

TRANSLANGUAGING PRACTICES IN STUDENTS' INFERENTIAL COMPREHENSION DURING NARRATIVE TEXT DISCUSSIONS

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: May 2026 Revised: July 2026 Accepted: September 2026 Published: October 2026	<i>The growing linguistic complexity of Indonesian EFL classrooms has exposed a significant gap between students' multilingual realities and existing pedagogical approaches, particularly in developing inferential comprehension of narrative texts. While translanguaging has gained theoretical traction as a means of leveraging students' full linguistic resources, empirical evidence of its practical implementation in this context remains limited. This study aims to explore how translanguaging practices in small group discussions support university students' inferential meaning-making when engaging with narrative texts. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, this study involved four Indonesian university EFL students as participants. Data were collected through recorded Zoom small group discussions and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model of data analysis. The findings reveal that translanguaging functions as a cognitive tool facilitating multiple inference types including logical, predictive, causal, and sociocultural while supporting a multi-stage process of exploration, negotiation, and formalization of meaning. These results indicate that students' cross-linguistic movement is not a communicative obstacle but rather a strategic resource for constructing deeper textual understanding. In conclusion, translanguaging meaningfully enhances inferential comprehension by enabling students to integrate their linguistic, cognitive, and cultural resources simultaneously. These findings imply that EFL educators and curriculum designers should reconceptualize multilingual classroom practices by intentionally incorporating translanguaging as a legitimate pedagogical strategy to strengthen reading literacy instruction.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian EFL classrooms represent inherently multilingual environments in which students navigate multiple linguistic resources, including regional languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and English. This multilingual reality creates both opportunities and challenges for language learning, particularly in developing advanced reading comprehension abilities. Although students are expected to achieve complex interpretive skills in English, classroom practices often continue to rely on predominantly monolingual instructional approaches that restrict learners' access to their complete linguistic repertoires (Ashari, Sibarani, & Siregar, 2025). One important challenge within this context concerns inferential comprehension, which requires readers to construct meanings beyond explicitly stated information by integrating textual evidence, prior knowledge, and contextual understanding (Simanullang, Ashari, Sinaga, & Edi, 2025). Unlike literal comprehension, inferential reading involves higher-order cognitive processes, including prediction, synthesis, evaluation, and critical reasoning. Therefore, supporting students' ability to make inferences is essential for improving academic literacy and deeper engagement with texts.

Narrative texts provide a particularly significant context for examining inferential comprehension because they require readers to interpret implicit meanings related to characters, events, motivations, and thematic messages. Recent evidence suggests that adolescent readers generate stronger inferences from narrative texts than from informational texts because narratives provide richer opportunities to connect causal relationships, character intentions, and background knowledge (Cain et al., 2025). However, inferential comprehension remains challenging for multilingual learners because successful inference-making depends not only on linguistic proficiency but also on access to cultural knowledge and interpretive strategies. Tai (2022) argues that students with limited proficiency in the instructional language often experience difficulties identifying subtle linguistic cues and cultural references necessary for constructing deeper meanings. Consequently, multilingual learners may encounter barriers when attempting to bridge gaps between explicit textual information and implied meanings.

Previous research demonstrates that inferential comprehension difficulties are not exclusively linguistic problems but are also related to learners' strategic knowledge and reading practices. Studies on EFL reading have highlighted the importance of metacognitive strategies, explicit inference instruction, guided questioning, and scaffolded activities in improving students' ability to interpret implicit meanings (Becirovic, Brdarevic-Celjo, & Dubravac, 2018). These findings indicate that learners require instructional approaches that support both cognitive processing and linguistic accessibility. In multilingual classrooms, one promising approach is translanguaging, which allows students to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire as a resource for constructing meaning.

Translanguaging has emerged as an influential perspective that challenges traditional views of languages as separate and bounded systems. García (2009) defines translanguaging as a dynamic process through which bilingual and multilingual individuals use their complete linguistic repertoires to make meaning. Unlike conventional code-switching, translanguaging emphasizes the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and semiotic resources in communication and learning (García & Wei, 2014). As both a pedagogical practice and ideological perspective, translanguaging recognizes multilingual learners' languages as valuable cognitive and cultural resources rather than obstacles to English learning (García & Kleyn, 2016). This perspective is particularly relevant in Indonesian EFL contexts, where students naturally move between regional languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and English during learning activities.

The cognitive contribution of translanguaging is particularly important for inferential comprehension. By allowing learners to process complex ideas through familiar linguistic

resources before expressing them in English, translanguaging can reduce cognitive demands and support higher-order reasoning (Tai & Wei, 2021). It enables learners to access background knowledge, cultural experiences, and conceptual understanding that may remain inaccessible under strictly English-only instruction (García, Johnson, Seltzer, & Lynch, 2018). Furthermore, translanguaging supports the interpretation of culturally embedded meanings in narrative texts, where implicit messages, moral values, and character motivations often require knowledge beyond the literal content of the text. Otheguy, García, and Reid (2018) argue that translanguaging allows learners to mobilize linguistic and cultural resources to construct meanings that would otherwise be difficult to achieve within monolingual learning environments.

Beyond individual cognition, translanguaging also facilitates collaborative meaning-making during classroom interactions. Translanguaging practices enable learners to negotiate interpretations, clarify ideas, and collaboratively construct understanding through diverse linguistic and semiotic resources (Wei, 2018). Creese and Blackledge (2015) demonstrate that translanguaging in classroom discussions allows students to explain concepts to peers, overcome comprehension difficulties, and develop shared interpretations. In Indonesian multilingual classrooms, translanguaging functions as a cognitive and sociocultural bridge that supports collaborative knowledge construction among learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds (Ashari, Sibarani, & Siregar, 2025). Previous studies indicate that students who initially discuss narrative texts using their familiar languages can demonstrate improved comprehension when transitioning to English-based academic expression (Tai, 2024).

