# Imprroving Students' Reading Comprehension Through Translanguaging Strategy at Mts DDI Amparita

*****Nurul Isnaini
Universitas Muhammadiyah Parepare
***Email: nurulisnaini610@gmail.com**

**Abstract**

This study investigated whether translanguaging strategies can improve students' reading comprehension at MTs DDI Amparita. The study employed a quasi-experimental design with pre-tests and post-tests, involving two eighth-grade classes as samples: one taught using translanguaging and the other using code-switching. A reading comprehension test was used to collect data, and the results were statistically analyzed. The findings indicated that the experimental group showed improvement in reading comprehension, with post-test scores reaching a higher average compared to the control group. The t-test results also confirmed that translanguaging had a statistically significant impact on student achievement. Furthermore, translanguaging not only facilitated deeper text comprehension but also encouraged student participation, reduced learning anxiety, and created a more inclusive classroom environment. These results suggest that translanguaging can be considered a pedagogical approach that can improve English reading comprehension, particularly in multilingual learning contexts.

**Keywords:** English Learning, Reading Comprehension, Translanguaging

## INTRODUCTION

In the globalization era, English plays a crucial role as the dominant language of international communication, science, business, and culture. Mastering English provides students with access to wider knowledge, opportunities for academic exchange, and pathways to global collaboration. In educational contexts, English language teaching has become increasingly important to equip learners with the skills needed to succeed in a competitive world. Among the four language skills, reading is considered a fundamental aspect because it supports not only language learning but also overall academic achievement. Through reading, students can develop critical thinking, broaden their horizons, and strengthen their literacy. Therefore, improving students' reading comprehension has become an urgent focus in English education, particularly in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language.

Reading comprehension is not merely the ability to pronounce or recognize words but involves constructing meaning from texts. According to Snow (2002), comprehension is a process of simultaneously extracting and building meaning through interaction with

written language. This highlights that reading requires active cognitive engagement, where readers identify main ideas, interpret details, and make inferences. In the Indonesian context, however, many students struggle with these skills due to low literacy habits and limited vocabulary. The lack of motivation to read also contributes to their difficulty in understanding English texts. As a result, reading comprehension continues to be one of the most challenging aspects of English language learning for Indonesian students.

At MTs DDI Amparita, similar problems were observed among eighth-grade students. Based on classroom observations, their reading interest was relatively low, and their test scores often fell below the minimum standard. Many students expressed that reading in English felt boring and difficult, which discouraged them from engaging actively in the learning process. Several internal factors, such as weak motivation and limited reading habits, influenced this condition. In addition, external factors, including monotonous teaching methods, lack of family support, and the dominance of digital entertainment, also played a role. Consequently, students' comprehension of English texts remained low, which negatively affected both their learning outcomes and confidence.

To overcome these obstacles, teachers need effective and innovative strategies that help students connect with texts more meaningfully. One promising approach is translanguaging, which allows learners to use their first language alongside English to facilitate comprehension. García and Wei (2014) describe translanguaging as the flexible use of multiple languages to construct knowledge and make meaning. This approach creates space for students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire when dealing with challenging tasks. Previous studies indicate that translanguaging reduces learning barriers, supports vocabulary development, and increases student engagement. Moreover, it promotes inclusivity in the classroom by validating students' linguistic identities and encouraging active participation.

Considering these advantages, this study aims to investigate whether translanguaging can improve students' reading comprehension at MTs DDI Amparita. A quasi-experimental design was applied by comparing students taught with translanguaging and those taught with code-switching. This comparison allows researchers to measure whether translanguaging provides greater benefits than conventional strategies. This study is expected to demonstrate that translanguaging can significantly improve reading performance and comprehension. Furthermore, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence supporting the integration of translanguaging in English classes, particularly in multilingual contexts. Ultimately, this study contributes to theoretical discussions and practical implications for English language teaching in Indonesia.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Participant

This study involved 38 eighth-grade students at MTs DDI Amparita, consisting of two intact classes with 19 students each. One class was assigned as the experimental group, taught using translanguaging strategies, and the other class as the control group, taught through code-switching. Participants were selected through total sampling, due to the relatively small population. They had multilingual backgrounds, with Indonesian as their primary language and regional languages spoken at home, making the context suitable for implementing translanguaging in English learning.

