

Negotiating In-Group and Out-Group Identities through Translanguaging in English Area Communities

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ABSTRACT

Background: Along with the development of sociolinguistic studies and language education, the orientation of research and learning practices is shifting from a monolingual approach to a more inclusive multilingual framework. In this context, translanguaging is seen as a communicative practice that allows individuals to use the entirety of their linguistic resources dynamically to build meaning, form identity, and establish social relationships.

Purpose: This study aims to explore the practice of translanguaging within English Area communities that function as Community of Practice (CoP), focusing on the role of such practices in strengthening social cohesion as well as in the identity negotiation process between core members and outsiders of the community.

Method: This research applies ethnographic case study approach. Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and review of community documents involving various actors, ranging from core administrators, active members, new members, former members, to external observers. Data analysis was conducted using Thematic Analysis to reveal patterns of language use, linguistic norms that develop, and the dynamics of social identity formation in the community.

Results and Discussion: Research findings show that the English Area acts as a community of practice that supports the collaborative and sustainable English learning process. The practice of translanguaging not only serves as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate the understanding of the material, but also as an effective strategy that contributes to decreasing language anxiety and increasing member engagement. The use of language in the community is flexible and situational, where English is applied in accordance with the goals of the activity and the level of readiness of the participants. Although the ability to speak English serves as a symbol of membership, the application of language flexibility actually strengthens the sense of community and reduces the potential for social exclusion.

Conclusions and Implications: This study confirms that translanguaging plays an important role in language learning, identity formation, and the sustainability of

communities of practice, and has implications for the development of more inclusive and contextual English learning practices.

Keywords:

Translanguaging; Community of Practice; Social Identity.

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Seiring dengan perkembangan studi sosiolinguistik dan pendidikan bahasa, orientasi penelitian dan praktik pembelajaran bergeser dari pendekatan monolingual ke kerangka kerja multilingual yang lebih inklusif. Dalam konteks ini, *translanguaging* (transbahasa) dipandang sebagai praktik komunikatif yang memungkinkan individu untuk menggunakan seluruh sumber daya linguistik mereka secara dinamis untuk membangun makna, membentuk identitas, dan menjalin hubungan sosial.

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi praktik *translanguaging* di dalam komunitas *English Area* yang berfungsi sebagai Komunitas Praktik (*Community of Practice/CoP*), dengan fokus pada peran praktik tersebut dalam memperkuat kohesi sosial serta dalam proses negosiasi identitas antara anggota inti dan pihak luar komunitas.

Metode: Penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan studi kasus etnografi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi partisipatoris, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan tinjauan dokumen komunitas yang melibatkan berbagai aktor, mulai dari pengurus inti, anggota aktif, anggota baru, mantan anggota, hingga pengamat eksternal. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan Analisis Tematik untuk mengungkap pola penggunaan bahasa, norma linguistik yang berkembang, dan dinamika pembentukan identitas sosial di dalam komunitas.

Hasil dan Pembahasan: Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *English Area* bertindak sebagai komunitas praktik yang mendukung proses pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara kolaboratif dan berkelanjutan. Praktik *translanguaging* tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai strategi pedagogis untuk memfasilitasi pemahaman materi, tetapi juga sebagai strategi afektif yang berkontribusi dalam menurunkan kecemasan berbahasa dan meningkatkan keterlibatan anggota. Penggunaan bahasa di dalam komunitas ini bersifat fleksibel dan situasional, di mana bahasa Inggris diterapkan sesuai dengan tujuan kegiatan dan tingkat kesiapan peserta. Meskipun kemampuan berbahasa Inggris berfungsi sebagai simbol keanggotaan, penerapan fleksibilitas bahasa pada kenyataannya justru memperkuat rasa kebersamaan (komunitas) dan mengurangi potensi eksklusi sosial.

Kesimpulan dan Implikasi: Studi ini menegaskan bahwa *translanguaging* memainkan peran penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa, pembentukan identitas, dan keberlanjutan komunitas praktik, serta memiliki implikasi bagi pengembangan praktik pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang lebih inklusif dan kontekstual.

