a confirmation of learners understanding, comprehension checking, repetition, clarification request, rephrasing learner's utterance, completion and backtracking.

Language plays an important role in classroom interaction; hence it is the way to communicate between learners and educator, in this case students and teacher. Language is used to convey opinions, feelings, emotions [1]. Furthermore, language is communicated to express

concern and transacted goods and services. Moore et al. [3] emphasize students use of languages in classroom interaction that are categorized as bilingual or multilingual do not focus on the choice of words, instead they are focus on pre-consciously regulated utterances.

One of the recent terms regarding language and education is translanguaging. Moore et al. [3] state that translanguaging developed as part of critical proses of language practices. Furthermore, Moore et al. [3] emphasize that translanguaging concept is the multiplicity, fluidity, mobility, locality and globality of the resources deployed by individuals for engaging in complex meaning-making processes.

Translanguaging was first coined by Williams (as cited in Moore et al.[3]), initially stated as a development of language skills in high school that will benefit students in both language skill and deeper understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, Garcia and Wei [4] define translanguaging as a pedagogical practice that is essential for students to alternate between languages in productive and receptive use. Translanguaging views languages as social construction that shaped by people interaction, therefore languages a not an autonomous linguistic system that separated in each compartment of its user.

The research on translanguaging performed by Liando et al. [5] explore translanguaging in Junior High School in North Sulawesi. The study focused on translanguaging done by teacher. The study identified translanguaging type by lending code switching term and explained the impact of translanguaging done in EFL classroom.

This research objective is to investigate how translanguaging in classroom interaction using Rabbidge Framework. The research will focus on translanguaging done in classroom activities, by both teacher and students during English classroom interaction where the process of knowledge transfer happened. This research focuses not only to the teacher utterance that contain translanguaging but also students' responses in classroom interaction. By doing so, this research objective is to gain holistic view on translanguaging in classroom interaction is done. This study is different from previous research that focused only on teachers' utterance corresponding to translanguaging.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Translanguaging**

Translanguaging is defined as speakers' construction using original and interrelated discursive practice that make speakers complete language repertoire [4]. Translanguaging is used to encourage speaker's full linguistic repertoire in order to communicate without limiting its language choices. In translanguaging perspective, it is recognized the fluid and natural linguistics preferences that speakers have in communication.

Garcia and Wei [4] emphasize the term of languaging is the process done by individual that related to their social preferences and their language use in order to make meaning in their interaction to others. In regard of languaging, Wei in Moore et al. [3] recognizes that a speaker ability to communicate in more than one languages came from full utilization of individual linguistic and semiotic resources. Furthermore, Wei emphasizes that languaging means a process of construction reality rather that a system to communicate. From what Garcia and Wei propose of languaging then language practices done by individual to communicate and transfer code are done with complete linguistic repertoire drawn from each person that want to convey their messages or feelings. In conclusion, translanguaging tries to encounter traditional views of language that consider language as a fixed system.

Translanguaging provides a method to analyze complicated language practices of speakers that have more than one language available in their linguistic system as they communicated within a complex social differences and vary semiotic context with other speakers that also have many linguistic preferences [4]. Translanguaging facilitates the concept of people use language to communicate within their available linguistic repertoire fluidly. Translanguaging acknowledges the diversity of environment where people lived where complex cultural and social life affected their communication ability. Translanguaging is offering holistic perspective of how to capture multilingual communication.

Wei [6] conceptualizes translanguaging as a practical theory of language that view a process knowledge construction that done continuously and evolve simultaneously through experience and goes beyond what called as named languages. Garcia and Wei [4] emphasize that translanguaging embodies different perspective in understanding meaning-making and language practices.

Translanguaging firmly relates to many disciplines, such as, linguistic anthropology, ethnography, sociolinguistics, discourse studies and semiotics [7]. In linguistic anthropology, Duranti in Mazzaferro [7] explains translanguaging supports language as social and transformative practice that use individual to interact in rich linguistic environment. Rich linguistic environment can be describes as spaces of interaction between individual which have different social and culture that can be reflected on their linguistic system. In ethnography, translanguaging introduces point of view where languages is a social resources without clear boundaries that centers on individual in order to convey code within interaction with others. While in sociolinguistic disciplines, translanguaging seen as the study of multilingualism that views languages as a holistic entities in communication and the utilization of all linguistic features of the user to achieve communication aims [7].