Despite increasing theoretical attention to translanguaging and inferential comprehension, empirical research examining how translanguaging specifically supports inferential meaning-making in narrative reading discussions remains limited. Existing studies have explored translanguaging in relation to general literacy development and reading comprehension (Ocampo, 2022; Huang & Chalmers, 2023), while recent reviews have emphasized its cognitive, affective, and sociocultural benefits in EFL contexts (Zakharova & Lasagabaster, 2026). However, these studies have rarely examined how translanguaging practices correspond to specific inference processes, such as logical, predictive, causal, and sociocultural reasoning. Furthermore, much translanguaging research in Indonesia has focused primarily on describing language alternation patterns rather than investigating the cognitive functions served by multilingual practices during higher-order comprehension activities.

This limitation represents an important research gap because inferential comprehension requires learners to actively construct connections between textual information and prior knowledge. Although inferential questioning has been shown to stimulate deeper engagement with implicit meanings (Hutagalung, Ashari, Sinaga, & Adam, 2025), little is known about how students use their multilingual resources to negotiate these meanings during collaborative reading discussions. Existing research has also predominantly examined bilingual contexts such as Spanish–English or Cantonese–English classrooms (García, 2018; Tai, 2022; 2023a), which differ from the highly fluid multilingual ecology of Indonesian classrooms. Therefore, investigating translanguaging in Indonesian EFL settings provides an opportunity to expand understanding of how multilingual learners employ diverse linguistic resources for complex cognitive tasks.

This study addresses this gap by examining translanguaging as a cognitive and interactional resource for supporting inferential comprehension during narrative text discussions among Indonesian EFL university students. The study aims to investigate the forms of translanguaging practices that emerge during collaborative reading activities, analyze how these

practices facilitate different types of inferential reasoning, and explore the stages through which translanguaging contributes to meaning construction. The novelty of this study lies in moving beyond examining translanguaging as a general classroom phenomenon and instead mapping specific translanguaging practices onto distinct inference types and stages of meaning-making, including exploration, negotiation, and formalization. This approach provides a more detailed understanding of the cognitive mechanisms through which multilingual resources support advanced reading comprehension.

Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions: *What types of translanguaging practices emerge during Indonesian EFL university students' small-group discussions of narrative texts?; How do these translanguaging practices facilitate inferential comprehension, including logical, predictive, causal, and sociocultural inference types?; and Through what stages of meaning-making—exploration, negotiation, and formalization—does translanguaging support students' inferential reasoning during narrative discussions?*

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) emphasize that qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena in natural settings through direct interaction, focusing on processes rather than outcomes. This approach is appropriate as the study seeks to explore how students use and negotiate linguistic resources to construct meaning in semi-formal discussions. Creswell & Creswell (2018) further note that descriptive qualitative research captures participants' perspectives and the complexity of their experiences in rich detail. In addition, Flick (2022) highlights that research design is essential for ensuring the quality of findings; thus, this study analyzes detailed interactions occurring during students' discussions in response to narrative texts.

Aligned with naturalistic inquiry principles (Jacobson, 2019) this design positions students as active participants who collaboratively construct meaning in authentic contexts, recognizing that language use is contextual, dynamic, and unpredictable (Rymes, 2022). Accordingly, students' group discussions served as the primary data source. Zoom-based synchronous group discussion was selected as the primary data collection setting for several interconnected reasons. Second, Zoom allows for the simultaneous recording of both verbal interaction and nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and gestures, which are analytically relevant to understanding how meaning is co-constructed in multilingual discussions. The use of a digital platform is consistent with virtual ethnography principles, which recognize online spaces as legitimate and analytically productive research sites (Pole & Morrison, 2003).

Research Participants and Site

Students' interactions were conducted through group discussions via Zoom to obtain recorded data. The use of Zoom is also methodologically appropriate because videoconferencing can support synchronous qualitative data collection when ethical, technical, and interactional issues are carefully managed (Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey, & Lawless, 2019). The participants were four students from Universitas Riau Kepulauan, Batam, Indonesia, who voluntarily agreed to take part. All four participants were undergraduate students enrolled in the English Language Education Study Program at Universitas Riau Kepulauan, Batam, Indonesia, at the time of the study. They were in their third year of study and had completed foundational courses in reading comprehension and language skills, making them academically suited to engage with inferential tasks in narrative texts.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, guided by two primary criteria: (1) they were active users of more than one language in their daily communication, specifically Bahasa Indonesia, at least one regional language (Batak or Malay), and English and (2) they had prior experience with group discussion tasks in academic settings. These criteria were established to ensure that participants' translanguaging practices would be both observable and analytically meaningful in the context of the study. Purposive sampling is appropriate when the goal is to select information-rich cases that are directly relevant to the research phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In terms of language background, all four participants were multilingual from early childhood, having grown up in Batam, a border city with a highly diverse linguistic ecology comprising Bahasa Indonesia, various regional languages, and English as a language of commerce and education. This background made them representative of the multilingual student population that is the focus of this study. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant in accordance with ethical research guidelines (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants were assured of confidentiality; pseudonyms are used throughout this report to protect their identities. These procedures are consistent with applied linguistics research principles that emphasize ethical access, participant autonomy, and trust-building in the field (Rogers & Révész, 2020). Additionally, it follows ethical guidelines proposed by Creswell & Creswell (2018), including maintaining confidentiality, securing informed consent, and respecting participants' autonomy throughout the research process.