Kata Kunci:

Translanguaging; Komunitas Praktik; Identitas Sosial.



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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, sociolinguistic research and language education have shifted from a monolingual orientation toward a more dynamic multilingual perspective. Within this shift, translanguaging has emerged as an important lens for understanding how multilingual speakers draw on their full linguistic repertoires to make meaning, negotiate identity, and manage social relationships.[1] ; [2] In English learning environments, this perspective challenges the English-only ideology that often treats the use of other languages as a deviation rather than as a legitimate communicative and learning resource.[4]

This study is grounded in two main theoretical perspectives. First, translanguaging is understood not merely as a pedagogical technique, but as a social practice through which language users mobilize available linguistic resources in situated interaction.[1] ; [2] Second, the study draws on the Community of Practice (CoP) framework, which views learning as participation in shared social practices and emphasizes the role of language in the construction of membership, legitimacy, and collective identity.[3] Taken together, these perspectives make it possible to examine translanguaging not only as a means of facilitating understanding, but also as a mechanism through which social boundaries, belonging, and participation are negotiated within a learning community.

Existing studies have shown that translanguaging can support conceptual understanding, learner participation, and identity construction, particularly in bilingual or multilingual educational settings.[5] Other studies have also suggested that translanguaging contributes to social cohesion and a sense of community among learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds.[3] However, the current literature remains dominated by research conducted in formal classroom contexts. As a result, translanguaging in non-formal English learning communities remains underexplored. In particular, there is still limited research that explicitly examines how translanguaging relates to in-group and out-group dynamics, how it is shaped by local linguistic norms and ideologies, and how it influences membership negotiation and social cohesion in community-based settings.[6]

This gap is especially relevant in the Indonesian EFL context, where the legitimacy of translanguaging remains contested. Some studies suggest that translanguaging is often used only as a compensatory strategy to address limited exposure to English and is still viewed through the lens of English-only ideology.[7] In contrast, other studies highlight its value in creating inclusive participation, strengthening communication, and supporting identity development in multilingual learning environments.[8] These contrasting perspectives indicate the need for closer examination of how translanguaging is actually practiced, regulated, and interpreted in everyday English learning communities outside formal classrooms.

This study addresses that need by focusing on English Area as a non-formal English learning community. Its novelty lies in three main aspects. First, it examines translanguaging in relation to the negotiation of membership boundaries between in-group and out-group members, an aspect that has received limited direct attention in previous studies. Second, it integrates translanguaging with the Community of Practice framework to explain how language practices, norms, and ideologies are collectively constructed and negotiated through everyday interaction. Third, it extends translanguaging research beyond formal classroom settings by providing empirical evidence from a non-formal English learning community in Indonesia.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How and in what social contexts do English Area members use translanguaging to construct internal group identity and distinguish themselves from outsiders?, (2) How do translanguaging practices contribute to social cohesion and shape the negotiation process with new members and outsiders?, (3) What linguistic norms and ideologies underlie translanguaging practices in the community, and how do they affect in-group and out-group dynamics?.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translanguaging as Social Practice

In the last ten years, research on translanguaging has shown significant progress as criticism of the monolingual paradigm has increased that it is inadequate to explain linguistic practices in multilingual contexts. Translanguaging is seen as a dynamic and adaptive practice of language use, in which the individual mobilizes all the linguistic resources at his disposal to generate meaning, establish and negotiate identity, and regulate social relationships.[9] Thus, this approach challenges

the conception of language as a fragmentary system and emphasizes language as a social practice that is continuously constructed and negotiated through interaction.

