

Opening Translanguaging Spaces: Facilitating Bilingual Development in an English Discussion Class

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Abstract

This teaching practice report documents the experimental implementation of the bilingual pedagogy of translanguaging in an undergraduate English discussion program at a Japanese university, with the primary aim being to facilitate bilingualism and the development of a bilingual identity among learners. This intervention specifically focuses on how translanguaging practices can be integrated into an established teaching context while providing learners with opportunities or *spaces* to utilize their native linguistic resources to enhance their experience of learning English discussion.

Keywords: translanguaging, English discussion, bilingualism, Japanese university

Introduction

This teaching practice report details the implementation of a bilingual pedagogical practice in an experimental classroom-based intervention in an undergraduate English discussion program at a Japanese university, with the primary goal being to promote bilingualism and, more specifically, the growth of a bilingual identity among learners.

Although open to wide interpretation, the terms *bilingual* and *bilingualism* most often refer to “the use of two or more languages (or dialects) in everyday life” (Grosjean, 2013, p.5), and it is generally accepted that a bi- (or multilingual) person is an individual who knows, uses, and is fluent to various degrees in two or more languages. Going by this definition, it could be said that the state of being bilingual suggests a certain level of mastery of a foreign, second, or other language (L2) and, therefore, achieving bilingual *status* is something that L2 learners should be encouraged to strive for and even embrace. This view has been espoused by academics, such as Ofelia García, who argue that foreign language learners—irrespective of their actual level of language proficiency—should be recognized as “emergent bilinguals” (García, 2009). This condition requires that an L2 learner is nurtured through routine exposure to bilingual pedagogical practices, which not only serve to bolster their self-identity as a capable and competent user of foreign languages but also work to raise their cognitive awareness of the interrelationship between their native language (L1) and the foreign language(s) they are studying.

Such an enviable situation, however, stands in stark contrast to the reality of the author’s personal experiences of teaching tertiary-level L2 learners in Japanese universities, where it is clear that while bilingualism, as a concept, is understood by most learners, the prospect of personally attaining bilingual status is not something the majority could conceive of or would feel comfortable adopting as part of their sociolinguistic identity. This appears to be a common phenomenon among native Japanese L2 learners and has been documented in recent research (see Turnbull, 2021). This sentiment is further compounded by the fact that general foreign language education programs (and EFL in particular) adhere to the policies of language segregation (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017), which are

deeply embedded in their teaching methodologies, both at the practitioner and institutional level.

Therefore, in an effort to reverse this trend, the primary purpose of the current teaching practice report is to document the integration of a bilingual pedagogical practice within an English discussion course context and promote the development of bilingualism amongst L2 learners. By providing learners with *spaces* to utilize their native linguistic resources, it is hoped that this course of intervention works to strengthen attitudes and beliefs in their abilities as competent and confident bilingual Japanese-English speakers.

Translanguaging: A Bilingual Pedagogy

What is required to achieve the stated objective is the deployment of an effective bilingual pedagogy, one which provides a foundation upon which the practice of normalizing the combined and intentional use of multiple languages can transform the process and experience of foreign language learning. This is where *translanguaging* comes into prominence. A concept initially conceived by Cen Williams in the Welsh language as *trawsieithu* (Williams, 1994), it is the bilingual practice of strategically combining the use of two languages within a single subject lesson. The English version of the term, *translanguaging* was subsequently introduced by Colin Baker (2001), who outlines translanguaging as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages” (Baker, 2001, p. 288). In a practical sense, the subject content is presented in one language, after which learners can demonstrate their understanding by producing it in another. The benefits of this are twofold: it promotes a more complete understanding of the subject matter whilst supporting the development of the L2 (Baker, 2001, as cited in García & Lin, 2017). Further delineations of the concept were made by García and Lin (2017) to reflect different theoretical perspectives on how languages are learned, with distinctions drawn between *weak* translanguaging and *strong* translanguaging (García & Lin, 2017, p. 124). Weak translanguaging (as practiced in educational contexts) essentially preserves boundaries between named languages; however, it also views these boundaries as flexible, fluid linguistic spaces where the exchange and transfer of information and meaning occur among bilingual learners and their learning environment. The strong form of translanguaging (as practiced by bilinguals in any context) views all named languages as being part of a single, holistic linguistic system, underpinned by a universal grammar structure. Bilingual speakers can freely navigate through this system using all linguistic resources available, enabling them to effectively and appropriately communicate in any given interactive context. The perspective of a single linguistic system is also espoused by Canagarajah (2011a), who describes translanguaging as “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” Canagarajah (2011a p.401). Other important theoretical distinctions come from Cenoz and Gorter (2022), who recognize *spontaneous translanguaging*—to denote the communicative events of bilingual speakers that occur naturally (and beyond a teacher’s control)—and *pedagogical translanguaging*—the controlled and deliberate implementation of teaching strategies designed to activate a learner’s bi-/multilingual skill set. The notion of learners engaging in purposeful, teacher-directed bilingual pedagogical practices is also conceptualized in the research of Jones (2017), who designates this as *Cognitive Academic Translanguaging*.