Instruments

Recording, transcription, and the researcher were employed as the primary instruments for data collection. Recording captured authentic verbal interactions in real time without influencing participants' behavior (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) using non-participant observation. Online qualitative data collection also requires careful attention to ethical, technical, and interpersonal dimensions, especially when interaction is mediated through digital platforms (Salmons, 2015). All recordings were converted into verbatim transcripts, enabling systematic analysis to identify patterns, keywords, and contextual meanings. Observation notes were also taken to complement the transcripts by capturing nonverbal and contextual details. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data and findings, several measures were implemented across the stages of data collection and analysis. First, credibility was established through prolonged engagement with the data: researchers repeatedly reviewed the full recordings and transcripts before selecting excerpts for analysis, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in the full context of each discussion rather than isolated fragments. Fourth, conformability was strengthened through investigator triangulation, whereby two members of the research team independently coded a subset of the data and then compared and reconciled their interpretations. The data collection procedure followed a clear sequence. The entire session was recorded with participants' consent. Following the session, recordings were transcribed verbatim, with code-switching instances preserved exactly as spoken.

Data Analysis

This study aligns with the interactive model of data analysis proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014), which emphasizes iterative and simultaneous data collection and analysis to enhance validity and uncover meaningful patterns. The analysis followed three main stages. First stage was data condensation, where relevant excerpts from students' interactions

were selected based on the research objectives. The data were then simplified by identifying keywords, significant phrases, and contextual meanings, allowing the researchers to focus on segments with high analytical value. Second stage was data display, in which the condensed data were organized into tables to clarify interaction patterns and the flow of discussion. Open coding techniques were also applied to generate themes emerging naturally from students' discourse.

The final stage involved conclusion drawing and verification, where the researchers interpreted the data and rechecked the validity of findings through triangulation, ensuring the credibility of the results. In total, 34 key excerpts were selected for in-depth analysis, distributed across ten inferential questions responding to a narrative text. Each excerpt was selected on the basis of containing at least one observable translanguaging move that contributed to the process of inferential meaning-making. The selection of the 34 excerpts followed explicit and systematic criteria. From the full transcripts, interaction units were initially identified based on the presence of observable translanguaging moves defined as instances where participants shifted between Bahasa Indonesia, a regional language, and/or English within a single turn or across adjacent turns. Each candidate excerpt was then evaluated against three additional criteria: (1) it contained at least one identifiable inference type (logical, predictive, causal, or sociocultural); (2) it demonstrated a distinct stage of meaning-making (exploration, negotiation, or formalization); and (3) it represented a pattern that was either recurring across participants or analytically unique in its function.

Excerpts that were ambiguous, incomplete due to technical audio issues, or redundant with already-selected excerpts were excluded. Coding proceeded in two phases. In the first phase, open coding was applied to identify emerging themes and label the function of each translanguaging move within its interactional context. In the second phase, axial coding was used to group related codes into broader categories corresponding to inference types and meaning-making stages. Triangulation was carried out at two levels. First, data triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing the verbal transcripts with the observation notes taken during the Zoom sessions, ensuring that nonverbal cues and contextual factors were integrated into the interpretation of each excerpt. Second, investigator triangulation was applied by having two researchers independently code three of the 34 excerpts before comparing results and resolving discrepancies through discussion.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of 34 excerpts drawn from students' Zoom-based group discussions of a narrative text. The excerpts were selected from interactions responding to ten inferential questions, each targeting a distinct type of inference: logical, predictive, character-based, causal, contextual, symbolic, predictive-causal, schema-based, genre-based, and sociocultural. Across all ten questions, a total of 34 interaction excerpts were identified as analytically significant, each demonstrating at least one observable translanguaging move that contributed to the process of inferential meaning-making. The findings are organized question by question, with each section comprising three components: (1) a brief description of the inferential demand of the question, (2) an analysis of the translanguaging practices observed in the students' interaction, and (3) representative excerpts illustrating the key patterns.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Inferential Comprehension

A closer examination of the interaction reveals that students' translanguaging practices function not merely as a communicative strategy, but as a cognitive tool for mediating inferential

meaning-making. In responding to the question of whether the old house is inhabited, students are required to integrate textual evidence, activate background knowledge, and apply logical reasoning processes that are significantly scaffolded through their dynamic bilingual discourse. At the outset, translanguaging is employed to construct a shared epistemic understanding of the task as inferential rather than literal. This is evident when a student explicitly frames the nature of the question: *“jadi untuk menjawab ini kita harus menduga berdasarkan dari beberapa keterangan keterangan di dalam teks.”* (Lines 31–32). This utterance is critical because it represents a form of metacognitive regulation, where the speaker guides peers to shift from surface-level comprehension to deeper inferential processing.

The use of Indonesian here is not incidental; rather, it allows for conceptual precision and inclusivity, ensuring that all participants fully grasp the abstract requirement of “inferring” beyond the text. As the discussion progresses, translanguaging becomes a mechanism for bridging textual evidence and interpretive reasoning. For instance, Melanie’s response demonstrates how linguistic resources are flexibly mobilized to construct inference: *“In my opinion menurut aku rumahnya berpenghuni, karena sometimes the light turning on, jadi kalau malam kayak suggest someone in there.”* (Lines 34–35). In this excerpt, English is used to anchor the claim in textual evidence (“the light turning on”), while Indonesian is used to elaborate causal reasoning (*“jadi kalau malam...”*).