Translanguaging in EFL and the Limits of Pedagogical Framing

Within the realm of learning English as a foreign language, translanguaging has been the focus of attention in a variety of cutting-edge studies, particularly those focusing on learning practices in formal classrooms. Findings from systematic reviews indicate that the application of translanguaging pedagogically contributes positively to the learning process of students through strengthening meaning construction, increasing learning engagement, and expanding inclusive participation in the classroom environment.[10] Furthermore, translanguaging allows learners to connect the first language with the target language, making it easier to understand the material and encourage more active involvement in learning activities. Correspondingly, recent empirical research suggests that translanguaging not only serves as a means of communication, but also as an effective pedagogical strategy in improving students' conceptual understanding and self-confidence in the context of EFL.[11]; [12]Click or tap here to enter text. Thus, translanguaging is positioned as an adaptive and inclusive learning approach, which is able to accommodate the heterogeneity of learners' language skills in EFL classes.

However, such a pedagogical framing may limit a broader understanding of translanguaging. When translanguaging is viewed primarily as a classroom strategy, its wider social, relational, and identity-related dimensions may be overlooked. Drawing on Li Wei's view of translanguaging as a practical theory of language, this study moves beyond its pedagogical utility and examines translanguaging as a socially situated practice embedded in community interaction.[2]

Identity, Membership and Community of Practice

Beyond the pedagogical dimension, recent studies show that translanguaging has an important role in the formation of social identity and the strengthening of the sense of community among multilingual learners. The results of a study of the practice of translanguaging pedagogy reveal that the opportunity for learners to activate all their linguistic resources has positive implications for identity recognition, increased inclusiveness, and decreased learning anxiety, while strengthening a sense of membership in the educational community.[13] In addition, research conducted in diverse educational environments shows that translanguaging contributes to the social and academic integration of learners by opening up space for expression of cultural affiliation and layered identity negotiation in interindividual interactions.[14] Therefore, translanguaging can be understood not only as a communicative strategy, but also as a social practice that facilitates the formation of social bonds and the affirmation of a sense of belonging in multilingual societies.

The Community of Practice (CoP) framework offers a relevant theoretical foundation for interpreting translanguaging as a social practice tied to a community context. In a community of practice, the process of identity formation and membership takes place through continuous participation in collective activities, including the adoption of linguistic practices that the community considers legitimate. Recent research reveals that translanguaging plays a strategic role as an interactional resource in negotiating levels of participation, social legitimacy, and sense of belonging within multilingual communities of practice [15] In English language learning communities, such as English areas or English clubs, translanguaging often serves as a symbolic marker of core group membership, as well as a distinguishing mechanism between members who have mastered community language norms and peripheral participants who are still at the adaptation stage. Such linguistic activities progressively develop fluid social boundaries and strengthen collective identities inside communities of practice.[15] This occurs in tandem with the intensity of member participation that occurs within these communities.

Translanguaging and In-Group/Out-Group Dynamics

The use of translanguaging, on the other hand, is inseparable from the argument, particularly when dealing with the English-only worldview that continues to be prevalent in English language learning practices.

Several research indicate that translanguaging is often seen with mistrust. This is because it is thought to blur the lines between languages and make it less likely that the target language would be used often and strongly during the learning process.[16] Critical perspectives regard translanguaging as a manifestation of the realities of global language use and as a mechanism to promote more equal social engagement.[17]

In this sense, translanguaging may also function as a marker of group belonging and boundary-making.[18] In communities where certain language norms are privileged, those who can appropriately use translanguaging practices may be perceived as legitimate members of the in-group, while others may remain positioned at the margins as out-group members or peripheral participants. Therefore, translanguaging is not merely a linguistic practice, but also a social resource through which group boundaries, inclusion, and exclusion can be negotiated.

Research Gap and Positioning of the Present Study

Recent study on translanguaging in Indonesia has uncovered persistent contradictions between ideologies advocating for exclusive English use and the actual multilingual behaviors observed in English as a foreign language classrooms and learning communities.[19] Furthermore, empirical studies indicate that translanguaging facilitates learners in negotiating their identities, promotes their self-esteem, and fosters social cohesion by recognizing the entirety of students' language repertoires.[20] Despite these insights, most research focuses on formal educational settings, and there remains a deficiency of studies examining translanguaging in non-formal communities of practice. Furthermore, there exists a paucity of studies examining translanguaging explicitly in relation to the dynamics of in-groups and out-groups. Consequently, the present research aims to rectify this gap by examining how translanguaging serves as a mechanism for negotiating identity, linguistic conventions, and social boundaries within an English community of practice.

