

## THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF TRANSLANGUAGING ON SPEAKING SKILLS: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES IN ESP CLASS

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### ABSTRACT

Research on translanguaging has shown its various benefits in learning contexts. However, it has not been widely researched in the ESP classroom specifically for improving speaking skills. Therefore, this study aims to examine students' perceptions of translanguaging. This study employs a quantitative survey research design involving 33 students from an ESP class at a private university in Malang, East Java. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results show a generally positive tendency toward the use of translanguaging in ESP speaking instruction. Affective factors obtained a mean score of 3.25, indicating increased student confidence and comfort in speaking activities. Translanguaging was also perceived to support speaking development ( $M = 3.22$ ), particularly in terms of fluency and comprehension, although its contribution to pronunciation development was relatively limited. Furthermore, students acknowledged both the challenges and opportunities of translanguaging ( $M = 3.04$ ), noting its benefits for lower-proficiency learners while expressing concerns about the full development of English-speaking proficiency. This study implies that translanguaging can increase students' confidence, comfort, and motivation in speaking, but it needs to be balanced so as not to hinder the development of English-speaking skills in practical classroom settings.

*Keywords:* Translanguaging, ESP Classroom, Speaking Skills

### A. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become vital in meeting the increasingly complex professional and academic needs of students. ESP, by definition, focuses on tailoring language teaching to the specific needs of students within particular domains (Paltridge & Starfield, 2016). Unlike general English, the primary role of ESP is to provide a tailored educational experience that aligns language instruction with the specific professional objectives and practical needs of various student groups. ESP aims to prepare students with the communication skills necessary in their specific academic and professional contexts, with an emphasis on the practical use of English to meet clearly defined professional needs (Dominguez & Ro-kowski, 2002). This is where the concept of

translanguaging emerges as an innovative solution. By prioritizing these targeted competencies, ESP ensures that learners are equipped with the precise linguistic tools necessary for success in their specialized fields.

Despite the recognized importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), a common phenomenon is the gap between students' language knowledge and their ability to apply it in real and contextual communication situations. One major challenge is their limited command of specialized vocabulary and field-specific discourse, which impedes accurate and fluent expression during speaking activities (Basturkmen, 2016; Hyland & Wong, 2019). Additionally, affective barriers such as low self-confidence and high speaking anxiety frequently hinder active participation, especially in settings that enforce English-only communication (Woodrow, 2006). These difficulties are exacerbated by traditional pedagogical approaches that adhere to strict monolingual norms, limiting students' ability to optimize their overall linguistic capacity for the purpose of understanding and expressing ideas (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Jaspers, 2018). This disconnect between students' multilingual reality and monolingual classroom practices poses a significant barrier to developing functional speaking proficiency in ESP contexts.

Given these persistent pedagogical and affective challenges in ESP speaking instruction, translanguaging (TL) has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach that strategically leverages learners' multilingual repertoires as a resource for communication and comprehension. TL is gaining significant attention and is increasingly popular among educational practitioners who focus on bilingual and multilingual learning (García, 2009). Extensive research across America (Burton & Rajendram, 2019; Dougherty, 2021; Galante, 2020), Europe (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Cots et al., 2022; Iversen, 2020; Kirgöz et al., 2022; Sobkowiak, 2022) and Asia (Fang & Liu, 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Tai & Wei, 2021) indicates that the application of TL pedagogy can significantly enhance the learning experience by providing essential affective support.

TL practices consistently demonstrate their potential to reduce anxiety and increase self-confidence, create an emotionally supportive learning environment (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Galante, 2020) facilitate a better understanding of complex concepts and improve speaking fluency (Afriadi & Hamzah, 2021; Tai & Wei, 2021). This approach can significantly enhance students' learning experience by allowing them to use all available languages flexibly and simultaneously. Previous research has explored EFL context-focused TL (Afriadi & Hamzah, 2021; Sobkowiak, 2022; Yuvayapan, 2019), ESL context focused TL (Akbar & Taqi, 2020; Ooi & Aziz, 2021). The translanguaging approach also leverages language diversity, helping students maximize their language skills so they can elaborate information, express ideas, and use academic vocabulary and important terms more effectively in the context of ESP (Chen et al., 2019; Llanes & Cots, 2022; Nufus, 2023; Triastuti et al., 2023;). In addition, some research focuses on one language skill, i.e. translanguaging does not have a significant impact on reading comprehension (Qureshi & Aljanadbah, 2021), helps improve the quality of writing in ESP contexts by utilizing diverse language resources (Chen et al., 2019), and enhanced interaction and comprehension through the use of both local and target languages (Afriadi & Hamzah, 2021). Despite these findings, previous studies have mostly examined translanguaging in general English language learning (EFL/ESL) contexts, demonstrating its benefits for affective factors, comprehension, and learner engagement (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Galante, 2020). However, a critical examination reveals that its application within the more specialized domain

of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) remains underexplored, particularly concerning speaking skill development.