The fluid alternation reflects what can be understood as cognitive layering, where different languages are recruited to perform distinct epistemic functions English for textual referencing and Indonesian for inferential elaboration. Such practice enables the student to construct a coherent link between observable clues and inferred human presence. This negotiation is further intensified through the expression of epistemic stance and uncertainty, which is a key feature of higher-order inferencing: *“kemungkinan... fifty fifty... bisa iya bisa ngga.”* (Lines 41, 52). The use of Indonesian terms such as *kemungkinan* (possibility) allows students to articulate degrees of certainty more naturally, thereby enabling a more nuanced evaluation of competing hypotheses. This reflects an important dimension of inferential comprehension: the ability to weigh evidence and tolerate ambiguity. Translanguaging, in this sense, provides a linguistic space where such epistemic negotiation can occur more fluidly.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Predictive Inferential Comprehension

In responding to the second question, the students’ interaction illustrates how translanguaging practices facilitate predictive inferential comprehension, particularly in projecting future possibilities based on textual evidence and background knowledge. Unlike the first question, which centers on evaluating present conditions, this task requires students to extend beyond the given information and construct a forward-looking interpretation. The data reveal that translanguaging plays a crucial role in enabling this cognitive shift from interpretation to prediction. At the initial stage, translanguaging is used to reframe and contextualize the question, ensuring that all participants understand the temporal and inferential demand of the task: *“Jadi, pertanyaannya ini adalah apa yang akan terjadi terhadap rumah tersebut di masa depan yang dekat? Maksudnya untuk seterusnya ini kemana, bakal kayak mana rumahnya?”* (Lines 63–65). Here, the speaker strategically shifts into Indonesian to elaborate the meaning of “near future,” unpacking it into more concrete and accessible terms. This move reflects conceptual scaffolding, where translanguaging supports the transformation of an abstract inferential prompt into a cognitively manageable task. It ensures that students are not merely translating the question linguistically, but reconceptualizing it in terms of prediction and possibility.

Subsequently, translanguaging enables students to draw on textual evidence while formulating predictive inferences. One student provides a response that integrates textual clues with forward-looking reasoning: “Since a for sale sign has been put up, *terus ada juga truck datang, jadi* the house will be sold soon, *terjual*.” (Lines 66–67). This excerpt demonstrates a clear instance of evidence-based prediction, where English is used to reference key textual elements (“for sale sign,” “truck”), while Indonesian is used to reinforce and confirm the inference (“*jadi... terjual*”). The alternation between languages allows the student to construct a causal-probabilistic link between present indicators and future outcomes, illustrating how translanguaging supports the integration of textual cues and predictive reasoning.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Character Inferential Comprehension

In responding to the third question, the students' interaction demonstrates how translanguaging practices facilitate character inferential comprehension, particularly in deriving Sarah's personality traits from her actions and psychological responses as depicted in the narrative. This task requires readers to move beyond explicit textual information and engage in interpretive reasoning, linking behavioral evidence to abstract personality constructs. The transcript reveals that translanguaging plays a central role in enabling this complex cognitive process. At the initial stage, translanguaging is used to frame the inferential focus of the question, guiding students toward character interpretation rather than factual recall: “*Jadi kayak mana? Kita tahu apa tentang Sarah, karakter dari Sarah ini?*” (Lines 72–73). Through this shift into Indonesian, the speaker simplifies and contextualizes the task, making the abstract notion of “judging character” more accessible. This reflects conceptual mediation, where translanguaging supports students in reinterpreting the question as an invitation to analyze psychological traits based on narrative evidence.

Subsequently, translanguaging facilitates the generation of character traits through collaborative meaning-making. Students begin by proposing personality descriptors: “In my opinion, *Sarah itu orangnya* curiosity.” (Line 74) and “Anxious *juga*.” (Line 75). Moreover, translanguaging enables students to link behavioral evidence to inferred traits, which is a key component of character inference. This is evident when one student elaborates on Sarah's psychological state: “*because when sesuatu yang aneh terjadi in Sarah neighbour, her thought completely consumed her focusness.*” (Lines 80–81). This statement shows an attempt to connect observable narrative events (strange occurrences) with internal psychological reactions (anxiety, preoccupation). Although expressed in English, the idea is further clarified through Indonesian: “*Jadi dia cemas, was was, awalnya dia penasaran... tapi tiba tiba dia menjadi cemas karena banyak kejadian aneh terjadi...*” (Lines 83–85)

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Causal Inferential Comprehension

In addressing the fourth question, the students' interaction demonstrates how translanguaging practices facilitate causal inferential comprehension, particularly in identifying plausible reasons behind the occupants' decision to leave the old house. This task requires students to infer unstated causes, drawing upon contextual cues and background knowledge, rather than relying on explicitly stated information. The transcript reveals that translanguaging plays a critical role in enabling students to hypothesize, elaborate, and evaluate causal explanations collaboratively. At the outset, translanguaging is used to explicitly frame the inferential demand of the task as requiring reasoning beyond the text: “So, this question the answer is not in the text. So, we must conclude, *jadi kita harus menyimpulkan kenapa yang nempati sebelumnya itu pengen pindah.*” (Lines 86–88) This utterance reflects a form of

metacognitive scaffolding, where the speaker guides the group to recognize that the question requires causal inference rather than retrieval.

The shift into Indonesian (“*jadi kita harus menyimpulkan...*”) reinforces shared understanding, ensuring that all participants engage in constructing explanations rather than searching for literal answers. Following this, translanguaging facilitates the generation of causal hypotheses grounded in real-world knowledge. One student proposes a plausible explanation: “*Mungkin karena rumahnya udah ga layak untuk ditempati lagi.*” (Line 89). This response draws on general knowledge about housing conditions, suggesting that physical deterioration may lead to relocation. The use of Indonesian allows the student to express this idea fluently and naturally, indicating that background knowledge is more readily accessed in the first language. Another student expands the range of possible causes by introducing an alternative explanation: “*Menurut aku, in my opinion itu mungkin ada personal reason. Misalnya financial issue biasanya keuangannya lagi buruk buruknya.*” (Lines 91–92). Here, translanguaging enables the integration of multiple knowledge domains; financial issue. This demonstrates how students draw upon socioeconomic schemas to construct causal explanations, reflecting a deeper level of inferential processing.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Contextual Inferential Comprehension