More specifically, existing translanguaging scholarship has largely focused on pedagogical and classroom-based applications [21], whereas the role of translanguaging in negotiating in-group/out-group dynamics, identity, and social boundaries in community-based settings has received comparatively less attention.[22] Therefore, the present study addresses this underexplored area by examining how translanguaging mediates identity, linguistic norms, and social boundaries within a non-formal English community of practice.[23]

METHOD

Research Design

This research uses an ethnographic case study methodology to explore how members of the English Area, as a Community of Practice, construct and negotiate group identity both within and outside the group through translanguaging practices.[24] The choice of ethnography is predicated on research aims at elucidating the dynamics of language use, established norms, and patterns of social interaction as they manifest organically within the community setting.[25] The case study methodology enhances the research by facilitating an in-depth examination of a particular social entity, specifically the English Area, hence allowing for a comprehensive analysis of linguistic culture, member engagement patterns, and identity formation processes.[26] The study design is grounded in the ideas of linguistic ethnography, which considers language, identity, and social practice as interconnected and contextually expressed components in everyday activities.

Population and Samples

The population of this study includes all parties connected with the English Area community at IAIN Manado, taking into account the diversity of roles and the level of involvement of members. Participants in the study included administrators or senior members who play a role in the planning and implementation of community activities, active members who regularly participate in community activities, new members who are adapting to community language norms and practices, and old members or alumni who contribute reflections based on their previous participation experiences. All of 10 students were included in the study. A more objective point of view about the formation of linguistic identity and social boundaries that develop within the community is obtained through the participation of external observers who are not a part of the study program. This research also includes the participation of external observers.

Research Instruments

In this study, data were collected using four main tools such as field notes, semi-structured interviews, document examination, and researchers' reflective journal to provide a full ethnographic understanding. Field Notes-equipped observation method are employed to document language practices. These practices encompass the use of several languages, translanguaging patterns, interaction dynamics among members of diverse membership levels, and the application of linguistic rules in both formal and informal contexts. To examine the linguistic repertoire, the motivations for translanguaging, the development of social identity, the perception of group membership, and digital communication habits, semi-structured interviews were done for each participant type. Furthermore, to discern regulations, language representations, and identity markers, an examination of documents pertaining to community activities, both printed and digital, is conducted. The researchers' reflective journal is employed to document the researchers' analytical reflections and possible subjectivity as an integral component of the research process. This helps make the interpretation of the data more trustworthy and credible.

Data Collection and Procedures

The research data were collected in 13 weeks by applying an immersive ethnographic approach, which allows researchers to engage directly in community life in order to gain a deep and contextual understanding of linguistic practices. In the initial phase, the researchers observe a variety of community activities while building relationships with members and identifying evolving patterns of participation. The next stage includes participant observation in various spheres of interaction, whether formal, semi-formal, informal, or digital, to record translanguaging practices and group identity construction. In-depth interviews were then conducted with selected participants and systematically analyzed after a recording and transcription process, with the aim of revealing the language ideology and identity dynamics involved. In addition, digital documentation as well as community archives are collected as supporting data. All data obtained from various sources were then analyzed comparatively through triangulation techniques to improve the consistency of findings, reduce the potential for bias, and strengthen the credibility of research results.^[27]

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was carried out by applying a Thematic Analysis approach that follows six systematic stages as formulated by.^[28] At the outset, researchers undertook a data familiarization process by transcribing interviews and scrutinizing all field notes and study materials to discern preliminary patterns of translanguaging procedures. The second step is an initial coding process that looks at how translanguaging works, the social context of language use, identity markers, linguistic ideology, language practice in digital spaces, and how people see themselves as part of a group. The codes were synthesized into more general ideas. The theme evaluation and validation process is conducted via cross-group comparisons of participants and triangulation with

observational data and documentation to confirm the consistency of findings.[29] Additionally, themes are articulated with greater specificity, encompassing translanguaging as a form of identity affirmation, multilingual flexibility as a means of social cohesion, English-only ideology as a representation of hierarchical boundaries, and digital linguistic practices as a method for enhancing community.[30] The final step is to write a research report that answers the research questions by combining all of the analytical themes. This is done with the help of participant quotes from 10 students during 13 weeks of collecting the following data and triangulation procedures to make the research results more reliable in IAIN Manado.