In light of the stated aims of this teaching practice report and the theories outlined here, it should be stated that no particular form or method of translanguaging will be given preference over another in the process of planning and implementing bilingual pedagogical practices. This will allow

for flexibility as different strategies are considered in terms of their potential practical application within the discussion lesson setting.

The Need for Translanguaging Spaces

As the title of this report declares, the objective is to facilitate bilingual pedagogical practices through the use of spaces (opportunities) for translanguaging. The necessity to create such spaces in this educational context alludes to the possibility of unfavorable, even hostile reactions that await emergent bilingual learners in foreign language classes who engage in what might be ordinarily natural behavior to them. Whilst framing the situation this way is somewhat extreme, it is not unrealistic, as Canagarajah (2011b) points out, bilingual learners often conduct translanguaging discreetly amongst each other and out of sight of the teacher, possibly fearing negative repercussions if they are “discovered.” Therefore, there are virtually no *safe* spaces for these learners. This may be an unfortunate but inevitable consequence of the longstanding language separation/segregation policies that permeate foreign language education (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). This means that the learners’ L1 is largely isolated and/or ignored whilst foreign language skills are being taught. Language separation practices stem from theories about the potential risk of errors due to L1 “interference” (Lott, as cited in Bhela, 1999, p.22; Ooi & Abdul Aziz, 2021), which is often cited as justification for using such methods.

Fortunately, however, proponents of pedagogical translanguaging have come to vigorously defend the concept of translanguaging spaces, citing the importance of teachers consciously and proactively creating spaces to foster healthy translanguaging competency in and amongst bilingual learners (see Canagarajah, 2011b; Wei, 2011). Bonacina-Pugh et al. (2021) also draw some useful insights on this subject from their analysis of translanguaging practices in foreign language education, forming the conclusion that, “... as teachers open up *spaces* for translanguaging practices, students can creatively interact with each other, engage with their own text, and together find solutions for the linguistic problems they encounter; and ultimately, students can develop the target language that they are learning” (Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021, p.24, my emphasis).

Therefore, it is upon this theoretical basis that the author set out to create viable translanguaging opportunities in the given teaching context, which will manifest in the form spaces, both physical—in the sense of time and place—and cognitive, as in the mind of learners (Wei, 2011).

Teaching Context and Participants

The teaching context featured in this report is an English language discussion course provided by Rikkyo University in Tokyo. All first-year freshmen students are required to take *Discussion class*, a weekly 100-minute-long class consisting of practical, topical discussion-based lessons, conducted over a 14-week semester. The relatively small (ten student) teaching groups are arranged according to ability level (I-IV) based on students’ TOEIC scores. Students study oral functions frequently utilized in discussions, namely *Discussion Skills* phrases (e.g., “*What’s your opinion?*” and “*In my opinion...*”, etc.) and *Communication Skills* phrases (e.g., “*Could you repeat that, please?*” and “*Do you understand?*”, etc.), developing their ability to contribute to the exchange of ideas. The course adheres to a unified lesson format and communicative teaching approach, comprising four main teaching stages: The Fluency stage, the Function Presentation stage, the Practice stage, and two Discussion stages. These are taught in conjunction with the aforementioned Discussion and

Communication Skills.

In light of the stated aims of this report, an examination of the syllabus design, teaching approach and objectives of the course was conducted. It revealed that the program does not expressly reject bilingualism or bilingual development in learners. However, neither does it accommodate it. This is evident in the founding documentation, authored by Hurling (2012), which, by omission, appears to implicitly advocate monolingualism through the aforementioned general language separation/segregation practices in EFL teaching. This influence can be seen in both classroom practice and research within the Discussion class program: The course follows a strictly communicative teaching approach, and instructors are strongly encouraged to conduct classes as an *immersive* English language experience; learners are also required to use English at all times throughout lessons whilst receiving and following directions from instructors in English. Furthermore, in-house action research has often focused on the development of effective strategies to deter and/or suppress learners' use of L1.