In addressing the fifth question, the students' interaction illustrates how translanguaging practices facilitate contextual inferential comprehension, particularly in constructing an understanding of the broader context in which the narrative might have been written. This task requires learners to move beyond surface-level details and engage in abstract interpretation, drawing on their knowledge of genre, thematic elements, and sociocultural contexts. The transcript reveals that translanguaging plays a significant role in enabling students to navigate this complex interpretive process. At the initial stage, translanguaging is used to negotiate and clarify the meaning of “context,” which appears to be conceptually ambiguous for the students: “*Jadi konteks apa yang tertulis di story ini, kaya mana ya maksudnya.*” (Lines 109–110). This utterance indicates that the concept of “context” is not immediately accessible, prompting the speaker to shift into Indonesian to unpack its meaning. This reflects conceptual mediation, where translanguaging is used to transform an abstract academic term into a more comprehensible notion, thereby facilitating engagement with the task.

Subsequently, students begin to approximate the concept of context through genre-based reasoning, suggesting that the story belongs to a particular narrative type: “This could be written as a suspenseful or *cerita misteri*.” (Line 111). As the discussion progresses, translanguaging supports the activation of thematic and interpretive knowledge, particularly in relation to narrative elements such as mystery and the supernatural: “*Menurut aku ini supernatural elemen... soalnya lampunya itu... hidupnya di jam 8 malam... itu kaya supernatural sih.*” (Lines 114–116). This excerpt demonstrates how students draw on cultural and narrative schemas associated with supernatural themes. The use of Indonesian allows for richer elaboration of these ideas, suggesting that sociocultural knowledge is more readily accessed and expressed in the first language. Through this process, students begin to construct a contextual interpretation grounded in shared cultural understandings of mystery and suspense narratives. However, translanguaging also reveals a shift toward a more interpretive and perspective-based understanding of context, as one student reframes the discussion: “*kayanya keingin tauhan Sarah itu membuat dia merasa takut... ini kan dari perspektifnya Sarah...*” (Lines 120–122). This statement marks an important development in the inferential process. Rather than focusing solely on genre, the student begins to interpret context in terms of narrative perspective and psychological framing.

The use of Indonesian here facilitates deeper conceptual exploration, enabling the student to articulate the relationship between character perspective, emotional tone, and narrative context. The idea is then reformulated in English as part of a shared conclusion: *“because Sarah orangnya penasaran, it makes her anxious about her neighbour.”* (Lines 123–124). This shift back to English reflects an attempt to align the interpretation with the academic task, suggesting that translanguaging supports not only idea generation but also formalization of interpretive conclusions.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Symbolic Inferential Comprehension

In responding to the sixth question, the students' interaction demonstrates how translanguaging practices facilitate symbolic inferential comprehension, particularly in interpreting the non-literal meaning of the recurring lights in the old house. Unlike previous questions that rely more on concrete reasoning, this task requires students to engage in abstract and interpretive thinking, moving beyond literal description toward symbolic representation. The transcript reveals that translanguaging plays a crucial role in enabling students to construct and negotiate these deeper layers of meaning. At the outset, translanguaging is used to frame the task as one requiring interpretation rather than factual recall, although the initial response shows a tendency toward literal reasoning: *“Jadi makna lampunya kedap kedip itu makna dari lampu yang selalu hidup jam 8 itu sampai jam 9 itu apa? Menyebabkan apa.”* (Lines 125–127). This utterance illustrates how the speaker rearticulates the question in Indonesian to emphasize the key concept of *“menyebabkan”* (symbolize). This indicates an attempt to shift the group's focus from surface-level observation to symbolic interpretation, highlighting the role of translanguaging in conceptual clarification.

However, the subsequent response initially reflects a literal interpretation of the phenomenon, as one student explains: *“the owner back to check something... karena rumah itu kan udah cukup tua the light become flickering.”* (Lines 128–130) This suggests that students may initially rely on causal or factual reasoning, interpreting the lights as a physical occurrence rather than a symbolic element. This stage is important, as it reflects a transitional phase in inferential processing, where learners move from literal comprehension toward more abstract interpretation. The shift toward symbolic inference becomes more evident when another student expands the interpretation: *“mungkin lampu tadi itu menunjukkan bahwa ada orang yang tinggal disana tapi cuma didalam hari... atau melambangkan ada kehidupan tersembunyi atau rahasia didalamnya.”* (Lines 131–133). This excerpt represents a significant development in the inferential process. The student moves beyond literal explanation and begins to interpret the lights as a symbol of hidden presence or secrecy.

The use of Indonesian here is particularly important, as it allows for the expression of nuanced and abstract meanings such as *“kehidupan tersembunyi”* (hidden life) and *“rahasia”* (mystery/secret). This indicates that translanguaging supports semantic expansion, enabling students to articulate symbolic meanings that may be difficult to express in a second language. Following this, the group collaboratively negotiates and consolidates their interpretation, combining both literal and symbolic perspectives: *“So the light kadang hidup kadang mati in the old house symbolize that someone is there... or there something secret about the house that kita tak tau kan?”* (Lines 137–139). This final statement reflects a hybrid interpretation, where the lights are understood both as an indicator of possible human presence and as a symbol of mystery or the unknown. The use of English in this concluding statement suggests a shift toward formalizing the interpretation, while the prior translanguaging interaction provides the conceptual depth needed to reach this point.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Predictive–Causal Inferential Comprehension

In responding to the seventh question, the students' interaction illustrates how translanguaging practices facilitate the integration of predictive and causal inferential comprehension, particularly in anticipating the consequences of Sarah's intense curiosity. This task requires learners to connect present behavior (cause) with potential or emerging outcomes (effects), while also considering how such developments align with broader patterns of human behavior and narrative progression. The transcript reveals that translanguaging plays a crucial role in enabling students to construct these cause–effect relationships and project plausible consequences. At the initial stage, translanguaging is used to clarify the causal–predictive nature of the task, ensuring that students focus on outcomes rather than causes: "*Jadi apa gara gara kepengen tahuan yang sangat intense ini, apa yang penyebabnya, eh bukan penyebabnya akibatnya ke dia ini apa? Ke Sarah?*" (Lines 140–142).