While studies in ESP have begun to examine translanguaging's role in supporting writing or content comprehension (Chen et al., 2019; Nufus, 2023), there is a paucity of focused empirical research investigating its direct impact and strategic implementation in ESP speaking classrooms. This gap is especially pronounced in multilingual contexts like Indonesia, where learners naturally navigate a rich linguistic repertoire involving Indonesian and regional languages (e.g., Javanese, Sundanese) (Wahyudi, 2023). Although the suitability of translanguaging in such a context is theoretically acknowledged, scant research exists on how it is perceived and how it functions specifically to enhance speaking proficiency within Indonesian ESP settings. Therefore, further empirical investigation is required to examine students' perceptions of the use of translanguaging in ESP speaking classrooms, particularly in multilingual contexts such as Indonesia. By exploring how students perceive the role of translanguaging in supporting their speaking activities, this study aims to contribute insights into its pedagogical potential in ESP instruction. The findings are expected to provide educators with a clearer understanding of how translanguaging is experienced by learners and how it may support more meaningful language learning in ESP settings.

## **B. METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey design to determine how students perceive the use of translanguaging in ESP speaking classes. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to identify general patterns and tendencies in participants' responses (Creswell, 2014). The research was conducted in one of the ESP classes of a private campus in Malang city. The participants of this study were 33 students enrolled in an ESP class at a private university in Malang, East Java. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who were considered relevant to the research objectives, as they had direct experience with ESP speaking instruction involving translanguaging practices (Cohen et al., 2002).

Data were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide an overview of students' perceptions. The online questionnaire was developed by researchers in accordance with the research data requirements and was compiled using Google Forms. The questionnaire link was then distributed to respondents via WhatsApp and email. The questionnaire was designed using a four-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) without a neutral option in order to obtain clearer answers from respondents. Quantitative data obtained from the online questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, were employed to provide an overview of the questionnaire results. Prior to data analysis, the instrument was reviewed to ensure content validity, and its internal consistency was examined using reliability analysis.

### C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and analyzes the research results related to the objectives of the research. The results are organized into three main categories to provide a clear and systematic interpretation of students' perceptions of translanguaging in the ESP classroom. The first subsection examines the affective aspects of students' speaking, including confidence, comfort, and anxiety. The second subsection focuses on the perceived impact of translanguaging on students' speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency, comprehension, and pronunciation. The third subsection addresses the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of translanguaging in ESP speaking classrooms

#### 1. Students' Affective Aspects in Speaking

To understand how translanguaging shapes students' emotional experiences in speaking activities, the study assessed key affective factors such as confidence, comfort, and anxiety. Table 1 summarizes students' perceptions of how translanguaging supports these aspects during ESP speaking tasks.

**Table 1.** Students' Perception of the Impact of TL on Affective Factors in Speaking

Questionnaire items	Min	Max	Mean
Translanguaging makes it easier to express my ideas during speaking activities in the ESP classroom	2.00	4.00	3.27
My first language makes me feel more confident when speaking in English during class	2.00	4.00	3.06
Translanguaging helps me reduce my anxiety during speaking assignments	2.00	4.00	3.27
I find it easier to express complex ideas when allowed to use their first language	2.00	4.00	3.39
I feel more comfortable participating in speaking activities when I am allowed to use both my first language and English.	2.00	4.00	3.27

Based on the data from table above, the higher mean scores indicate that TL plays a significant role in reducing affective barriers and supporting oral communication, while the slightly lower scores on confidence-related items suggest that TL's contribution to building English-speaking confidence tends to be more gradual in nature. Overall, mean scores ranged from 3.06 to 3.39, indicating that students generally perceived translanguaging as beneficial in supporting the affective aspects of speaking. The highest mean score was recorded for the statement "I find it easier to express complex ideas when allowed to use my first language" ( $M = 3.39$ ). This suggests that translanguaging enables students to articulate complex ideas more comfortably during speaking activities. By allowing students to draw upon their first language, translanguaging appears to facilitate cognitive processing and alleviate the difficulty of expressing academic content in English. This finding lends support to the pedagogical translanguaging theory proposed by Cenoz and Gorter (2020), wherein classroom activities encourage students to strategically connect their first language with the target language in order to facilitate comprehension. The utilization of students' full linguistic repertoire has been shown to assist them in overcoming cognitive barriers when required to explain domain-specific concepts within the ESP context.