RESULT

Theme 1: English Area as a Community of practice based on academic objectives

The findings indicate that English Area is collectively understood as a learning community with a clear orientation toward improving students' English skills. Senior members emphasized that the community has structured programs, as reflected in the statement, *"We have three work programs: vocabulary memorization, basic speaking class, and basic grammar class. The purpose is to develop students' English language skills."*

Another senior member similarly noted that the community had developed three English-focused programs: *"memorizing vocabulary, learning basic grammar, and basic speaking."* This suggests that English Area operates not simply as an informal student gathering, but as an organized learning space with explicit linguistic goals.

Its systematic character is further reflected in the weekly routine described by an active member: *"before the schedule of the basic speaking class, we have to memorize the vocabularies, phrases and expressions in the booklet weekly."* This image was also confirmed by outsiders, who viewed English Area as *"a supportive environment that encourages students to practice and improve their language skills"* and associated it with *"consistent use of English in daily conversations."*

Theme 2: Contextual and Situational Language Norms and Regulations

The findings show that language regulation in English Area is contextual rather than rigid. Senior members stated that there are no general language rules across the whole community, as one participant simply said, *"Tidak ada."* However, English is explicitly required in specific activities, especially *"only in the 'Basic Speaking' class."* Outside this setting, members mostly use local and national languages, including *"Melayu-mongondow"* and *"manado-malay."*

Senior members also act as norm "keepers" by reinforcing English use in designated learning spaces. As one respondent explained, this is done by *"giving rules for language use in the basic speaking class,"* while an active member described the routine more specifically: *"before the schedule of the basic speaking class, we have to memorize the vocabularies, phrases and expressions in the booklet weekly."* At the same time, new members reported little pressure, responding *"Not really"* and *"I don't feel pressure."* These findings suggest that language norms in English Area function as an adaptive pedagogical strategy that supports English practice without becoming repressive.

Theme 3: Translanguaging as a Learning and Affective Support Strategy

The findings show that translanguaging is a prominent practice in English Area and functions as both a learning resource and an affective support strategy. Senior members explained that language mixing occurs in almost all activities, *"in all programs except the Basic Speaking class,"* and is mainly used for *"correction, and because many students still lack vocabulary."* Active members described similar functions in more concrete terms. One participant stated, *"When I presented my material in course progress because sometimes I forgot the vocabulary in English,"* while another explained, *"I mix languages because it helps me explain things more easily, and when I do not know a word in one language, I use*

another.” These accounts show that translanguaging helps members manage lexical gaps, clarify meaning, and sustain communication during learning activities.

Its affective function is also evident in the experiences of newer members. One new member reported mixing languages *“when I do not understand the conversation,”* and another stated, *“For me, I think yes, because it makes me confident,”* when asked whether mixing languages helped them fit in. This suggests that translanguaging not only supports comprehension but also reduces anxiety and increases confidence, especially for those who are still adjusting to the community. Taken together, these findings indicate that translanguaging contributes to a more inclusive and supportive learning environment by widening participation and easing entry into the community’s linguistic practices.

Theme 4: Language, Membership, and the Negotiation of Social Identity

The findings indicate that English competence carries symbolic value in marking membership within English Area. Senior members explicitly linked group differentiation to linguistic ability, as one participant stated, *“It can be seen from their English skills.”* Another added, *“Senior members have better linguistic ability than new members. Some explanations from seniors during peer teaching seemed more prepared and clearer.”* These accounts suggest that language proficiency functions as an index of experience and legitimacy within the community.

