

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes translanguaging practice and teachers' perception of teaching young learners, especially elementary school students at Singaraja Montessori School. This chapter has discussed the research background, problem identification, research question, research objectives, research scope, and research significance.

1.1 Research Background

The concept of translanguaging has become increasingly relevant in educational settings, especially in bilingual and multilingual classrooms. Translanguaging in an educational context refers to the practice where students use multiple languages for communication. This approach has been recognized for its potential to support bilingual and multilingual learners by allowing them to flexibly use their linguistic repertoire rather than confining them to a single language to support learning (García & Wei, 2014). According to García & Lin (2016) the translanguaging approach offers several educational benefits. It enables a deeper understanding of subjects of material by allowing students to use their L1 to support the learning, which is encouraged through the processing of the material. Translanguaging supports the development of weaker languages by providing opportunities to use them in academic contexts. It also strengthens the connection between home and school by recognizing and appreciating the language used at

home, thus building teacher-student relationships (Chaika, 2023). In addition, translanguaging creates an inclusive learning environment where all students can develop. However, while translanguaging offers many theoretical benefits, its practical application in the classroom largely depends on teachers' perceptions and their understanding of its role in education (Khan et al., 2024).

According to Cameron (2001), teaching languages to young learners involves understanding both the cognitive and social aspects of language development. Young children learn best through play, interaction, and engaging activities that make the learning process enjoyable and meaningful. It is essential to create a supportive environment where children feel safe to experiment with new language skills and integrate their learning with everyday experiences. According to Montessori (2016), children learn best in an environment that supports exploration and independence. The Montessori method highlights the importance of experiential learning in encouraging responsibility and independence, aligning education with the developmental stage of each child to influence students' practical lives. Using the Montessori curriculum, teachers as educators cannot force students to develop at the same pace and with the same abilities, but must adapt to the needs and developmental abilities of each student (Hasanah et al., 2024).

Language plays an important role in teaching young learners. It is used to communicate, understand others, and learn. In the context of bilingual and multilingual education, translanguaging can create a relaxed classroom atmosphere, reducing the pressure to communicate, encouraging active participation, and boosting student confidence (Nagy, 2018). Teachers' views of translanguaging are important because they impact how they implement it during the learning process.

According to Lewis et al. (2012), there are two types of translanguaging: teacher-directed translanguaging and pupil-directed translanguaging. This type of translanguaging is based on observations and analyses of classroom interactions. By understanding types of translanguaging, educators can observe students' needs and help teachers facilitate better communication among students, allowing them to express their understanding and misconceptions that can create a conducive learning atmosphere (Lewis et al., 2012)

Many research studies have examined translanguaging in an educational context. They focus on teachers' perceptions of translanguaging and its impact on learning. Some research studied teachers' perceptions (Batool et al., 2022; Olson., 2023; Silalahi & Santoso., 2023; Yolandana et al., 2023; and Yusri et al., 2022). These research subjects are in higher education, such as senior high school and college. The research aims to understand how teachers view translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy, how these views impact classroom practice, and the role of translanguaging. These studies show that teachers have various views of translanguaging activity applied in the learning process for higher education.

However, there is still a lack of research that explores translanguaging in the context of teaching young learners, especially at the elementary school level. This is a crucial stage in a child's education, as early language experiences significantly shape children's academic and social development. Teachers at this level play an essential role in guiding how languages are used in the classroom. Therefore, understanding their perceptions of translanguaging is vital, as it will influence how they conduct the class, respond to students' language use, and create an inclusive bilingual environment. This gap encourages the researcher to examine

translanguaging practice in the classroom and how teachers perceive its use at the elementary level. Through this research, it is expected to provide new insight into how translanguaging is practiced for young learners, which remains underexplored in previous studies.

Based on preliminary observations conducted, the researcher observed the teaching and learning process carried out by the teachers at Singaraja Montessori School. This school has students from diverse linguistic backgrounds and has different native languages, which can be a challenge in language comprehension. From a short interview with a teacher, some foreign students cannot understand Indonesian well, while some Indonesian students are not fluent and struggle with English. As a bilingual school using both English and Indonesian, teachers have to bridge the language gaps to support students' learning. The practice of translanguaging at Singaraja Montessori school is not the same as public school because of the different environment and students' native languages. At public school, translanguaging is used only for specific courses, mostly for English or bilingual courses (Putra & Arifin, 2022). Based on the interview, teachers use translanguaging during the teaching and learning process, not only in the specific lesson but mostly for all of the lesson as a communication tool, which is an interesting case to discuss.

It is essential to explore an in-depth understanding of how translanguaging is practiced and perceived within a specific educational setting. Identifying translanguaging practice, especially the types of translanguaging, provides in-depth information into how translanguaging is used as a learning strategy in a real bilingual environment. Understanding teachers' perceptions can also inform the

teachers' views of the use of translanguaging, and the impact of the translanguaging strategy, whether it can help or hinder students' development. From these study findings, teachers can identify and adapt teaching strategies to support students with diverse language backgrounds to understand the subject matter optimally.