The utterance reflects a moment of metacognitive self-correction, where the speaker explicitly distinguishes between cause (*penyebab*) and effect (*akibat*). The use of Indonesian here enables precise conceptual clarification, guiding the group to correctly interpret the question as one concerning consequences. This demonstrates how translanguaging supports task reorientation and conceptual accuracy. Subsequently, translanguaging facilitates the generation of immediate, behavior-based consequences, as one student proposes: "*Dia jadi ketakutan sendiri.*" (Line 143). This response reflects the activation of general knowledge about human behavior, particularly the idea that excessive curiosity can lead to fear or anxiety.

The use of Indonesian allows for a direct and affectively rich expression of this consequence, indicating that emotional and experiential knowledge is more readily accessed in the first language. The discussion then shifts toward textually grounded reasoning, where a student connects the inference explicitly to evidence from the narrative: "*dia kan jadi mikir sendiri, her thoughts consumed by the strange occurrences next door.*" (Line 144). This statement demonstrates the integration of textual evidence with causal reasoning, linking Sarah's curiosity to her psychological state. The use of English here reflects an attempt to anchor the inference within the textual domain, thereby increasing its validity and academic alignment. This reasoning is further elaborated through translanguaging: "*Jadi, pemikiran dia itu dimakan sama kecemasannya terhadap segala sesuatu yang aneh terjadi.*" (Lines 145–146). Here, Indonesian is used to deepen the explanation, emphasizing the intensification of Sarah's anxiety. This demonstrates how translanguaging supports semantic enrichment, allowing students to move from a basic cause–effect relationship to a more nuanced understanding of psychological consequences. Finally, the group collaboratively formulates a consolidated predictive–causal inference: "*because the intense curiosity of Sarah, her thought consumed by the strange occurred next door.*" (Lines 147–148). This statement reflects a clear cause–effect structure, where Sarah's curiosity (cause) leads to psychological distress (effect). Although the prediction remains closely tied to the immediate textual outcome (anxiety), it also implicitly suggests future narrative consequences, such as increased fear, obsession, or potential risk.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Schema-Based Inferential Comprehension

In responding to the eighth question, the students' interaction demonstrates how translanguaging practices facilitate schema-based inferential comprehension, particularly through the activation and application of background knowledge related to abandoned houses. Unlike previous questions that rely heavily on textual evidence, this task explicitly requires students to draw upon shared societal assumptions and real-world experiences, making it a clear instance of schema-driven inferencing. The transcript reveals that translanguaging plays a central role in

enabling students to access, articulate, and negotiate this background knowledge. At the initial stage, translanguaging is used to clarify the epistemic basis of the question, emphasizing that the response should be grounded in general knowledge rather than personal opinion: “*Jadi, menurut pengetahuan umum... ini bukan tentang pendapat, ya. Tapi pengetahuan umum.*” (Lines 157–159).

The utterance reflects an important act of metacognitive framing, where the speaker distinguishes between subjective opinion and socially shared knowledge. The use of Indonesian here is particularly effective, as it allows for precise clarification of the concept of “*pengetahuan umum*” (common knowledge), thereby guiding the group toward the appropriate inferential strategy. Subsequently, translanguaging facilitates the activation of culturally shared schemas related to abandoned houses. One student states: “*Biasanya rumah tua yang terbengkalai itu dianggap orang menyeramkan atau mysterious.*” (Lines 160–161). This response illustrates how students draw upon collective cultural perceptions, associating abandoned houses with fear and mystery. The use of Indonesian enables the expression of culturally embedded meanings (*menyeramkan*), while the inclusion of English (*mysterious*) reflects an attempt to align with the academic discourse of the task. This interplay highlights how translanguaging supports the articulation of culturally situated knowledge. The discussion becomes more elaborate as another student integrates local contextual knowledge into the schema: “*biasanya rumah-rumah di perumahan apalagi kaya di Batam ini... kalau ada kasus pembunuhan... itu bakal jadi murah banget karena ga ada yang mau menempati.*” (Lines 165–168).

The excerpt is particularly significant, as it demonstrates the localization of schema-based inference. The student moves beyond general assumptions and incorporates situated knowledge of housing practices in Batam, linking abandoned houses to past criminal events and their impact on property value. The use of Indonesian here allows for a rich and detailed explanation, indicating that context-specific knowledge is more effectively expressed in the first language. Finally, the group synthesizes their ideas into a generalized schema-based conclusion: “*So based on common knowledge, the abandon old house... maybe the house is haunted... or in the past has a murder case.*” (Lines 170–172). This statement reflects the integration of multiple schema elements; fear, mystery, danger, and past events into a coherent interpretation. The use of English in this final formulation suggests a shift toward academic generalization, while the preceding translanguaging interaction provides the conceptual richness necessary for this synthesis.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Genre-Based Inferential Comprehension