Furthermore, a positively scored item was also observed in the anxiety reduction category ( $M = 3.27$ ), which aligns with the ideas of García and Wei (2015), who emphasize the role of translanguaging as an approach capable of fostering an emotionally safe and supportive learning environment. This finding is consistent with the findings of Bourton and Rajendram (2019) and Iversen (2020), who assert that TL serves not only a linguistic function but also an affective function within the classroom. This is further corroborated by Puspitasari and Sugirin (2024), who found that the implementation of TL contributes to the establishment of an inclusive learning atmosphere and encourages students to communicate more freely without fear of making linguistic errors, a view similarly affirmed by Romanowski (2019), who asserts that TL effectively bridges the gap between students of varying language proficiency levels within a single classroom.

With respect to confidence enhancement, this aspect recorded the lowest mean score ( $M = 3.06$ ) compared to other affective dimensions. This finding implicitly suggests that while students feel more comfortable and less anxious with the support of their first language, such comfort does not automatically translate into autonomous confidence in using English independently. This is consistent with the recommendation of Romanowski (2019) that translanguaging should not function in isolation but rather be integrated with other instructional methods to enable students to develop optimal communicative independence and confidence in professional English use. These finding signals that TL in the ESP classroom should be positioned as a bridging strategy rather than an end in itself, so as to ensure the sustained development of students' communicative confidence.

## 2. The Perceived Impact of Translanguaging on Speaking Skills

Having evaluated the affective dimensions, the second part of these findings examines students' perceptions of the impact of translanguaging on their speaking skills more specifically within the ESP context. This analysis focuses on how the use of diverse linguistic resources assists students in organizing their thought processes, conveying technical content, and enhancing their fluency and pronunciation. The following table provide an overview of the extent to which students perceive TL as contributing to the effectiveness of their communication in the classroom.

**Table2.** Students' Perception of the Impact of TL on Speaking Proficiency

Questionnaire items	Min	Max	Mean
I feel more confident participating in speaking activities when I am allowed to use both my first language and English	1.00	4.00	3.24
Translanguaging helps me organize my thoughts better before speaking in English	2.00	4.00	3.21
Using translanguaging improves my ability to deliver content more effectively	2.00	4.00	3.27
I can speak more fluently in English when I am allowed to use my first language for complex ideas	2.00	4.00	3.15
Translanguaging helps me improve my pronunciation when I practice speaking in English	2.00	4.00	3.24

Table 2 presents students' perceptions of the impact of translanguaging on their speaking skills in ESP classes. Generally, students demonstrated positive perceptions, with the mean scores of all statements exceeding 3.0, reflecting that translanguaging is perceived as beneficial in enhancing various aspects of speaking ability. The overall mean scores ranging from 3.24 to 3.27 indicate that participants held positive perceptions toward the use of TL in supporting speaking proficiency. The minimum (2.00) and maximum (4.00) scores, with one item recording a minimum score of (1.00), suggest the presence of variation in participants' responses.

The highest average score (3.27) for the statement "Using translanguaging improves my ability to convey content more effectively" indicates that TL helps students convey ideas or content in a more structured and impactful way. This suggests that students view translanguaging as a useful strategy for expressing ideas more clearly when discussing academic topics or those related to specific subjects in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) speaking activities. By utilizing their first language and English simultaneously, students are better able to organize and articulate specific information during oral communication. These findings are consistent with the theories of García and Wei (2015) and Vogel & García (2024), which emphasize that TL enables learners to use their entire linguistic repertoire to communicate effectively without being rigidly constrained by monolingual grammatical rules. The results of this study also align with Yuvayapan (2019), who states that TL creates opportunities for students with low proficiency to engage more actively in class. Furthermore, TL's ability to bridge understanding of technical terms and difficult concepts reflects the findings of Hopp et al. (2021) and Sahib (2019), where TL functions as a cognitive aid to clarify complex vocabulary and language structures. Research by Aoyama (2020) and Conteh (2018) indicates that the use of L1 in teaching can increase student engagement and participation, which is crucial for fluent speaking.

However, the data also reveal that aspects related to fluency ( $M = 3.15$ ) and thought organization ( $M = 3.21$ ) received relatively lower scores. These scores remain positive yet indicate that some students may feel that the use of translanguaging still requires additional support, particularly in assisting them to organize their thoughts prior to speaking. In this context, TL can function as a linguistic bridge that helps students with lower English proficiency to comprehend complex concepts and communicate them more effectively. Translanguaging constitutes an effective tool for assessing students' understanding and clarifying the meaning of vocabulary items, which is particularly relevant to the needs of students who encounter difficulties in comprehending lessons delivered directly in English (Sahib, 2019). These results are highly consistent with Ha et al. (2021), who assert that TL enhances fluency and enables students to feel more secure when speaking. Furthermore, Hopp et al. (2021) found that TL is beneficial in improving students' comprehension and conceptual understanding, particularly when lecturers explain challenging concepts such as pronunciation, technical terminology, or complex linguistic structures. According to García and Wei (2015), this phenomenon encompasses more than merely the use of two languages in accordance with grammatical rules but also involves drawing upon all available linguistic resources in order to communicate effectively.