Otheguy, et al. [8] argue from translanguaging perspective that there are no separation of languages in every individual but one unified repertoire in which all linguistic, symbolic resources, tools and knowledge are active and available in communication interaction. Translanguaging differs from traditional view on language in seeing individual capabilities using language is seen as separated entity but as a whole linguistic repertoire. Translanguaging views linguistic capabilities of individual as a cohesive and comprehensive set of resources that utilized in a communication. Finally, translanguaging introduces a paradigm shift to the dynamic and integrated nature of language to understand language use for expression and learning.

Nevertheless, Donley [9] emphasizes that translanguaging does not consider languages are irrelevant or problematic but languages must be understood as relevant from external or third person point of view. Furthermore, Blommaert and Rampton in Mazzaferro [7] argue that languages are ideological construction that tied to the rise of nation-state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fundamentally, translanguaging disrupts a classic structuralist understanding of language as a purely lexical or grammatical set of codes or rules [7]. Translanguaging according to Mazzaferro [7] challenges the view of fixed rules and set of grammatical codes in order to investigate the complexity of language use in the real-world situation.

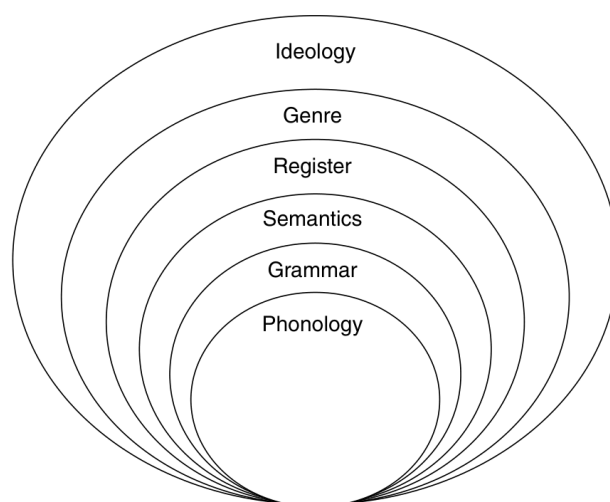
Garcia and Wei [4] stress that translanguaging able to accommodate traditional meaning making practice while promotes transdisciplinary perspective beyond conventional, hence translanguaging emerges from complex interaction of multilingual. Wei [6] concludes translanguaging stance as a specific theory of language that utilized integrated approach that focus on speakers' ability on communication using one's linguistics repertoires in term on social practice.

Garcia and Wei [4] conclude that translanguaging take position as languaging actions that refer to a political process of social and subjectivity transformation which resist the asymmetries of power that language and other meaning-making codes produce. Translanguaging emphasizes the dynamic process of languaging that transcends the traditional views of language and emphasizes the idea of fluid language use in the real word situation.

In order to analyze how translanguaging were done in the classroom, this research will use the framework proposed by Rabbidge [10] that utilized element from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) that introduced by Halliday, which is Genre Theory proposed by Martin (2009), Bernstein's Pedagogic Discourse theory (1990), and Sinclair and Coulthard's discourse analysis of Initiation Response Feedback (IRF) sequences (1975). Using Rabbidge [10] framework, this research is allowed to analyze classroom interaction under holistic view of social construct interaction in order to achieve classroom goal in different stages of lesson rather than use the named languages function in the analysis.

## 2.2 Rabbidge Framework

Rabbidge [10] proposes SFL as the first step to analyze translanguaging. SFL that first introduced by Halliday in 1979 has been widely use in applied linguistics disciplines. SFL treats language as a meaning-making system. Furthermore, SFL proposes a series of levels possibilities of meaning within multi-layered system of meanings, which each level realized through the other. The lower-levels meaning of language deeply influences by social context which are in the higher-levels meaning of language. From figure 1, the realization of meaning depends on higher-level which are ideology, genre and register, while lower-level of meaning realized in semantics, grammar and phonology.

