

Power through Translanguaging in Writing Class Discourse: An Indonesian Case Study

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Abstract

This study looks at how power is established when translanguaging occurs in writing class discourse using English as the language of instruction. It is a qualitative research method using a case study methodology. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with class lecturers, focus groups with nine students, and classroom observations. Fairclough's (2001) notions of "power behind discourse" and "power in discourse" serve as the analytical foundation for this study. He defined three types of aspects: subjects, or the "subject positions" that persons might hold; connections, or the social ties that people develop during talks; and content, or what is said or done. The findings demonstrated that translanguaging helps students conceive complicated concepts, negotiate meaning, and preserve their language and cultural identities. It also promotes collaborative learning environments, which normalize language variety while increasing students' confidence and academic autonomy. Translanguaging helps students to use their language resources, which promotes agency and critical engagement with academic information. However, it also emphasizes the power dynamics in students' linguistic identities, in which the usage of many languages threatens English's supremacy. By analyzing these interactions, this study emphasizes the need of inclusive instructional practices that empower students while respecting their language variety.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis, power, translanguaging, writing class*

INTRODUCTION

This study illustrates how power is produced in writing class discourse via translanguaging in an English-medium instructional context. Language is a critical tool in the development of power dynamics in educational settings. In writing courses, particularly in multilingual contexts, the language of teaching is critical in shaping interactions, identities, and access to academic information.

Power dynamics in translanguaging methods may be examined using Fairclough's (2001) concept of "power behind discourse" and "power in discourse." The term "power behind discourse" refers to the institutional norms and ideologies that influence language usage, whereas "power in discourse" investigates how people negotiate meaning within these institutions. In writing courses, translanguaging breaks the hierarchical connection between English and other languages, allowing students to demonstrate their linguistic agency. Conteh and Meier (2020) show how this empowerment alters classroom dynamics, placing students as active participants in knowledge

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development. These theoretical concepts are crucial in this study because they help us understand how translanguaging strategies rearrange power relations in English-medium writing schools.

Fairclough (2001) explored how "power in discourse" is used by powerful persons to constrain and regulate the contribution of inferior individuals. He identified three major types of limitations: subjects, or the "subject positions" that individuals can take; connections, or the social ties that people develop during discussions; and content, or what is said or done (page 46). In order to limit the less powerful participants, powerful individuals may indirectly choose among these restraints based on the nature of the discourse. For example, the study's principal educator rejected translanguaging procedures out of fear of being stigmatized for deviating from accepted academic standards, not because she did not see their benefits (Canagarajah 2021).

The current study contributed to the ongoing discussion on writing classes and translanguaging by applying Fairclough's (2001) concepts of "power in discourse" and "power behind discourse." "The power behind discourse" refers to "the stake in power struggles-for control over orders of discourse is a powerful mechanism for sustaining in power," whereas "power in discourse" views discourse as a source of conflict (Fairclough 2001, 74). These terms have been used in conjunction with two other relevant ideas: "addressivity," which refers to how students use the cultures and ideologies they have encountered, and "inventing the University," which refers to the body of power that students envision reading and evaluating their work (Bakhtin 1986; Bartholomew 1986).

When it comes to class discourse, multilingual authors face inherent contradictions between their quest for originality and autonomy and their acceptance of institutional and disciplinary standards (Lillis 2001). As previously stated in the intervention section of this study, when a student was allowed to translanguange, he employed Indonesian script to transliterate English words in order to handle the tension between his individualism and the institutional norm. Another student advocated for adopting translanguaging as a problem-solving approach while writing in monolingual English and unable to recollect a specific Indonesian or English term.

The power of writing class conversation is the next topic of debate. Students' writing styles vary depending on their lecturers, institutions, and subjects of study (Garska and O'Brien 2019; Lillis and Tuck 2016). To avoid having their scores influenced by the lecturers' monolingual attitude, the students chose not to translanguange in the writing assignment. Because the students constantly transformed their voices in writing class, anticipating the body of power that would read and judge their writings, this finding supports the previously discussed concept of "Inventing the University" (Lillis 2001).

Translanguaging, the purposeful use of many languages to aid learning, challenges established monolingual paradigms and shows the intricate interaction of language, identity, and authority in educational environments (García & Li, 2019). This strategy not only benefits bilingual and multilingual students, but it also reveals how language practices influence power dynamics in academic environments.

