

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The notion that Indonesian students had difficulty learning study material at school is still true to this day. English classes are no exception, considering Indonesians learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This claim is further supported by studies that find Indonesian EFL students have difficulties during the English learning process (Andika & Mitsalina, 2020; Susanto et al., 2020; Tukan, 2024). Moreover, these difficulties align with the learner autonomy issue that Wiraningsih and Santosa (2020) find, regarding students' dependent tendency on the teachers. The findings of the previously mentioned studies include difficulties in vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension. These difficulties especially worsen as Susanto et al. (2020) found that different English proficiency among students is one major contributing factor to this issue.

Moreover, these difficulties or challenges can be found at any educational level in Indonesia, whether it is middle school, high school, vocational high school, or even university level. These difficulties cannot be ignored, especially for vocational high school students, as they are guided to learn skills that should be immediately applicable to their future occupations. This concern is further supported by Reswari et al. (2022) who highlight the need for English learning

materials that are relevant to students' future workplace and instruction that fits the students' language proficiency level in vocational high schools. Similarly, Ardiansyah (2023) added that better teaching strategies are necessary for EFL vocational high school classrooms, in the hope of making vocational high school graduates perform better in their future occupations.

Currently, Indonesian vocational high school students face various challenges and difficulties in their English studies. One such difficulty is students' speaking skills (Milania et al., 2022). In addition, Zannah and Nurlaili (2023) added that these difficulties also include a lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and emotions of uneasiness and shyness when using English. Similar difficulties have also been documented among senior vocational high school students by Nasihin and Oktarini (2022) which revealed that students perceive English as difficult and unnecessary for their future and struggle with confidence, motivation, and its practice. These difficulties continue to exist as students progress to higher education, where psychological emotions, academic English, and online learning become additional challenges (Winnie, 2023).

Based on the discussed issue, teachers have tried a lot of teaching strategies to deal with these rising students' challenges and difficulties in the context of EFL vocational high schools. Some of the strategies might have been done deliberately to address classroom problems, while others may have occurred naturally. Currently, SMK Negeri 1 Bebandem, one of the vocational high schools in Indonesia, uses Think-pair-share, dialogue building, visual aids, and role-play as its primary EFL teaching strategies. The use of these strategies is

intended to foster student-centered learning environments, accompanied by the goal of making students proficient in using English. Nowadays, translanguaging is one of the phenomenon in multilingual discourse that are emerging as pedagogical strategies in the classroom and are commonly used by teachers and students in multilingual geography contexts such as Indonesia (Sahib, 2019).

Translanguaging is a phenomenon where multilingual people use multiple languages and varieties, to communicate effectively while shaping experience and building up knowledge (Baker & Wright, 2021). It usually uses the fluid movement of the person's full language repertoire. Furthermore, in translanguaging, it is also important to note that the main focus is understanding and communication. Thus, translanguaging is usually used with some kind of purpose in mind. Later on, Baker and Wright (2021) concluded that translanguaging refers to multilingual people receiving information in one language and then applying it in another language. This also means that it's how multilinguals use their language repertoire in daily life to make sense of their multilingual worlds.

Due to its nature, where translanguaging is usually used with some kind of purpose in mind, and how it utilizes a person's repertoire of languages, the discussion on using translanguaging in the educational field emerged with the term pedagogical translanguaging (García and Wei, 2014). Pedagogical Translanguaging is translanguaging within the field of pedagogy and education that introduces a methodology that recognizes and maximizes students' multilingual capacities during the learning process. Cenoz and Gorter (2021) stated that pedagogical translanguaging is a theoretical and instructional

approach that aims to improve language and content quality in educational settings by utilizing resources from the learner's entire linguistic repertoire.