### Course Descriptions

The course content in this study focused on reading comprehension of narrative texts, which is one of the core materials for eighth-grade students at MTs DDI Amparita. Narrative texts were chosen because they are widely used in the curriculum and provide opportunities for students to practice identifying orientation, complication, and resolution, as well as extracting main ideas and moral values. Examples of texts included *The Legend of Malin Kundang*, *The Lion and the Mouse*, and *Cinderella*, which are familiar stories for students and relevant to their cultural background. These texts were considered appropriate because they contain clear structures and relatable themes that make them suitable for comprehension practice. By engaging with narrative texts, students were expected not only to improve their language skills but also to strengthen their critical thinking through story analysis. Thus, narrative texts provided a meaningful context for the implementation of translanguaging and code-switching strategies.

In the experimental class, translanguaging strategies were systematically implemented throughout the learning session. Students were encouraged to flexibly use all their available languages to help them understand the meaning of the text. For example, students might read a paragraph in English, then retell or summarize it in Indonesian or their local language before switching back to English during class discussions. This process allowed them to build a bridge between their prior knowledge and new concepts presented in English. Translanguaging also reduced students' anxiety when faced with difficult vocabulary or complex sentence structures, as they could rely on their first language for clarification. Furthermore, this practice encouraged collaborative learning, as students worked in groups to discuss and explain the story using a mix of both languages. Overall, this approach provided an inclusive classroom atmosphere where all students could actively participate regardless of their English proficiency level.

In the control class, the course was conducted using code-switching as the primary teaching strategy. The teacher primarily explained narrative texts in English but occasionally switched to Indonesian to clarify difficult words or phrases. Students were asked to answer comprehension questions and retell stories primarily in Indonesian, with limited opportunities to actively use English. Unlike translanguaging, code-switching in this

setting was teacher-directed and less flexible, focusing primarily on bridging communication gaps rather than fostering deeper interaction between the two languages. As a result, students tended to rely heavily on Indonesian when completing comprehension tasks, which sometimes limited their engagement with the English text. This approach conventionally reflects classroom practice where code-switching serves as a support tool rather than a learning resource. While helpful in certain aspects, this method does not provide the same level of student engagement or language development opportunities as translanguaging.

The comparison between the two strategies highlighted a key distinction in how students engaged with narrative texts. Translanguaging gave students agency to draw upon their full linguistic repertoire to understand, analyze, and retell stories, while code-switching provided support in a more limited way through teacher intervention. In the experimental class, students were able to discuss moral values, character traits, and story structures more confidently by moving between languages as needed. Meanwhile, students in the control class often depended on teacher explanations and were less active in generating their own understanding of the texts. This distinction is crucial because it demonstrates how instructional strategies directly influence student participation and comprehension outcomes. Therefore, the design of the course in both groups illustrates the pedagogical implications of using translanguaging compared to traditional code-switching in English classrooms.

**Instruments**

The main research instrument used in this study was a reading comprehension test designed to measure students' ability to understand narrative texts. The test was administered in two stages: a pre-test given before the treatment and a post-test given after the treatment. Both tests contained similar types of questions to ensure comparability, including literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and evaluative comprehension items. The questions required students to identify main ideas, recognize supporting details, make inferences, and determine moral values from the texts. Narrative texts such as *Malin Kundang*, *The Lion and the Mouse*, and *Cinderella* were selected as the test materials because of their familiarity and suitability for measuring comprehension. By using these instruments, the researcher was able to obtain quantitative data on students' reading progress across both experimental and control groups.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the study revealed that the application of translanguaging strategy had a significant positive effect on students' reading comprehension at MTs DDI Amparita. Data from the pre-test showed that students in both the experimental and control groups had similar levels of comprehension, with average scores in the low category. However, after the treatment, the post-test results indicated substantial improvement in the experimental class, where the average score increased to 86.78 and most students achieved "good" or "very good" categories. In contrast, the control class, which was taught through code-switching, only reached an average of 61.68, with many students still

remaining in the "poor" category. This demonstrates that translanguaging provided greater benefits in helping students comprehend narrative texts compared to conventional strategies. The statistical analysis supported this conclusion, as the t-test value (7.349) was higher than the t-table value (2.101), confirming that the difference was significant at the 0.05 level.

These findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms. Snow (2002) argued that reading comprehension involves constructing meaning through active interaction with text, and translanguaging facilitates this process by enabling students to use their first language as a bridge to understanding English texts. The results of this study also support Nur et al. (2020), who found that translanguaging significantly improved students' reading comprehension by encouraging deeper interactions between teachers and students. Students in the experimental class were able to retell stories more clearly, identify moral values, and draw conclusions using a combination of English and their first language. This flexibility reduced anxiety, increased self-confidence, and encouraged them to actively engage during learning sessions. Therefore, translanguaging proved effective not only in improving scores but also in creating an inclusive classroom environment.

A closer examination of the data further highlighted that translanguaging reduced disparities among students' achievement levels. The standard deviation in the experimental class was smaller (9.76) compared to the control class (13.92), indicating a more even distribution of comprehension gains. This suggests that this strategy helps disadvantaged students catch up with their peers, thereby reducing the learning gap. This finding is consistent with Goli (2021), who emphasized that translanguaging promotes equitable learning outcomes by enabling students to use their full linguistic repertoire. In this study, students who initially struggled with English texts reported that translanguaging gave them the confidence to participate in discussions and answer comprehension questions, resulting in overall improvement. In contrast, the control group showed greater variation in scores, with some students still failing to meet the minimum standard.

The results also highlight important pedagogical implications. While code-switching provides some support by clarifying meanings, its role remains limited and teacher-centered, which may reduce opportunities for student autonomy. Translanguaging, on the other hand, allows students to take greater responsibility for meaning-making by using their native language strategically alongside English. This supports the findings of Ocampo (2023), who reported that translanguaging enhances not only literal comprehension but also inferential and evaluative understanding. In this study, students in the experimental class were able to analyze story elements, connect them with real-life contexts, and evaluate the moral lessons of the narratives more effectively than those in the control class. These outcomes show that translanguaging develops higher-order thinking skills, which are crucial in promoting deeper literacy.

Despite its advantages, the study also recognizes potential challenges in applying translanguaging. As noted by Aqilah & Abdul (2023), excessive reliance on the first

language may reduce students' motivation to practice English, and this was observed in a few cases during the study. Some students preferred to retell stories mostly in Indonesian rather than attempting to express ideas in English. However, with proper scaffolding and structured guidance, this limitation can be minimized. Teachers need to balance the use of translanguaging so that it serves as a bridge toward English proficiency rather than a substitute for it. Overall, the results of this study confirm that translanguaging is a powerful pedagogical strategy that not only improves reading comprehension but also supports equitable participation and inclusive practices in multilingual classrooms.

**CONCLUSION**

The results of this study indicate that the translanguaging strategy has been proven to improve students' reading comprehension at MTs DDI Amparita. The experimental group, which received instruction through translanguaging, achieved significantly higher post-test scores than the control group, which was taught through code-switching. Statistical analysis confirmed this improvement, showing that the difference between the two groups was significant at the 0.05 level. These findings suggest that translanguaging provides a more powerful learning approach compared to conventional strategies because it allows students to use their first language as a bridge to understanding English texts. Furthermore, translanguaging has been shown to reduce anxiety, encourage active participation, and create an inclusive classroom environment. This suggests that utilizing students' full linguistic repertoire can lead to better academic outcomes and stronger engagement with learning.