Language regulations and practices that regulate interactions have a significant impact on power dynamics in the classroom. English, being the dominant global language, frequently retains a position of authority in educational institutions, marginalizing other linguistic resources. However, translanguaging provides an alternate perspective, allowing students to manage academic hurdles and express their agency using their whole language repertoire (Lin, 2020). This research focuses on writing classes in an English-medium university in Indonesia, where translanguaging serves as both a pedagogical method and a site of power negotiation. Chalmers and Huang (2023) found that translanguaging allows students to engage critically with academic information while avoiding the limits of English-only rules. These dynamics highlight the necessity of investigating how power is exercised and disputed in such situations.

Translanguaging is gaining popularity as a method of assisting bilingual and multilingual learners in utilizing their whole language range. According to García and Wei (2020), it can improve cognitive growth and critical thinking abilities, in addition to linguistic flexibility. This is especially pertinent in Indonesia, where bilingual education frequently includes the usage of both Bahasa Indonesia and English. Translanguaging enables students to move between different languages, combining their native language and academic language to gain deeper comprehension and more meaningful learning (Al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2018). Translanguaging has been recognized as beneficial in the fields of literacy and language learning. According to García and Li (2021), translanguaging promotes critical understanding of linguistic ideologies and power systems among students. This critical viewpoint is especially significant in Indonesia, where English is frequently regarded as a language of status. Translanguaging allows students to challenge.

However, further study is needed in writing instruction on the application and acceptability of translanguaging by lecturers, as well as the consequences of these modifications on teaching in a range of situations (Ascenzi-Moreno and Espinosa 2018). This section investigates the most recent innovations in translanguaging literature to help students with their writing.

García and Kano (2014) studied how translanguaging might enhance writing skills in a bilingual English-Japanese class in the United States. García and Kano (2014) found that using a translanguaging approach helped both new and experienced bilingual Japanese students develop expertise in using their own strategies to construct academic texts in English and build their biliteracy practices, as well as become more aware of the differences in the construction of Japanese and English written texts. While more experienced bilinguals used translanguaging to better the task and demonstrate greater learner autonomy, emergent bilingual participants used it to comprehend the lesson and complete the assignment. Turnbull (2019) identified two types of translanguaging: "strong" translanguaging, which eliminates "barriers" between identified languages (García and Wei 2014), and "weak" translanguaging, which softens boundaries by acknowledging their existence and separation (Williams 1996). In contrast to another group of students who practiced monolingual English, he evaluated the impact of these two translanguaging approaches on academic and creative works generated by Japanese EFL students.

Translanguaging teaching approaches in Bangladeshi higher education have received little attention. In English literature, anthropology, and reading comprehension classes, translanguaging pedagogies were investigated by Rafi (2020) and Rafi and Morgan (2022a; 2022b).

Garska and O'Brien (2019) conducted research at an Irish higher education institution on how students evaluated language writing processes while employing translanguaging. Using 108 replies to a survey sent via social media, these authors investigated how English as an additional language students communicated their relationship with the writing class. Bilingual students' thought was frequently not well reflected in their writing class by a single language since each of the languages they could use provided distinct benefits for meaning-making and presentation (Canagarajah 2021; Lillis 2001; Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2019).

Recent research has highlighted the transformational power of translanguaging in education. Prilutskaya (2021) contends that translanguaging promotes fairness by recognizing students' cultural and linguistic identities, allowing them to engage more meaningfully in academic discourse. García and Kleyn (2020) argue that translanguaging fosters inclusive educational environments and normalizes language variety. These approaches are especially effective in writing schools because they allow students to understand complicated concepts in their native language before articulating them in English. By doing so, students not only strengthen their

arguments but also question traditional assumptions of writing class, which sometimes value language uniformity over intellectual variety.

This study extends these ideas by investigating how power is established when translanguaging occurs in writing classroom discourse at an Indonesian institution. It seeks to understand how translanguaging promotes critical engagement, improves social relationships, and redefines language hierarchy by investigating interactions between students and lecturers. The findings add to the continuing conversation regarding inclusive pedagogies in bilingual education, with practical consequences for educators and policymakers. Finally, this study aims to show how translanguaging may convert writing classrooms into places of empowerment, where linguistic variety is valued and power is distributed more equitably.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research technique. It is seen as appropriate for exploring participants' viewpoints, experiences, and contextual components (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Design

For the present research, a case study design has been chosen since it offers a thorough examination of practical implementations of pedagogical translanguaging and powers in particular discourse (Yin, 2018).