In the field of English education and EFL, Silwal (2021) stated that translanguaging can be planned as a teaching strategy to be applied in the classroom. However, translanguaging can also occur naturally without any prior planning, as it is a natural phenomenon in a multilingual context. Later on, in the same study, Silwal (2021) further indicated that the teachers were often unaware of translanguaging use during the teaching processes. These findings can open many more possibilities for research on the topic of translanguaging in classroom settings. Similarly, in their study, Hu (2020) argued that many students and teachers have already been using translanguaging unknowingly. There, they suggested that experimental methods might not always be the best way to study the phenomenon of translanguaging practices in multilingual settings. Rather, it can be observed as it is.

With translanguaging practices observed as they are, it can be said that there are still a few gaps in the study of translanguaging, which this study seeks to fill. Studies on the topic of translanguaging have explored its applications, teacher perception, strategies, effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities across different contexts of English Language Teaching (ELT) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Ataş, 2023; Hu, 2020; Liando et al., 2023; Rauteda, 2024; Sakkir et al., 2024). Especially on the topic of translanguaging strategies in the classroom, prior studies have mostly focused on the topic without accounting for established translanguaging strategies and their framework, resulting in general, non specified findings. Moreover, there is limited research

examining the strategies used by teachers in EFL classrooms within the vocational high school context. And, past research often faces challenges in generalizability, making it difficult to determine whether similar findings would emerge in different geographical, multilingual, or contextual settings, such as Indonesia's varied multilingual vocational classrooms.

As the study of translanguaging grew over the years (Mahayanti et al., 2024), this study aims to address these gaps by focusing on SMK N 1 Bebandem's 10th-grade Hotel Hospitality program's English class. In this context, the class provides an opportunity to explore translanguaging strategies used by the teacher, knowing the language diversity of the students and teacher. Moreover, the English subject class represents the first space where students begin building their English competency and proficiency, which they later can use for future hospitality interactions. Thus, examining translanguaging in this context is directly relevant to the vocational program's goals.

By observing how translanguaging strategies are used in this specific context, this study seeks to identify both what strategies are used and why it's being used in the classroom. Furthermore, the study examines these strategies through the lens of a translanguaging framework, allowing a discussion on how the findings are closely examined with the established theoretical framework of translanguaging, proposed by García and Wei (2014). Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to a deeper and more specific understanding of translanguaging strategies in vocational EFL classrooms and is hoped to be used as a reference for developing more effective, context-specific teaching strategies that promote the use of translanguaging in multilingual contexts.

To collect the required data, a basic qualitative study design with observation and interview as its data collection methods were employed. The decision to use this design is supported by Hu (2020), who suggested that observing translanguaging qualitatively in a multilingual setting is a viable option that could provide a rich understanding of the phenomenon.

First, the collection of real-time data on translanguaging strategies that are used by the teacher in the classroom primarily depends on observation. To achieve this, the 10th-grade Hotel Hospitality program's English class of SMK N 1 Bebandem was thoroughly observed with the attached observation sheet, which can be seen in Appendix 2, Observation Sheet. Furthermore, a recording was held to provide context and thorough descriptions of the identified translanguaging strategies. After that, an interview based on the observational data was conducted to explore the reasons behind each identified translanguaging strategy.

Complemented with thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis as the data analysis methods, this study not only discusses translanguaging strategy through García and Wei's (2014) translanguaging framework, but also allows the data to speak of its context. In other words, the study allowed additional themes to develop inductively from the data instead of only adopting García and Wei's (2014) translanguaging framework deductively as final thematic labels. Thus, the framework acted as a codebook that provided guidance on what to look for, while the themes and the teacher's reasoning in qualitative content analysis showed how those strategies combined and functioned pedagogically in this particular multilingual, vocational context. This was methodologically

justified as Braun and Clarke (2021) explained that inductive and deductive thematic analysis is more of a spectrum than a dichotomy.

With this design, this study aims to fill the geographical and contextual gap in identifying the employed translanguaging strategies in SMK N 1 Bebandem's EFL Hotel Hospitality program and to explore the reasons behind each of those translanguaging strategy.