In responding to the ninth question, the students' interaction illustrates how translanguaging practices facilitate genre-based inferential comprehension, particularly through the use of Bahasa Indonesia as a cognitive resource for schema activation and conceptual grounding. Although the final genre classification is expressed entirely in English, the transcript reveals that the inferential process is largely constructed through prior Indonesian-mediated interaction. At the initial stage, translanguaging is used to activate culturally embedded schemas related to abandoned houses, which serve as the foundation for genre recognition: “*Biasanya rumah tua yang terbengkalai itu dianggap orang menyeramkan...*” (Lines 160–161). This utterance demonstrates how Bahasa Indonesia enables students to access shared cultural knowledge, particularly the association between abandoned houses and fear. The use of the term “*menyeramkan*” reflects a culturally grounded perception that aligns closely with the conventions of horror narratives. Through this process, students begin to construct meaning that implicitly supports genre identification, even though the term “*genre*” has not yet been explicitly

introduced. This schema activation is further elaborated through contextual and experiential reasoning: “...*kalau ada kasus pembunuhan... itu bakal jadi murah banget karena ga ada yang mau menempati.*” (Lines 165–168). Here, Bahasa Indonesia is used to integrate local and real-world knowledge, linking abandoned houses with past criminal events and social stigma. This reflects a deeper level of schema-based inferencing, where students draw upon societal experiences to enrich their interpretation. Importantly, these ideas correspond to genre conventions, particularly those associated with mystery and horror, such as hidden crimes and unsettling past events. Finally, the students articulate the genre explicitly: “*this narrative remind us of mystery and horror story...*” (Lines 174–175). This statement reflects the successful application of genre recognition and inference, where students categorize the narrative based on previously constructed understanding. The use of English in this stage indicates a shift toward academic formalization, while the justification that follows referring to mystery, atmosphere, and unexplained phenomena demonstrates the ability to align textual features with genre characteristics.

Translanguaging Practices in Facilitating Sociocultural Inferential Comprehension

In responding to the tenth question, the students' interaction illustrates how translanguaging practices facilitate sociocultural inferential comprehension, particularly in interpreting implicit social norms embedded within the narrative. This task requires learners to move beyond individual actions and events, and instead infer broader social values, community practices, and patterns of interaction that characterize the society depicted in the story. The transcript reveals that translanguaging plays a crucial role in enabling students to articulate abstract sociocultural interpretations grounded in both textual cues and real-world understanding. At the initial stage, translanguaging is used to frame and contextualize the abstract nature of the question, which involves interpreting implicit social meanings: “*Jadi norma sosial apa yang bisa kita gambarkan dari cerita ini?*” (Lines 180–181). This shift into Indonesian reflects an effort to make the concept of “social norms” more accessible and relatable.

By rephrasing the question in familiar linguistic terms, the speaker enables the group to engage with the task at a conceptual level, illustrating how translanguaging functions as a tool for abstract concept mediation. Subsequently, a student proposes an interpretation that reflects sociocultural reasoning based on character interaction patterns: “*Maybe this society seems to very privacy as Sarah observe doesn't interact her neighbour.*” (Lines 181–182). This response demonstrates the ability to infer social norms (e.g., valuing privacy) from limited textual evidence, particularly the lack of interaction between Sarah and her neighbor. The use of English here indicates an attempt to align the response with academic discourse, while the underlying reasoning reflects interpretive generalization from specific narrative details. The idea is then reinforced and clarified through translanguaging: “*Jadi menurutmu norma sosial ini adalah saling menjaga privacy.*” (Line 183). In this excerpt, Indonesian is used to restate and confirm the interpretation, emphasizing the concept of “*saling menjaga privacy*” (mutual respect for privacy). This demonstrates how translanguaging supports conceptual consolidation, ensuring that the inferred social norm is collectively understood and agreed upon.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that translanguaging functions as a cognitive and interactional resource that facilitates students' inferential comprehension during narrative text discussions. Rather than representing a failure to use English exclusively, students' movement between Bahasa Indonesia, regional linguistic resources, and English served as a strategic mechanism for constructing, negotiating, and formalizing meaning. This finding challenges

monolingual assumptions in EFL education, which often position students' first languages as barriers to English development. Instead, the results support the perspective of García (2009) and García and Wei (2014), who conceptualize translanguaging as the dynamic use of multilingual learners' complete linguistic repertoires for meaning-making. In the present study, translanguaging enabled students to access linguistic, cognitive, and cultural resources simultaneously when interpreting complex narrative meanings.

One of the most significant findings is that translanguaging supported multiple forms of inferential reasoning, including logical, predictive, causal, character-based, symbolic, schema-based, genre-based, and sociocultural inferences. This finding extends previous research that has primarily examined translanguaging in relation to general comprehension improvement rather than specific cognitive processes involved in inference construction. Previous studies have demonstrated that translanguaging enhances literacy development and reading comprehension by increasing learners' engagement with texts (Ocampo, 2022; Huang & Chalmers, 2023). However, the current study provides a more detailed explanation of *how* translanguaging contributes to comprehension by linking multilingual practices with particular inference types. The findings therefore extend existing translanguaging scholarship by demonstrating that language alternation is not merely a communicative practice but a cognitive mechanism that supports different levels of interpretive reasoning.

The findings related to logical and predictive inference confirm previous research emphasizing the role of translanguaging in reducing cognitive demands during complex learning tasks. Tai and Wei (2021) argue that translanguaging allows learners to process difficult concepts through familiar linguistic resources before expressing them in the target language, thereby supporting higher-order thinking. In this study, students frequently used Bahasa Indonesia to clarify abstract concepts, negotiate interpretations, and construct reasoning before reformulating ideas in English. For example, when discussing whether the old house was inhabited, students used Indonesian expressions to evaluate possibilities and uncertainty while relying on English to refer to textual evidence. This pattern suggests that different languages served different epistemic functions: Bahasa Indonesia supported conceptual elaboration, while English provided academic alignment and textual referencing.