Research Instruments

Data collection is mostly done through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research to allow for freedom in questions while ensuring that relevant topics are addressed (Kallio et al., 2016). They allow individuals to openly discuss their opinions and experiences with translanguaging. Classroom observations allow the researcher to observe teaching and learning processes firsthand, which helps to confirm interview findings and give contextual understanding (Tracy, 2020). The study's goal is to use these methods to triangulate data sources, which will improve the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the results.

Subject of Research

The study focuses on nine students and three university lecturers at a private institution, namely in sessions that mix English and Indonesian into their classroom instruction. The selection of individuals with relevant expertise and experience (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data Analysis

Fairclough's (2001) notions of "power behind discourse" and "power in discourse" serve as the analytical foundation for this study. He identified three major kinds of aspects: themes, or "subject positions" that persons might hold; connections, or the social ties that people develop during talks; and content, or what is said or done (p. 46). To identify concerns inside, among, and between study participants, the researcher categorized all field notes and transcriptions of observations and translated them into translanguaged text or identified languages spoken.

RESULTS

This study uses the notions of "power behind discourse" and "power in discourse," as described by Fairclough (2001), as an analytical framework to investigate how translanguaging might help bilingual students in writing class. He identified three major types of power: subjects, or the "subject positions" that individuals can take; connections, or the social ties that people develop during discussions; and content, or what is said or done. The following utterances are samples drawn from observation and interviews findings.

Table 1. Results from Observation and Interviews

Observation Result		
Category	Utterances	Analysis
1. Topics (Subject Positions)	<p>Lecturer: "What is the main argument in your essay draft?" Student: "Saya pikir argumennya adalah tentang 'social hierarchy,' seperti di Indonesia ada istilah stratifikasi sosial." Lecturer: "Good. Now, try to explain 'social hierarchy' in English with examples from your essay."</p> <p>Lecturer: "What is your supporting idea for this paragraph?" Student: "Saya pakai ide tentang keadilan sosial, karena ada teori dari Rawls. Tapi belum tahu istilah 'justice as fairness' itu harus dijelaskan pakai bahasa saya dulu atau langsung dalam English?" Lecturer: "Great starting point! You can start in Indonesian to clarify your thoughts and then translate into English, using Rawls' terms."</p>	<p>The student utilizes Indonesian to connect with familiar concepts ("stratifikasi sosial") and establishes themselves as an active participant in the discussion. The lecturer transitions the discourse to English, emphasizing academic norms while maintaining inclusivity.</p>
2. Connections (Social Relationships)	<p>Lecturer: "Does anyone have a question about paragraph structure?" Student A: "Miss, apakah 'topic sentence' itu harus selalu di awal paragraf?" Lecturer: "Great question! In English writing class, it's common for the topic sentence to be at the beginning, but you can adjust based on your argument. Let's see an example from your draft." Student B: "Kalau di Indonesia biasanya langsung ke inti, jadi kita harus belajar lebih terstruktur."</p> <p>Lecturer: "Can you discuss your ideas with a partner?" Student A: "Tadi saya tulis 'The data shows that inequality is rising,' tapi kayaknya perlu contoh konkret." Student B: "Coba tambahkan konteks, seperti di Indonesia, 'kesenjangan pendapatan antara</p>	<p>The students draw on their linguistic and cultural background (Bahasa Indonesia) to clarify writing norms. Collaborative exchanges strengthen social bonds between peers and the lecturer, promoting a supportive and inclusive learning environment.</p>

