



Pedagogical Translanguaging in Enhancing Indonesian Language Writing Skills among Junior High School Students

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-09-23 Revised: 2026-09-30 Accepted: 2026-10-12 Keywords: <i>Translanguaging, Writing Skills, Indonesian Language, Emancipated Curriculum, Systematic Literature Review</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.12698 Corresponding Author: Weny Sugianto sugiantoweny@gmail.com Universitas Jambi	<i>Writing formal texts in Indonesian language classes often poses cognitive challenges for Junior High School (SMP) students transitioning from regional languages or informal registers to standard Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia baku). This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) examines the implementation of translanguaging—the flexible use of students' entire linguistic repertoires—as a pedagogical scaffolding strategy in Indonesian writing instruction. Guided by the PRISMA framework, a systematic screening of Scopus, Google Scholar, SINTA, and Portal Garuda yielded 25 empirical articles published between 2021 and 2026. The thematic synthesis reveals three primary findings: (1) translanguaging is most frequently utilized during pre-writing and drafting stages, allowing students to explore ideas bilingually before editing into standard Indonesian; (2) the approach was consistently associated with reduced writing anxiety and enhanced text coherence; and (3) primary challenges include language purism ideologies among educators and a structural misalignment with monolingual summative assessments. The findings suggest that translanguaging spaces could be more explicitly accommodated within the national curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). By focusing specifically on standard Indonesian language acquisition in multilingual SMP classrooms, this review addresses a critical gap in a literature traditionally dominated by EFL contexts.</i>

1. Introduction

In the Indonesian educational landscape, the Indonesian language subject serves as both the primary medium of academic instruction and a unifying national identity (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). At the Junior High School (SMP) level, instructional expectations shift from basic literacy toward the mastery of complex, structured academic genres governed by the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI). However, these standardized expectations frequently encounter a highly diglossic sociolinguistic

reality. According to the Language Development and Fostering Agency (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2019), Indonesia possesses 718 documented regional languages. Many students acquire these regional languages or informal urban vernaculars as their primary mode of daily communication, resulting in a functional differentiation where standard Indonesian is reserved primarily for formal and educational domains.

Traditional language instruction in Indonesia has often leaned toward a monolingual approach, enforcing strict separation between the students' home languages and standard academic Indonesian. In writing instruction, this expectation requires novice writers to simultaneously conceptualize complex ideas and immediately translate them into a formal register. Previous literature indicates that prohibiting mother tongues in formal academic writing can impede idea generation and elevate writing anxiety, as students become preoccupied with mechanical correctness over substantive content (Alwasilah, 2005; Nurgiyantoro, 2010).

To address these cognitive and affective barriers, pedagogical translanguaging has emerged as a viable instructional framework. Translanguaging conceptualizes language boundaries as fluid, positing that bilinguals utilize a unitary linguistic repertoire to communicate effectively (García & Li Wei, 2014). Pedagogically, it involves the intentional integration of students' diverse linguistic resources to facilitate meaning-making and knowledge construction (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). When applied to writing, translanguaging operates as a temporary cognitive scaffold, enabling students to decouple idea generation from formal grammatical translation.

While translanguaging has been extensively investigated, previous empirical studies have predominantly concentrated on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or bilingual education contexts in Western settings. The literature examining its application in standard Indonesian writing instruction at the secondary level remains fragmented. Recent isolated studies have begun exploring this phenomenon: for instance, Pertiwi (2023) investigated code-switching in pre-writing strategies, while Fadilah et al. (2023) examined meaning negotiation in 8th-grade classrooms. However, a comprehensive synthesis evaluating the collective empirical evidence, methodologies, and outcomes across the Indonesian secondary education sector is currently lacking.

This systematic literature review addresses this gap by analyzing recent empirical studies to evaluate how translanguaging functions specifically when Indonesian is the target academic language in multilingual SMP classrooms. This review seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the instructional strategies for implementing translanguaging in Indonesian language writing classes at the SMP level? (2) What are the reported cognitive and psychological outcomes of translanguaging on students' writing processes? and (3) What pedagogical challenges do educators encounter when implementing this approach?

2. Method

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design, strictly adhering to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to ensure methodological transparency and reproducibility.