Furthermore, this study shows that translanguaging not only benefits high-achieving students but also supports those with lower proficiency levels. The smaller standard deviation in the experimental class compared to the control group reflects a more even distribution of comprehension gains, meaning that less-able students are catching up with their peers. This study confirms the role of translanguaging in promoting equity and inclusivity in multilingual classrooms. Although some students tend to rely too heavily on their first language during retelling activities, this challenge can be minimized with appropriate teacher scaffolding and balanced instruction. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that translanguaging serves as a bridge to English proficiency, rather than a substitute for it.

In conclusion, translanguaging is a promising pedagogical approach that improves reading comprehension, fosters student confidence, and bridges linguistic diversity in the classroom. Its implementation in an English as a Foreign Language context, such as in Indonesia, demonstrates that multilingual resources can be a powerful tool to support language learning. These findings provide both theoretical and practical contributions: theoretically, they confirm the relevance of translanguaging in literacy development, while practically, they recommend its use as an alternative strategy for English teachers. This study suggests that future educational practices and policies should consider integrating translanguaging as part of instructional design to improve language outcomes and create inclusive learning environments for all students.

## REFERENCES


Aqiah, S., & Abdul, B. (2023). Translanguaging: Teachers and Pupils' Challenges in ESL Reading Comprehension Lessons in Chinese Vernacular Primary School. Higher Education and Oriental Studies, 3(1), 37–53. https://doi.org/10.54435/heos.v3i1.92

Gay, L. R., Milss, G., & Airasian, P. (2012). Educational Research Competencies Analysis and Application (10th ed.).

Goli, A. (2021). Assessment of the Effectiveness of Translanguaging Pedagogy for Japanese EFL Students' reading Comprehension. International Journal of Language and Linguistics, 8(2), 54–58. https://doi.org/10.30845/ijll.v8n2p1

Goli, A. (2023). Translanguaging Instruction and Reading Comprehension Skills of Japanese EFL Learners: A Quasi-Experimental Study. Journal of Language andEducation, 9(1), 59–75. https://doi.org/10.17323/JLE.2023.14069

Harefa, T. (2021). Peningkatan Keterampilan Membaca Teks Klasifikasi Menggunakan Metode SQ3R dengan Media Gambar. Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan, 5(1), 658–664. https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v5i1.2125

Harianto, E. (2020). "Keterampilan Membaca dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa." *Jurnal Didaktika*, 9(1), 2. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.2

Lee, S. (2019). The Importance of Language Learning in a Globalized World. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 10(5), 901–907.

Nur, R., Namrullah, Z., Syawal, & Nasrullah, A. (2020). Enhancing Reading Comprehension Through Translanguaging Strategy. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 11(6), 970–977. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1106.14

Nur Tiala. (2017). Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through Read, Ask, Put (Rap) *Strategy At The Second Grade Students Of MTsN Belopa*.

Ocampo, D. (2023). Translanguaging and Reading Comprehension of Filipino ESL Intermediate Learners. *Journal of Natural Language and Linguistics*, 1(1), 13–21. https://doi.org/10.54536/jnll.v1i1.1510

Pitri, R., & Sofia, A. (2022). Factor Analysis for Increasing Reading Literacy in Indonesia. *Parameter: Journal of Statistics*, 2(2). https://doi.org/10.22487/27765660.2022.v2.i2.15898

Putrawan, G. E. (2022). *Gede Eka Putrawan Translanguaging Practices in EFL Classrooms: Evidence From Indonesia Translanguaging*.

Putrawan, G. E. (2022). Translanguaging Practices in Efl Classrooms: Evidence From Indonesia. *CaLLs (Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics)*, 8(1), 69. https://doi.org/10.30872/calls.v8i1.7973

Ramadani, R. (2015). Membaca Permulaan Melalui Kegiatan Menebalkan Huruf. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, *4*(1), 582-587. https://doi.org/10.21831/jpa.v4i1.12346

Umam, A. H. (2022). Translanguaging As a Practical Pedagogy Based on Educators' Perspective. ANGLO-SAXON: *Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 13(1), 76–87. https://doi.org/10.33373/as.v13i1.4314

Wei, L. (2018). Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(1), 9–30. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amx039