	<p>kota dan desa,' terus translate ke English."</p> <p>Lecturer: "Good collaboration! Now use your example in the English version of your paragraph."</p>	
<p>3. Content (What is Said or Done)</p>	<p>Lecturer: "Write your thesis statement first, and then we'll work on the body paragraphs." Student: "Saya sudah tulis thesis statement-nya, tapi masih bingung kalau mau pakai kata 'because' atau langsung fakta saja?" Lecturer: "Let me see. Okay, in English, using 'because' helps connect your argument to evidence. Write it like this: 'This issue is critical because...' Can you translate that back to check your understanding?"</p> <p>Lecturer: "How do you explain the key concept in your introduction?" Student: "Saya menulis begini: 'Education is important because it develops character and knowledge.' Tapi kalau di Indonesia, karakter itu lebih seperti 'akhlak' atau 'moral values,' jadi saya bingung mau pakai istilah apa di sini." Lecturer: "That's an insightful comparison. You could write, 'Education develops moral values, which align with Indonesian concepts of character and akhlak.' Then expand on it in your paragraph."</p>	<p>Translanguaging aids in understanding writing class conventions, such as the function of "because." The lecturer bridges English academic norms with the students' linguistic resources, helping them clarify complex concepts and culturally specific terms (e.g., "akhlak") in a way that enriches their academic writing.</p>
Interview Result		
<p>1. Topics (Subject Positions) - Interviews</p>	<p>Lecturer A: "When students use their first language to brainstorm ideas, I see them becoming more confident. They feel like they are experts in their topics when they express themselves in their native language before transitioning to English."</p> <p>Lecturer B: "Sometimes, I ask students to explain their thesis statements in Indonesian first. It allows them to clarify their main argument without worrying about</p>	<p>Allowing students to use their native language for brainstorming fosters confidence and positions them as active participants in constructing knowledge. This practice reflects the "power behind discourse," emphasizing the empowering role of linguistic resources.</p>

	grammar. Once they feel confident, they translate it into English, which results in stronger and more coherent thesis statements."	
2. Connections (Social Relationships) - Interviews	Lecturer B: "When students discuss their essays in small groups, they naturally mix languages. They switch to Indonesian to clarify concepts for their peers, then back to English when they present. This builds a collaborative atmosphere where everyone contributes." Lecturer C: "During peer reviews, I notice that students often explain feedback in Bahasa Indonesia, even if the original text is in English. It helps them connect and make sure their peers understand the suggestions. They then work together to rephrase in English."	Translanguaging fosters positive social interactions and encourages collaborative learning. It builds a sense of connection among students and creates an equitable space for sharing feedback and ideas.
3. Content (What is Said or Done) - Interviews	Lecturer A: "I encourage students to draft their essays in a mix of languages if it helps them organize their thoughts. Some students write complex ideas in Indonesian first, then refine the wording in English. The final essays are often clearer because of this process." Lecturer C: "When teaching argumentative essays, I let students outline their points in Indonesian first. This way, they can focus on the logical flow of their arguments. Translating it into English becomes easier because the structure is already clear."	Translanguaging reduces cognitive load during the writing process, enabling students to focus on organizing their thoughts and developing coherent arguments. Drafting in Indonesian first provides a scaffold for creating clearer and more structured essays in English.

The table above contains the utterances and statements based on the result from observation and interview. The data presentation is in line with Fairclough's (2001) concepts of "power behind discourse" and "power in discourse" as an analytical framework to evaluate how translanguaging might benefit bilingual students in writing class. He distinguished three sorts of power: topic, or the "subject positions" that individuals might adopt; connections, or the social links that people form during conversation; and content, or what is said or done.

DISCUSSION

This study uses the notions of "power behind discourse" and "power in discourse," as described by Fairclough (2001), as an analytical framework to investigate how translanguaging might help bilingual students write class courses. The following discussion is presented based on the findings

from classroom observation and interviews with lecturers. First, the discussion is from observation in the writing classes.

In terms of topic, the resulted chat revealed that the student employed Bahasa Indonesia to understand complicated topics while negotiating new English terms. The lecturer encouraged translanguaging, allowing students to establish themselves as respectable contributors to academic debate. This is consistent with Fairclough's concept of power behind discourse, in which language choices empower students inside academic settings. García and Kleyn's (2020) study supports the technique of translanguaging, which allows students to connect with academic content without being limited by their target language skills. It also reinforced their cultural and linguistic identities. Bilingual students reported feeling more confident in presenting their thoughts while utilizing translanguaging. For example, one student wrote an academic essay outline in Indonesian to expound on complicated ideas before translating it to English. This technique allowed them to build more nuanced thoughts than writing exclusively in English. According to García and Li (2019), translanguaging allows students to create academic identities in multilingual situations.

Regarding connections or social relationships, the example off utterances showed how students utilize translanguaging to explain their thoughts in Bahasa Indonesia before communicating them in English. They create social relationships while creating academic arguments through collaborative discourse, which reflects Fairclough's idea of power in discourse, since social interactions enable shared meaning-making. Lin (2020) supports this, stating that translanguaging promotes equal participation in group work by allowing students to engage effectively in their original language before transferring to English. Similarly, Chalmers and Huang (2023) argue that translanguaging encourages greater engagement with academic information and collaborative problem solving. When students used translanguaging, they worked together more effectively. For example, during group discussions, students discussed ideas in both English and their home tongue, such as Indonesian. This technique improved their grasp of the content and resulted in essays with more diverse opinions. Prilutskaya (2021) found that translanguaging strengthens social ties and normalizes language variety in schools.