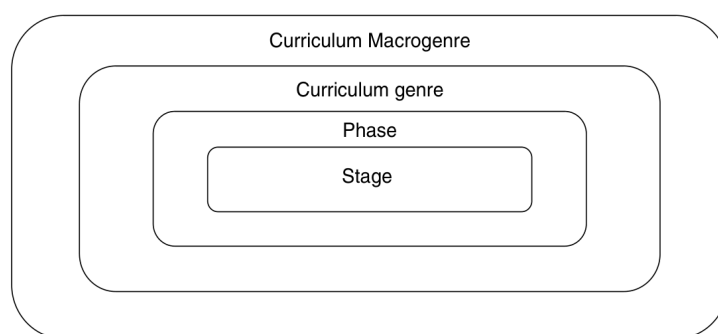


**Fig. 1.** Martin & Matthiessen's Stratified Theory of Context in SFL

Genre as defined by Martin in Rabbidge [10] is 'a recurrent configuration of meanings' that creates social borders within the use of language. The recurrent of meaning that described by Martin has the objective to meet specific social purposes that can be accomplished by using

patterns in specific context. The Genre within educational linguistics according to Martin in Rabbidge [10] is a staged, goal oriented social process. Genre is staged since it required more than one phase of meaning to realized it. Genre is goal-oriented because it has the objective of accomplished designated task. Finally, genre is social hence the need of interaction between individuals within the staged level.

Furthermore, Christie in Rabbidge [10] emphasizes that curriculum genre is the realization of school and classroom goals in a patterned way and staged level. While, classroom genre is classified as the embedded level of each staged of classroom interaction within other higher levels. Stage level is the smallest level in Curriculum Genre, followed by Phase level, Curriculum Genre and Curriculum Macrogenre.



**Fig. 2.** Embedded Stages of Curriculum Genres

Curriculum genres stage as in figure 2 is to signal the start of a new phase. For example, a stage of a phase that aim to introduce new vocabulary. Teacher might focus on practicing and presenting words and phares that is relevant to the lesson topic. Furthermore, the individual lesson topic that given to the students considered as the curriculum genres and each unit of lesson within the textbook considered as the curriculum macrogenre.

Rabbidge [10] in his framework proposed the sociological theory of pedagogic discourse proposed by Bernstein (1990) [10], [11] allows for an analysis of the social relations that emerge between the teachers and their students within curriculum genres. By using pedagogic discourse, this research can gain insights into language construction and negotiation used in relation to power and control. Some examples, how is teacher gives instructions, asks questions, or provides feedback can reveal underlying assumptions about authority, knowledge, and student participation. In other word, way students' responds, questions, or engagement in discussions can provide their roles and their relationship with the teacher.

Furthermore, Bernstein in Rabbidge [10], [11] proposes the recontextualization as the displacement of original context of social and power relation into the new virtual social and power relations of the classroom. There are to distinct term that translate the issues of power and control in classroom interaction into classification and framing.

Bernstein in Rabbidge [10], [11] refers Classification as the boundaries and insulation created between categories such as, class subjects, or life at home and in school. The boundaries between categories are socially constructed. Strong classification occurs when the relation between class subjects or life at home and in school is insignificant. In contrast, if the relation between those is significant then the classification is weak.

Berstein in Rabbidge [10], [11] refers Framing as to who is the person that controls the classroom. It is defined by representing the regulation of communication in the classroom. There

are five key points of control regarding framing, there are; the selection of the communication, the sequences of communication, the rate of communication acquisition, the criteria and the control of the social base. Strong framing can be indicated by transmitter, in this case is teacher, control over five key points of it and weak framing indicated by acquirers, in this case is students, control over classroom interaction.

In addition to Martin and Berstein theory, this research is utilized IRF sequences, introduced by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) [10], [12], in analyzing how translanguaging is done in classroom interaction. The IRF sequence stands for Initiation-Response-Feedback sequence that is common happened in traditional classroom interaction. The Initiation and Feedback sequence usually are dominated by teacher, while Response sequence dominated by students.

This research was done using qualitative research method and utilized case study as the approach. Data collection completed using observation and interview, capturing students and teacher utterances in classroom interaction. The phenomenon observed in eight classrooms' meetings in Elementary Private School in Medan. The data of this study was teacher's and students' utterance consist of translanguaging during English classroom interaction. Teacher's and students' utterances then analyzed to find out how translanguaging done in the classroom interaction.

Qualitative research emphasized the boundaries of studies that will be analyzed. This article focused on investigating translanguaging in English classroom interaction. There are several techniques in collecting data for qualitative research, which are; interview, observation, action research, focus meeting, and personal text. This research completed data collection by interview and audio recording. The data was captured using audio recording devices. The data was taken from four English classroom interaction in Elementary Private School in Medan.

Data analysis done after all four meeting of English classroom activities were done. Data analysis first step was data reduction, where the audio recording from English classroom interaction were break down into several parts. The researcher then pulled teacher's utterances then selected and analyzed using translanguaging framework proposed by Michael Rabbidge [10].