An exhaustive search was conducted in August 2026 across four databases: Scopus, Google Scholar, SINTA, and Portal Garuda. The search utilized specific Boolean strings tailored to each database. For Scopus and SINTA, the primary string was: TITLE-ABS-KEY (("translanguaging" OR "cross-linguistic scaffold*" OR "pedagogical translanguaging") AND ("writing skill*" OR "writing proficiency" OR "menulis") AND ("Indonesian language" OR "Bahasa Indonesia") AND ("junior high school" OR "SMP")). For Google Scholar, due to its expansive algorithm, the search was limited to the first 200 relevance-sorted results using the exact phrase "translanguaging" AND "menulis" AND "SMP".

Eligibility criteria were established a priori. Included studies were: (a) peer-reviewed empirical articles (action research, quasi-experiments, or qualitative case studies); (b) published between 2021 and 2026; (c) written in English or Indonesian; (d) focused on Indonesian language writing skills; and (e) involving SMP student or teacher populations. Studies focusing on EFL, non-language subjects, university levels, or theoretical reviews were excluded.

The selection process was managed using Zotero reference management software. The initial database query yielded 142 records. Following the automated and manual removal of 32 duplicates, 110 articles underwent title and abstract screening, leading to the exclusion of 75 irrelevant studies. The remaining 35 full-text articles were independently assessed for eligibility. Ten were excluded (lack of empirical data or specific focus on standard writing), resulting in a final inclusion of 25 empirical articles (see PRISMA Flow Diagram, Figure 1).

The methodological quality of the included studies was evaluated using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (Hong et al., 2018). Data extraction was organized into a standardized matrix capturing author/year, research design, sample, writing genre, translanguaging strategies, and outcomes. A collaborative thematic synthesis was then performed; initial codes were generated directly from the findings of the included studies and iteratively grouped into three overarching themes aligned with the research questions. Disagreements in thematic categorization were resolved through consensus.

3. Result

3.1 Descriptive Overview of Included Studies

The 25 included empirical studies were predominantly conducted in Java and Sumatra, reflecting highly diglossic environments involving Javanese, Sundanese, and Minangkabau languages intersecting with standard Indonesian. Methodologically, the dataset comprised classroom action research (n=12), qualitative case studies (n=8), and quasi-experimental designs (n=5). The targeted writing genres largely aligned with the national curriculum, focusing heavily on descriptive (n=10), argumentative (n=8), and explanatory texts (n=7).

3.2 Instructional Strategies and Implementation

The synthesis mapped translanguaging practices directly onto the Process Writing Approach (Table 1). During the pre-writing phase, 18 of the 25 studies reported teachers utilizing translanguaging as a brainstorming scaffold. Students were permitted to construct mind maps or outlines in their L1 regional languages, which prevented early cognitive overload (Suryani & Rahman, 2022). In the drafting phase (reported in n=14 studies), students utilized bracketed insertion—writing predominantly in Indonesian but

inserting regional/informal terms when encountering lexical gaps (Pertiwi, 2023). The revising and editing stages featured explicit collaborative cross-linguistic negotiation (n=16 studies). During peer-review sessions, students and teachers systematically isolated the regional terms in the drafts and translated them into standard Indonesian using PUEBI guidelines (Widodo & Hidayat, 2024).

Table 1. Thematic Synthesis of Translanguaging Implementation Outcomes

Theme	Subtheme	Evidence Base	Representative Finding
Instructional Strategies	Bilingual Brainstorming	n = 18 studies	L1 use authorized for initial mind-mapping.
	Flexible Drafting (Bracketing)	n = 14 studies	Informal lexical insertions permitted in initial drafts.
	Cross-Linguistic Negotiation	n = 16 studies	Collaborative translation into standard Indonesian during editing.
Cognitive/Psychological Outcomes	Reduced Writing Anxiety	n = 19 studies	Lowered affective filter; increased willingness to initiate writing.
	Metalinguistic Awareness	n = 12 studies	Enhanced understanding of register differences between L1 and Standard Indonesian.
Implementation Challenges	Language Purism Ideology	n = 15 studies	Educator resistance viewing L1 use as language degradation.
	Assessment Misalignment	n = 11 studies	Pressure from monolingual high-stakes testing.

3.3 Cognitive and Psychological Outcomes

A notable reduction in writing anxiety was the most frequently reported psychological outcome, observed in 19 studies. Qualitative reports and teacher observations indicated that by validating students' home languages in the classroom, the perceived psychological risk of making mechanical errors decreased, allowing students who previously exhibited avoidant behaviors to initiate writing more confidently (Kusuma & Arifin, 2023). Cognitively, texts generated through this scaffolding process were associated with richer descriptive detail and structural coherence (n=11 studies). Furthermore, 12 studies reported that the comparative editing process improved students' metalinguistic awareness, helping them explicitly distinguish between formal and informal registers (Larasati, 2024).