## 1.2 Research Problem Identification

Indonesian students often face challenges in learning English, considering that English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia. These challenges are particularly increasing in vocational high schools, with students' varied proficiency levels and the practical application of English also contributing to the increased learning difficulties (Reswari et al., 2022; Susanto et al., 2020). In recent years, translanguaging has emerged as a teaching strategy that could support students' multilingual skills to improve engagement, language, and content understanding in EFL and multilingual classrooms. However, there is limited research on the use of translanguaging strategies in vocational high schools, specifically in geographical contexts of Bebandem, like SMK N 1 Bebandem's Hotel Hospitality program's English class, where multilingual communication is crucial. Furthermore, there is a need to explore translanguaging strategies in this study through the lens of established translanguaging framework, such as García and Wei's (2014) principles and strategies of translanguaging as pedagogy, resulting in both detailed and context specific findings.

### 1.3 Research Problem Limitation

This study is limited to the 10th-grade Hotel Hospitality program at SMK Negeri 1 Bebandem, a vocational high school in Bali, Indonesia. It focuses on identifying translanguaging strategies used by English teacher during English class and exploring the reasons behind these strategies. The study does not guarantee that the findings will be able to be generalized to other programs or schools in different geographical and multilingual contexts.

### 1.4 Research Questions

- a. What translanguaging strategies does the teacher use during the teaching process in the 10th-grade Hotel Hospitality English class at SMK N 1 Bebandem?
- b. What are the reasons behind the translanguaging strategies used by the teacher in the 10th-grade Hotel Hospitality English class at SMK N 1 Bebandem?

### 1.5 Research Objectives

- a. To identify the translanguaging strategies used by the teacher in the 10th-grade Hotel Hospitality English class at SMK N 1 Bebandem.
- b. To explore the reasons behind the use of translanguaging strategies by the teacher in the 10th-grade Hotel Hospitality English class at SMK N 1 Bebandem.

### 1.6 Research Significance

#### 1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study aims to close a geographical and contextual gap in the existing literature on the context of translanguaging strategy by giving translanguaging strategies and reasons behind their use an in-depth look in an Indonesian vocational high school, specifically SMK Negeri 1 Bebandem's 10th-grade Hotel Hospitality program's English class. It was expected to add to the current knowledge about translanguaging strategies in the vocational education context by closely examining how the translanguaging strategies used in SMK N 1 Bebandem are practiced, in comparison to the established translanguaging framework. It is hoped that the findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of translanguaging strategies in vocational EFL classrooms and is hoped to be used as a reference for developing more effective, context-specific teaching strategies that promote the use of translanguaging in multilingual contexts.

### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

This study offers practical significance to the teachers of SMK Negeri 1 Bebandem, the school as an institution itself, and educational policymakers in Indonesia. First, for teachers in SMK N 1 Bebandem, and those in a similar field, this study provided a clearer understanding of translanguaging strategies and the reasons for their use in multilingual vocational classrooms. These insights can help teachers at SMK N 1 Bebandem and similar contexts design more effective lessons that account for students' multilingual skills, promoting better comprehension, collaboration and language production in EFL classes.

Second, for SMK Negeri 1 Bebandem as the school institution where the study is conducted, this study could provide data for their instructional designers and curriculum developers to create actionable strategies by providing references to their current state of translanguaging strategies and practices. Furthermore, it can be used as a consideration on whether or not to use more translanguaging in their curriculum, considering that translanguaging supports bilingualism and multilingualism which coincidentally aligns with the language demography of the SMK Negeri 1 Bebandem population, where understanding two or more languages is common.

Lastly, for governments and policymakers in Indonesia, where multilingualism is common. The result of this study provides the needed data for policies that encourage students' multilingual abilities and acknowledge them through translanguaging, which could result in more diverse and successful EFL teaching practices in Indonesian vocational school.