### 3. The Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing Translanguaging In ESP Classrooms.

The analysis in this section aims to understand the extent to which flexibility in language use affects students' motivation and communicative courage, while simultaneously identifying potential barriers to the development of independent English-speaking ability. The descriptive statistics presented in the table below provide an overview of the balance between the psychological benefits offered by TL and students' concerns regarding their dependence on their first language.

**Table3.** Students' Perception of the Challenges and Opportunities of TL

Questionnaire items	Min	Max	Mean
I sometimes feel that the use of first language makes it harder to fully develop my English-speaking skills	1.00	4.00	2.60
It is challenging to use English only in class without the help of my first language	2.00	4.00	3.06
Translanguaging makes me feel less afraid of making mistakes when speaking in English	2.00	4.00	3.27
I feel more motivated to participate in discussions when I can use both my first language and English	2.00	4.00	3.24
Translanguaging helps me gain confidence in speaking in front of others in English	2.00	4.00	3.12

The findings showed that the highest mean score ( $M = 3.27$ ). This suggests that translanguaging plays a significant role in creating a more supportive learning environment and reducing psychological pressure during speaking activities. This finding demonstrates that flexibility in language use enhances students' emotional comfort when participating in speaking activities. Conversely, the lowest score was recorded for the statement indicating that the use of the first language sometimes hinders the full development of English-speaking skills ( $M = 2.60$ ). This finding indicates that while translanguaging enhances students' comfort and participation, its role in building speaking confidence remains limited. Students' perception that their first language may impede the optimal development of their English-speaking skills further reflects their concerns regarding over-reliance on their mother tongue.

These findings corroborate the research of Puspitasari and Sugirin (2024), who assert that the use of TL can enhance students' confidence in speaking, help establish an inclusive and pressure-free learning environment, and encourage students to better comprehend subject matter using their mother tongue. The ability to draw upon the first language as a form of support enables students to feel comfortable speaking in public, further demonstrating that TL also provides a sense of psychological security. With this sense of security, students are not only able to speak more freely but are also more motivated to participate in classroom discussions without fear of making errors. This opportunity is equally consistent with the ideas of Aoyama (2020), who argues that students' awareness of the role of the first language employed by the teacher can facilitate their learning process

From a pedagogical standpoint, these findings imply that ESP educators have considerable opportunity to utilize TL as a tool for promoting active student participation. However, students' concerns regarding TL as a potential barrier to the full development of English language proficiency ( $M = 2.60$ ) present a distinct challenge for educators. Consequently, the implementation of TL must be carried out in a proportional and strategic manner so as

not to diminish the focus on the target language. Teachers need to balance the emotional benefits of TL with intensive English output practice to ensure that students' psychological comfort ultimately translates into the development of independent and professional communicative competence.

#### D. CONCLUSION

This study investigates students' perspectives on the application of translanguaging (TL) in teaching speaking skills in ESP classes. It focuses on how TL can affect the speaking skills, including factors such as students' confidence, motivation, and comfort when speaking, and explores the challenges and opportunities in using TL as a pedagogical strategy. In summary, from a comprehension standpoint, TL assists students in understanding challenging material and enables them to feel secure when communicating, particularly in social learning contexts. From a motivational standpoint, TL encourages students to speak and engage actively in speaking activities. On the other hand, concerns remain that the use of the first language may constitute an obstacle to the comprehensive development of English-speaking skills, particularly with respect to pronunciation. Taken together, these findings suggest that translanguaging holds considerable pedagogical potential in the ESP speaking classroom, yet its effective implementation necessitates a carefully balanced approach that harnesses its affective and cognitive benefits while simultaneously fostering students' gradual progression toward autonomous and professionally competent English communication.

Consequently, the findings of this study offer practical pedagogical recommendations for ESP educators to implement translanguaging strategically, particularly as a supportive tool in addressing complex tasks without overlooking the importance of exclusive English language practice necessary for cultivating students' speaking independence, and educators need to establish clear boundaries regarding when TL is permitted so as to ensure that the primary objective of achieving professional communicative competence in the target language remains attainable. While these contributions are noteworthy, the findings should be interpreted in light of several methodological constraints inherent to the present study, most notably the limited number of participants, the confinement of the research setting to a single institution, and the absence of observational data or objective performance measures to complement the student perception-based findings, thereby suggesting that future research adopt a mixed-method approach with a larger and more diverse sample, directly investigate teachers' pedagogical practices, and examine the long-term effects of translanguaging on students' speaking proficiency in professional workplace settings.

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