At the same time, this differentiation does not appear to operate as rigid exclusion. New members described their entry into the community in positive terms, with one participant explaining that acceptance came because *“they welcomed me so warmly,”* while another stated that mixing languages helped them fit in *“because it makes me confident.”* This shows that translanguaging plays an important role in easing participation and supporting newcomers’ sense of belonging as they negotiate their place in the community.

This identity dimension is also visible from the perspective of outsiders. One out-group participant commented, *“The English Area creates a unique atmosphere where students are recognized by their active use of English and their commitment to practicing the language.”* Another similarly observed that members *“tend to speak English more frequently and confidently compared to students outside the area,”* and that their fluency *“often stands out in daily interactions.”* Taken together, these findings suggest that language in English Area functions not as a fixed boundary of exclusion, but as a fluid social resource through which membership, belonging, and identity are continuously negotiated.

DISCUSSION

This study shows that English Area is more than a supplementary space for practicing English. It operates as a non-formal Community of Practice (CoP) in which language learning is sustained through shared goals, repeated participation, peer interaction, and locally negotiated norms. What makes this case important is not simply that members practice English together, but that learning is socially organized through a structured yet flexible community system. In this sense, the findings do not merely confirm the relevance of CoP in language learning but they also show how CoP becomes meaningful in a student-led, non-formal context where academic objectives, multilingual practices, and social belonging are closely intertwined.

1. English Area as a non-formal Community of Practice

The findings support the CoP perspective by showing that English Area is organized around mutual engagement, a shared enterprise, and a developing repertoire of practices.^[15] However, the significance of this finding lies in why the community remains sustainable: members do not participate only to improve linguistic competence, but also to gain recognition, confidence, and a sense of belonging. This suggests that the continuity of the community is not driven by language practice alone, but by the social value attached to participation itself.

This interpretation extends previous studies that have framed CoP as a collaborative environment for language development and identity formation. While earlier work has shown the usefulness of CoP in educational and professional settings, this study demonstrates that CoP is equally relevant in non-formal, student-driven language communities, where learning is less institutionalized but still highly structured. Thus, the present findings move beyond the classical apprenticeship reading of CoP by showing that community-based language learning can be organized through peer-led routines and informal authority rather than through formal instructional hierarchies.

2. Translanguaging as more than a pedagogical strategy

A key contribution of this study is that translanguaging in English Area functions not only as a pedagogical tool, but also as a social and affective infrastructure for learning. Previous studies have consistently shown that translanguaging supports comprehension, participation, and engagement in EFL classrooms.[9] ; [31], [32]Click or tap here to enter text. The present study confirms these benefits, but it also shows why translanguaging matters in a non-formal community. It reduces communicative risk, enables members to remain active despite lexical limitations, and creates a safer pathway into participation.

This finding challenges the tendency in the literature to frame translanguaging mainly in terms of classroom effectiveness. In English Area, translanguaging is not simply a technique used to explain difficult material; it is a practice through which members manage anxiety, maintain interaction, and gradually move from peripheral to fuller participation. In other words, translanguaging does not only support learning outcomes; it supports learning membership. This is an important extension of prior research because it repositions translanguaging from a classroom strategy to a community practice that helps sustain participation over time.

3. Flexible language regulation as adaptive pedagogy

Another important finding concerns language regulation. At first glance, the absence of rigid, community-wide language rules might seem to indicate weak regulation. However, the data suggest the opposite: the norms are not weak, but selectively and strategically applied. English is required in particular pedagogical moments, especially in Basic Speaking classes, while multilingual flexibility is allowed in other contexts. This shows that language regulation in English Area is not based on an English-only ideology, but on a contextual judgement about when exclusive English use is productive and when multilingual support is necessary.