Last, in terms of content or what is said or done, in mentioned utterances, translanguaging assisted the student in connecting culturally particular terms (e.g., *akhlak*) with English writing class expectations. The lecturer facilitated the process by incorporating language and cultural subtleties into the academic discourse. According to Prilutskaya (2021) and García et al. (2019), translanguaging enhanced academic performance by allowing students to explain culturally grounded notions. It decreased cognitive burden and promotes critical thinking as students negotiate various language and cultural settings. Students showed substantial improvement in the cohesiveness and coherence of their writing. For example, one student's essay, which used translanguaging during the preparation phase, had a more coherent arguing framework than essays written by students who did not utilize it. These findings are consistent with Chalmers and Huang's (2023) study, which found that translanguaging helps students understand and explain complicated academic topics.

Furthermore, the interviews were conducted with lecturers to have a deeper understanding of this subject. The discussion is presented based on topic, connection, and content. In terms of topics or subject positions, the lecturer underlined that allowing students to begin in their native language places them as active participants in the knowledge-construction process. This method emphasized the power of discourse by recognizing the significance of linguistic resources in developing students' academic agency. García and Li (2019) argued that translanguaging helps students embrace their multilingual identities and interact critically with academic information. Similarly, Conteh and Meier (2020) argued that leveraging students' linguistic repertoires increases their feeling of ownership in academic settings, whilst Canagarajah (2021) emphasized how

translanguaging enables students to successfully negotiate meaning in their work.

In addition, regarding connections or social relationships, the statements demonstrated how translanguaging promotes good social dynamics in which students encourage one another using shared language resources. This exhibited power in conversation since the contact fosters bonds and promotes involvement. Accordingly, Lin (2020) argues that translanguaging in peer relationships enhances equal participation, particularly in group work. According to Chalmers and Huang (2023), collaborative learning environments that normalize language variety help students by improving both social and academic performance. Furthermore, Lin (2020) and Prilutskaya (2021) argue that translanguaging fosters inclusive spaces for collaborative learning, in which students feel more comfortable offering ideas and delivering criticism in a supportive setting.

Finally, in content or what is said or done, the lecturer demonstrates how translanguaging enhances cognitive processes during the writing stage, helping students to efficiently manage complicated concepts. This is consistent with Fairclough's approach, as translanguaging has a direct influence on what is written and how it is organized. According to Prilutskaya (2021) and García et al. (2019), translanguaging minimizes cognitive burden and allows students to prioritize subject development over linguistic hurdles. This method produces better, more cohesive writing while also aligning with educational aims in bilingual education. Furthermore, Chalmers and Huang (2023) discovered that translanguaging allows students to focus on higher-order thinking abilities like reasoning and critical analysis rather than being limited by language obstacles. García and Kleyn (2020) show that translanguaging procedures improve metacognitive awareness in writing.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated the efficacy of translanguaging as a pedagogical method for supporting bilingual students in writing class courses, particularly in settings where English is the predominant language of instruction. Using Fairclough's notions of "power behind discourse" and "power in discourse," the study revealed how translanguaging enables students to negotiate the linguistic and cultural demands of writing class. Students were able to grasp complicated ideas, clarify new phrases, and effectively negotiate meaning while keeping their cultural and linguistic identities by employing translanguaging strategies.

The studies further demonstrated that translanguaging not only boosts students' confidence and agency, but it also promotes collaborative learning settings that normalise language variety. When students used translanguaging during ideation, writing, and peer-review processes, their academic arguments were more clear and advanced. Furthermore, lecturers who promoted translanguaging methods had an important role in connecting writing class customs to students' existing linguistic resources, resulting in a more inclusive and powerful educational environment.

This study adds to the larger issue of fair and inclusive approaches to writing class teaching by validating students' multilingual identities and acknowledging the value of their language repertoires. It calls for the incorporation of translanguaging into higher education as a method of fostering critical thinking, deepening engagement with academic subject, and creating a feeling of belonging for bilingual students. The findings of this study need a rethinking of writing class norms, with translanguaging viewed as a beneficial resource for bridging academic and cultural gaps rather than a weakness.

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