This finding also supports Tai's (2022, 2023) argument that translanguaging creates inclusive learning spaces where students can engage with complex disciplinary concepts regardless of their level of English proficiency. However, the present study extends these arguments by showing that translanguaging supports not only conceptual understanding but also inferential reasoning processes involving evidence evaluation, prediction, and hypothesis formation. In other words, translanguaging operates as a bridge between textual information and deeper interpretation, enabling learners to move beyond literal comprehension.

Another important finding concerns the role of translanguaging in collaborative meaning-making. The analysis revealed that students did not use multiple languages individually but collectively negotiated interpretations through interaction. Translanguaging practices allowed participants to clarify questions, challenge interpretations, provide alternative explanations, and reach shared conclusions. This finding aligns with Creese and Blackledge (2015), who argue that translanguaging creates dialogic spaces where learners collaboratively construct knowledge and negotiate identities. Similarly, Wei (2018) emphasizes that translanguaging represents a practical theory of language in which multilingual speakers combine linguistic and semiotic resources to accomplish communicative goals.

The present study contributes further evidence by demonstrating that collaborative translanguaging is particularly valuable in inferential reading discussions because inference-making requires negotiation of meanings that are not explicitly available in texts. Unlike literal comprehension, where answers can often be located directly, inferential comprehension requires learners to compare evidence, activate background knowledge, and evaluate alternative interpretations. The findings show that students used translanguaging to collectively bridge these interpretive gaps. This observation supports research indicating that inferential comprehension depends on strategic engagement, metacognitive awareness, and the ability to connect textual information with prior knowledge (Becirovic, Brdarevic-Celjo, & Dubravac, 2018).

The study also highlights the importance of cultural knowledge in inferential comprehension. Narrative texts frequently contain implicit meanings related to social expectations, emotions, values, and cultural experiences. The findings indicate that translanguaging enabled students to activate culturally situated knowledge that supported sociocultural and schema-based inferences. For example, students used Bahasa Indonesia to discuss cultural interpretations of abandoned houses, fear, mystery, and social norms before expressing their conclusions in English. This finding supports Otheguy, García, and Reid (2018), who argue that translanguaging allows multilingual learners to mobilize cultural and linguistic resources that may remain inaccessible within strictly monolingual instructional environments. Furthermore, the findings extend existing translanguaging research by identifying three interconnected stages of meaning-making: exploration, negotiation, and formalization. During exploration, students used familiar linguistic resources to activate ideas and interpret textual clues. During negotiation, they compared perspectives and refined interpretations through collaborative discussion.

The findings also contribute to the Indonesian EFL context, where multilingual practices remain underexplored in relation to higher-order reading processes. Previous studies have documented translanguaging as a cognitive and sociocultural bridge in multilingual classrooms (Ashari, Sibarani, & Siregar, 2025), but empirical investigations connecting translanguaging with specific inference categories remain limited. Unlike previous studies conducted mainly in relatively stable bilingual contexts, such as Spanish–English or Cantonese–English classrooms (García, 2018; Tai, 2022), this study examines a more complex multilingual environment involving Bahasa Indonesia, regional languages, and English. Therefore, the findings expand translanguaging scholarship by demonstrating its relevance within Indonesia's diverse linguistic ecology.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the limitations of the study. The research involved only four university students participating in a small-group online discussion, meaning that the results represent a context-specific interpretation rather than a general claim about all EFL classrooms. However, the depth of qualitative analysis provides valuable insights into the cognitive functions of translanguaging during inferential comprehension. Future research involving larger groups, different educational levels, and comparative classroom contexts may further investigate how translanguaging practices vary across learning environments. This study advances understanding of translanguaging by demonstrating that multilingual practices function as cognitive resources for constructing inferential meaning.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how translanguaging practices facilitate inferential comprehension during narrative text discussions among Indonesian EFL university students. The findings demonstrate that translanguaging functions beyond a communicative strategy; it operates as a

cognitive, social, and cultural resource that enables learners to construct deeper meanings from narrative texts. Through the analysis of students' discussions, translanguaging was found to support various inference processes, including logical, predictive, causal, character-based, symbolic, schema-based, genre-based, and sociocultural reasoning. The study further revealed that students' meaning-making processes developed through three interconnected stages: exploration, negotiation, and formalization. During exploration, students employed familiar linguistic resources to activate prior knowledge and interpret textual information. During negotiation, they collaboratively refined interpretations by exchanging perspectives and evaluating evidence. Finally, during formalization, they transformed their negotiated understandings into academically appropriate English expressions. These findings contribute to translanguaging theory by demonstrating that multilingual practices provide a structured cognitive pathway for supporting higher-order reading comprehension rather than representing deviations from English learning objectives.

The study contributes theoretically and pedagogically by repositioning translanguaging as an essential resource for multilingual EFL classrooms. The findings suggest that restricting students to English-only interaction may limit opportunities for deeper comprehension, particularly when interpreting implicit meanings requiring cultural knowledge and complex reasoning. By contrast, allowing students to strategically mobilize their complete linguistic repertoires creates richer opportunities for inferential thinking and collaborative knowledge construction. The novelty of this study lies in connecting translanguaging practices with specific inference categories and identifying the stages through which multilingual resources contribute to meaning-making. These insights provide implications for EFL educators and curriculum developers seeking to design more inclusive reading instruction that recognizes multilingualism as an asset. Future research may extend this work by examining translanguaging practices across different educational levels, text genres, and instructional settings to further understand how multilingual resources support academic literacy development.

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INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. By agreeing to take part, the participants acknowledge that they have been informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data utilized in this study cannot be made publicly available due to strict adherence to privacy concerns and ethical obligations that safeguard participant confidentiality. This ensures compliance with ethical research standards and data protection regulations.

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