### 3 Findings and Discussion

In the finding, the first step of analysis, the data is transcribed into table one and categorized each of teacher's and students' utterances into IRF label. Additionally, each segment of classroom interaction categorized into smaller unit based on Genre theory proposed by Martin (2009) as in Rabbidge [10], [13], which are Curriculum Genre, Phase and Stage.

The analysis used classification and framing to show how teacher manage power and control and students' responses in classroom interaction. Classification and framing that used by teacher enable students to use their full linguistic repertoire in order to participate in the learning process.

**Table. 1.** Data from Classroom Interaction

IRF	Start of Curriculum genre
Start of phase 1 <i>1<sup>st</sup> stage</i>	

- I T: Okay, our last *materi*, our last topic talk about? *Sampai halaman berapa terakhir?*  
 Okay, we are going to remember our last topic *itu tentang apa?* Much, many and?  
 [Okay, our last lesson, our last topic talk about? What page were we last time? Okay,  
 we are going to remember our last topic that is? Much, many and?]
- R S: Enough.
- F T: Too much, too many, enough, not enough.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> stage

- I T: Okay. What is the differences between this? If we talk about quantities, *biasanya kita membahas tentang ini kan? Ketika kita berbicara tentang banyaknya, sedikitnya, tanpa harus menghitung jumlahnya. Begitukan? Cuma kalau kamu sudah tahu* specific number of your things, *gak usah lagi. Misalkan*, there are ... What does it mean? *Kalau misalkan* sentences *nya*, there are too many books here. What does it mean? Enough and not enough. *Ayo, Giordano.*  
 [Okay. What are the differences between this? If we talk about quantities, what do we discuss then? When we talked about the number of quantities, large or small without knowing the exact numbers, isn't so? But if you already know the specific number of your things, you do not need to use it. b there are ... What does it mean? If we the sentence is; there are too many books here. What does it mean? Enough and not enough. Read, Giordano.]
- R S: Enough is use to express that something is sufficient and it is use for countable and uncountable noun.
- F T: Yes. Use to express something that is sufficient *atau cukup.*  
 [Yes. (it is) use to express something that is sufficient or enough.]

#### 3<sup>th</sup> stage

- I T: *Biasanya* enough *itu artinya apa?*  
 [What is the definition of enough?]
- R S: *Cukup.*  
 [Sufficient]
- F/I T: I have enough money to buy Pajero Sport.
- R S: Hmm... <a lot of enthusiast response from students>
- F T: *Saya punya cukup uang, sudah cukup.*  
 [I have enough money. Sufficient.]

#### 4<sup>th</sup> stage

- I T: *Berapa* Pajero?  
 [How much is Pajero?]
- R S: *Lima ratus juta.*  
 [Five hundred.]
- F/I T: Five hundred *apa?* Million? Juta kan?  
 [Five hundred what? Million? Million, isn't it?]
- R S: *Lima ratus juta.*  
 [Five hundred million.]
- F T: Okay, five hundred million. *Cukup.* It is also use for countable and uncountable noun. *Kalau* too much and too many *itu dipisahkan, kalau* enough *itu boleh.* *Pokoknya* countable or uncountable noun, *boleh.* If you want to use enough.

[Okay, five hundred million. Enough. It is also use for countable and uncountable noun. We have it separated for too much and too many, but for enough it is not separated. We can use enough for countable or uncountable noun. If you want to use enough.]

End of phase 1

Start of phase 2

*1<sup>st</sup> stage*

- I T: Okay. Not enough. Giordano.  
R S: Not enough is use to express something is less that what we need or want.  
F T: Okay, is less, *berarti* the opposite of enough.  
[Okay, is less, so it is mean the opposite of enough]

*2<sup>nd</sup> stage*

- I T: *Kalau enough tadi cukup atau sufficient, berarti ini?*  
[If enough is sufficient then this means what?]  
R S: *tidak cukup.*  
[Not sufficient]  
F T: less than we need or we want.