3.4 Pedagogical Challenges and Barriers

Despite the reported pedagogical utility, systemic barriers persist. The most prevalent challenge, identified in 15 studies, was an underlying ideology of language purism. Many educators expressed concerns that translanguaging might foster non-standard grammatical fossilization, viewing the practice as an academic deficit rather than a scaffold (Rahayu, 2022). Additionally, 11 studies highlighted a structural mismatch between process-oriented translanguaging and product-oriented summative assessments. Because regional and national examinations strictly require monolingual standard Indonesian, teachers reported abandoning nuanced scaffolding in favor of rote grammar instruction to ensure test compliance (Fadilah et al., 2023).

4. Discussion

4.1 Interpreting Pedagogical Scaffolding

The finding that translanguaging is highly utilized during brainstorming and drafting aligns with Cummins' (2021) Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis. The reviewed evidence suggests that cognitive skills utilized in conceptualizing a narrative or argument in a regional language transfer functionally to standard Indonesian. By permitting a multilingual drafting phase, educators use translanguaging as a temporary cognitive bridge. This establishes an important conceptual distinction in the literature: in the SMP Indonesian language context, translanguaging operates primarily as a temporary pedagogical scaffold intended to culminate in a monolingual standard text, rather than an end-goal of producing hybrid, heteroglossic literature.

Based on the synthesized evidence, a reproducible pedagogical sequence for SMP classrooms emerges: (1) Multilingual Brainstorming → (2) Flexible Drafting (with bracketed L1 insertions) → (3) Collaborative Cross-Linguistic Negotiation → (4) Editing → (5) Standard Indonesian Final Text.

4.2 Affective Factors in L1 Contexts

The consistent association between translanguaging and reduced writing anxiety provides an interesting theoretical extension of Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. While Krashen's framework is fundamentally rooted in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), its application here is theoretically justified by the pronounced diglossic distance between Indonesian students' daily vernaculars and formal academic Indonesian. The strict policing of language boundaries in traditional classrooms creates a high-filter environment akin to foreign language anxiety (Alwasilah, 2005). Translanguaging lowers this barrier by establishing psychological safety, thereby freeing cognitive resources for substantive text generation (Kusuma & Arifin, 2023). However, it is necessary to interpret these psychological outcomes cautiously, as much of the evidence base relies on qualitative teacher perceptions rather than standardized psychometric anxiety scales.

4.3 Navigating Ideological and Structural Barriers

The observed resistance from educators (language purism) and the friction with monolingual assessments underscore a systemic tension in Indonesian language policy. The concern regarding grammatical fossilization is a recognized boundary condition of translanguaging; without the explicit "cross-linguistic negotiation" phase (where informal texts are rigorously translated into standard Indonesian), translanguaging could

theoretically lead to language mixing rather than standard proficiency (Setiawan, 2024). This highlights that translanguaging must be actively managed by the educator, not merely permitted passively.

The structural misalignment with summative assessments presents a significant pedagogical implication. If the Kurikulum Merdeka aims to support differentiated, culturally responsive learning, there is a clear imperative to align assessment frameworks with process-oriented learning.

4.4 Limitations of the Review

This systematic review is subject to several limitations. First, the temporal restriction (2021–2026) excludes foundational historical data on Indonesian bilingual practices. Second, despite utilizing the MMAT, the included studies exhibit considerable methodological heterogeneity—combining action research with experimental designs—which limits the ability to draw definitive causal conclusions regarding writing quality. Third, publication bias may influence the findings, as studies demonstrating the positive impacts of translanguaging are more likely to be published than those reporting null or negative outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This systematic literature review synthesizes recent empirical evidence on pedagogical translanguaging in Indonesian SMP writing classrooms, an area previously overshadowed by EFL research. The review demonstrates that deploying translanguaging as a structured pedagogical scaffold—specifically during pre-writing and drafting—can effectively mitigate cognitive overload and lower affective writing barriers for students navigating a diglossic environment. Rather than degrading standard language acquisition, systematic cross-linguistic editing enhances metalinguistic awareness and facilitates the production of coherent standard texts.

However, realizing the utility of this approach requires addressing entrenched ideologies of language purism and the structural constraints of strictly monolingual summative assessments. Future research should prioritize longitudinal, quasi-experimental studies to measure the long-term impacts of translanguaging on standard Indonesian writing proficiency, moving beyond qualitative perceptions of anxiety to establish robust, quantifiable learning outcomes.

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