Singaraja Montessori School has three classes, which are one class for pre-primary school and two classes for the elementary school. There are lower primary class and upper primary class. This school uses the Montessori curriculum, in which developing students' practical lives is the learning goal. The researcher chose to observe the upper primary class for this research because it fulfils the criteria. For pre-primary school, teachers mostly use fun and creative activities to match the students' needs. The upper primary class is suitable for this research because this class actively interacts and communicates compared to the lower elementary class. Students in the upper primary class are 9 to 12 years old. This represents a stage where children begin to express themselves more actively using language, making it an ideal setting to observe translanguaging practice. The researcher observed the upper primary class to get information about the types of translanguaging and interviewed two teachers who teach the upper primary class to get information about their perception of its use for learning. By addressing the current gap in translanguaging research at the elementary level, this study seeks to contribute new insights into how bilingual classrooms for young learners can be more effectively supported. The findings are expected to inform educators in developing an inclusive learning environment that enables students to communicate confidently and succeed academically.

1.2 Problem Identification

In the context of education, language is not only used for communicating and giving information but also as a medium for developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and exploring new concepts. In bilingual education, translanguaging practice can enhance the participation of students who may not understand the language of instruction that differs from the student's native language. In this learning environment, translanguaging is used naturally to bridge the language gap.

Singaraja Montessori School is a bilingual school for young learners that implements bilingual education. In this context, translanguaging is used naturally as a communication tool to match the students' needs. This is also part of the school curriculum, which is the Montessori curriculum that is designed to follow the child's development. Based on preliminary observation and short interviews with a teacher, some Indonesian students struggle with English, while foreign students face challenges in understanding Indonesian, especially in subjects like Indonesian language, PPKN, and Biology. The role of the teachers is to be the students' facilitators and ensure the learning process runs effectively.

Despite translanguaging in global education, there is limited research on how bilingual elementary school teachers in Indonesia perceive and apply translanguaging in the classroom. Understanding teachers' perceptions of translanguaging and identifying the types of translanguaging practices, whether teacher-directed or pupil-directed translanguaging, is essential, as these perceptions influence teaching strategies and classroom interaction. This research aims to fill this gap by analyzing types of translanguaging practices and investigating teachers'

perceptions of translanguaging within the context of a bilingual elementary school setting.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

The findings of this study are limited by its specific focus on the upper-primary class at Singaraja Montessori School. Due to the specific context of this study, these findings may not be applicable to other schools or different educational settings. Furthermore, the limited observation period only captured a brief snapshot of the translanguaging practices. Future research should address these issues by including a broader range of schools and conducting longer-term observation to gain a more comprehensive understanding of translanguaging.

1.4 Research Question

1. What types of translanguaging practices are implemented at Singaraja Montessori School
2. What are teachers' perceptions regarding the usage of students' first language in the learning process at Singaraja Montessori School?

1.5 Purpose of the Research

This research aims to discover the translanguaging practice, focusing on the types of translanguaging used and teachers' perceptions at Singaraja Montessori School. Based on this background, the purpose of this research is:

1. To analyze the types of translanguaging practices implemented at Singaraja Montessori School
2. To investigate teachers' perceptions of students' first language usage at Singaraja Montessori School

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this research lies in the contributions it may offer to the field of education, theoretically and practically. It is expected to offer new insight into translanguaging for young learners, particularly in bilingual classroom settings.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study provides a theoretical contribution by exploring the types of translanguaging practice: teacher-directed and pupil-directed translanguaging used in the bilingual classroom setting for young learners. By identifying this practice, the researcher offers information on how translanguaging is used in real classroom interactions, particularly in the context of young learners' bilingual education. Furthermore, this study investigates teachers' perceptions of the use of students' first language and translanguaging practice. These insights contribute literature of translanguaging, especially in early education. This research adds depth to theoretical discussions on the role of translanguaging in supporting language development and learning in bilingual settings.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

In this chapter, the practical significance of this study in the context of learning and knowledge development is outlined. Practically, the findings are expected to provide insight into the implementation of teacher-directed and pupil-directed translanguaging in bilingual classroom, especially at Singaraja Montessori School. Understanding the practices, along with teachers' perception of students' first language use, may support the improvement of classroom strategies and contribute to the development of bilingual learning environments.

1. For the teacher

This study can help teachers understand how translanguaging supports learning in bilingual classrooms. The findings may encourage teachers to be more open to the use of students' native language as a part of learning to help students understand the material and feel more confident. It can also give teachers ideas for their teaching strategies that suit the needs of bilingual young learners.

2. For the Future Research

The findings of this study can be used as a reference for future research on translanguaging in similar bilingual school contexts. It offers basic insights into the type of translanguaging practices found in bilingual young learners' classrooms. This study may help the readers to get information about how translanguaging can bridge the language barrier in elementary school students. This research is expected to help researchers develop their research ideas about translanguaging studies in the future. Researchers can explore translanguaging

in depth or examine the connection between the Montessori method and translanguaging practice at Singaraja Montessori School. This study can also give insight to the researcher with a similar topic in a public school.