*3<sup>th</sup> stage*

- I T: *Kurang dari yang kita butuhkan atau yang kita inginkan.* It means *tidak cukup maka kita gunakan* not enough. *Begitu dia.* Okay. *Penggunaan kata* too much, too many, enough and not enough *di dalam sebuah kalimat*, do you understand? *Berarti dia kita letakkan* after?  
[Less than what we need or what we want. It means that we use not enough for something that not sufficient. That's it. Okay. Do you understand the use of too much, too many, enough and not enough in a sentence? We put it after what?]  
R S: Subject.  
F/I T: Subject and?  
R S: verb, to be  
F/I T: Subject and?  
R S: to be.  
F T: Yes. To be *lah*. You *pake* don't, do, is and then *kamu masukkan*, you put it in the middle of your sentence.  
[Yes, it is to be. You can use don't, do, is and then you put it there, you put it in the middle of your sentence.]

*5<sup>th</sup> stage*

- I T: *Kamu letakkan dia di tengah sebelum ob?*  
[You put it in the middle before ob...]  
R S: Object.  
F T: We have enough time to do our exercise. We don't have enough time to do our exercise. *Contoh nya. Seperti itu dia.*  
[We have enough time to do our exercise. We don't have enough time to do our exercise. That is the example.]

*6<sup>th</sup> stage*



- I T: Okay, is there any question so far? *Ada pertanyaan?*  
[Okay, is there any question so far? Is there any question?]
- R S: No.
- F T: Okay, now open your exercise book. I'm going to give some exercise on our topic today.  
End of phase  
End of curriculum genre
- 

These data were taken from the observation during classroom interaction from Elementary level of Global Prima School in Medan. The data presented in table 1 is the excerpt of classroom interaction that contain translanguaging. The researchers then analyzed this data and put in into Rabbidge suggested framework to analyze translanguaging. Table 1 contains of one curriculum genre with two phase, phase 1 contains of 5 stages and phase 2 contains of 7 stages.

The data from phase 1, state 1 and state 2 is talking the introduction of lesson topic. In this data, teacher control in classroom interaction is very dominant which can be classified into strong framing. From IRF sequences analysis, the data shown that teacher control over initiation sequences is very central and leave little space for response from students.

Furthermore, the data showed how teacher translanguaging during classroom interaction in order to deliver lesson topic. Teacher is utilized her linguistic repertoire in explaining the essence of classroom genre. Teacher use question and command to interact with students.

The data from phase 1, state 3 and 4, teacher done translanguaging in elaborating how to utilize enough in the sentence. Teacher used her knowledge and social experience into the classroom interaction, in addition, students also understand and comprehend the example used by teacher in the explanation. The school is located in Medan area where most of the people know that Pajero as one of the expensive cars that people can buy. In this learning phase from the data shown the writer concluded that teacher use her full linguistic repertoire to explain about the lesson topic. Furthermore, teacher use strong relation between lesson topic and students' social life and experience led to weak classification in classroom interaction can be seen through the data.

The data from phase 1, stage 3 and 4, strong framing can be seen. Teacher fully controls the classroom interaction. Through IRF analysis from the data teacher initiation and feedback are dominated classroom interaction and only small amount of response can be seen from the data.

Rabbidge framework provided the holistic analysis of translanguaging in classroom interaction. From the data in table 1, this research is utilized Rabbidge framework and analyzed translanguaging. The first step is done with data reduction and identified the classroom genre from source of data. The next step is done with analyzing the data and put it into Curriculum Genre Phase and stage, furthermore the analysis finalized with the implementation of IRF sequences to the data. The final step is done with analysis of the interaction through Pedagogic theory that proposed by Berstein.

From the data, the writer concluded that translanguaging is done in every classroom interaction. Weak classification that can be seen in the 3<sup>th</sup> stage of phase one classroom genre allow the student comprehend the learning material significantly. Strong framing is seen in all the data through IRF sequences. These findings are supported by Otheguy et al. [8]statement that translanguaging understand that to have a fluid communication, cohesive and comprehensive use of linguistic capabilities of all participant are needed.

By languaging it means that language is not just a system to communicate but a process of constructing reality. Language practices as an individual means that an action of draw the

complete linguistic repertoire and move between languages to communicate and transfer code effectively.

## 4 Conclusion

This research concludes that translanguaging in classroom interaction allow teacher and students to use their full linguistic repertoire to validate their comprehension on learning subject. In addition, teacher ability to elaborate learning material with student's real-world experience reflected in the data. Translanguaging in classroom interaction can help teacher and students create supportive learning environment that will enable learners to achieve deeper understanding of the material. furthermore, translanguaging enable students to navigate and integrate multiple linguistic system that can enhance their cognitive flexibility and creative thinking.

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