This finding is analytically important because it complicates the binary often found in language education research between monolingual discipline and unrestricted multilingualism.[33] ; [34]Click or tap here to enter text. The case of English Area shows that effective language learning communities may rely on layered norms: English is intensified in certain practice spaces, while translanguaging is legitimized elsewhere to preserve participation and reduce pressure. Such a pattern helps explain why members, especially newcomers, do not experience the rules as repressive. Therefore, the contribution of this study is not simply to show that flexible norms exist, but to demonstrate that such flexibility can itself function as a deliberate pedagogical design.

4. Language, legitimacy, and porous social boundaries

The findings also offer a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between language and social identity. English proficiency clearly carries symbolic value in English Area: it marks experience, preparedness, and legitimacy. This supports earlier research showing that language practices are closely tied to identity formation and recognition in learning communities.[35] ; [36] However, the present study adds an important qualification. Although English competence differentiates senior and new members, the boundary is not entirely closed or exclusionary.

Translanguaging allows newcomers to participate before they fully master the target language, thereby softening the social consequences of linguistic inequality.

This point is especially important in relation to the study's research gap. Much of the existing literature discusses translanguaging in relation to learning, inclusion, and identity, but gives less explicit attention to how it mediates in-group/out-group dynamics in non-formal communities. The present findings suggest that translanguaging functions as a mechanism of *boundary negotiation*: English indexes valued membership, but translanguaging prevents that value from turning into a rigid gatekeeping device. Thus, group boundaries in English Area are better understood as porous rather than fixed. This is a more critical and precise interpretation than simply claiming that the community is inclusive. It shows that inclusion is not the absence of hierarchy, but the presence of practices that make hierarchy more negotiable.

5. New contributions of the study

The present study makes three main contributions. First, it extends CoP research by showing how a *non-formal English learning community* can operate as a sustainable site of collective learning beyond formal classroom structures. Second, it advances translanguaging research by demonstrating that translanguaging in such a setting is not only *pedagogical*, but also *affective and social*, because it supports confidence, belonging, and continued participation. Third, it contributes to *the literature on identity and group dynamics* by showing that translanguaging mediates the relationship between *membership, legitimacy, and boundary-making*. In this community, English proficiency remains symbolically important, but translanguaging makes membership more accessible and less exclusionary.

These contributions are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study brings together translanguaging, CoP, and identity negotiation in a way that clarifies how multilingual practice works in community-based learning. Practically, it suggests that non-formal English programs should not rely solely on rigid English-only policies. Instead, they should combine structured English practice with selective multilingual support, peer-led interaction, and community routines that make participation sustainable.

6. Implications for language learning practice

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that community-based English learning is most effective when it balances challenge and accessibility. Programs such as *Basic Speaking, grammar sessions, and vocabulary* memorization are important not only because they provide linguistic input, but because they create recurring spaces in which participation becomes normalized. At the same time, allowing translanguaging outside high-focus English practice sessions helps maintain engagement, especially for less confident members. This means that educators and student organizers should view multilingual resources not as obstacles to English development, but as supports that enable learners to remain active long enough to improve.

Overall, the discussion indicates that the value of English Area lies not simply in offering more opportunities to speak English, but in organizing those opportunities through a community model that is structured, flexible, and socially supportive. That is the study's central contribution which it shows that translanguaging and CoP are not parallel concepts, but mutually reinforcing processes in the development of inclusive non-formal language learning communities.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study confirms that the English Area functions as a non-formal Community of Practice in which language learning is shaped through participation, collaboration, and sustained social interaction. Within this setting, translanguaging operates not only as a pedagogical resource that facilitates comprehension and reduces language anxiety, but also as a social resource that

strengthens social cohesion and supports identity negotiation between core members and outsiders. The flexible use of language further reduces the risk of social exclusion and contributes to a more inclusive and sustainable learning community. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing multilingual practices as valuable resources for promoting inclusive, contextual, and socially sustainable English learning in non-formal environments. Nevertheless, as this study is limited to a single community, its findings remain context-bound. Future studies should investigate similar communities in other sociolinguistic settings and examine more closely how translanguaging shapes inclusion, exclusion, and group boundaries over time.

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