These were influential factors when it came to selecting a suitable participant teaching group as the subject of study and intervention: any potential candidate class would have to have already accepted and adapted to the principles of an immersive, monolingual environment by demonstrating a consistent use of English throughout lessons. Equally, however, to fulfill the stated objectives, the participants would also need to be willing to contemplate issues relating to their bilingualism as well as participate in any bilingual activities required by the intervention.

Therefore, based on these criteria, the group selected was a single, Level-II ability class, consisting of 10 (majority female) native Japanese speakers with combined TOEIC listening and reading scores ranging from 480 to 679. The students were judged by the author to be above average in terms of English language proficiency and attitude toward learning and, most importantly, capable of maintaining an English-only environment during lessons. Moreover, learners were willing to share their opinions on the subject of bilingualism, which the author gauged through informal discussions with individual participants. This yielded largely predictable results, as it was revealed that the bilingual label was not what the majority of students felt comfortable associating themselves with, even if they commanded a higher level of English proficiency. Amongst the most frequently cited reasons were, (1) a lack of self-belief in their English language ability and (2) not wanting to appear boastful in front of peers by proclaiming to be bilingual. As mentioned previously, the denial of bilingual identity seems to be a common stance amongst native Japanese learners of English, particularly at the tertiary level (see Turnbull, 2021). Nevertheless, the students' professed reluctance to identify as bilingual would be advantageous for this study, as it established a contextual foundation upon which bilingual pedagogical practices could be implemented and provide opportunities for evidencing the impact of the intervention.

Method

From a methodological perspective, collecting and recording evidence of this type of practical intervention would be most effectively achieved through a reflective teaching journal. Journaling is a form of qualitative, longitudinal data collection that can be documented in the form of *retrospective field notes* as well as incorporating *reflections on and for action* (Murphy, 2014). This would enable the author to document and respond effectively to what was being observed whilst students were engaging in translanguaging during the intervention period.

The intervention and reflection period for this teaching journal officially took place in lesson 7,

with lessons 1 through 6 being used purely for class observation, evaluation, and planning. In addition, unofficial observations were made from lesson 8 onwards. Furthermore, to meet the objectives and develop an appropriate interventional strategy, the following initial research question was proposed: *What are the practical planning considerations when designing pedagogical translanguaging activities on an English discussion course?* In response, the author made reflective notes during observations of lessons 1-6, which gave rise to further guiding questions to evaluate potential areas for creating viable translanguaging spaces within a standard discussion lesson:

1. *Considering the practicalities of physically accommodating translanguaging spaces (both spatially and temporally) in class, how will it be possible to implement pedagogical translanguaging activities without unduly disrupting classroom management, lesson stages, and/or timing?*
2. *Is there potential for the course to accommodate pedagogical translanguaging strategies (that is, mental/cognitive translanguaging spaces) without disrupting or undermining learners' ability to achieve the functional, linguistic objectives of the course?*

Therefore, in response to the above questions, it was necessary to consider the purpose and compatibility of each of the planned stages of a typical Discussion lesson, that is for their potential to accommodate the physical (spatial) and temporal adaptations required for pedagogical translanguaging

Figure 1.

Lesson Stages Identified as being Compatible with Pedagogical Translanguaging Activities.

Discussion class lesson stage/activity	Description/purpose	Is it potentially compatible with pedagogical translanguaging activities? How?
[1] Quiz	An 8-question, multiple-choice test based on homework reading from the textbook.	No
[2] Fluency	Interactive speaking and listening warm-up pair work activity, using questions based on the lesson topic.	Yes—learners can easily be directed to discuss warm-up questions (written in English) using L1.
[3] Presentation	First exposure to the new target language (Discussion and Communication Skills phrases).	No
[4] Practice	Semi-controlled pair work practice of target language.	Yes—a short plenary activity can be added where learners are directed to translate the target language (English Discussions Skill phrases) into L1, followed by the second practice of the same questions but conducted entirely through L1.
[5] Discussion 1 Preparation	Generate ideas/topical content, ready for the following discussion.	No
[6] Discussion 1	Interactive, free-production group activity utilizing target language (with scaffolding).	No
[7] Discussion 2 Preparation	Generate ideas/topical content, ready for the following discussion.	Yes—specific organizational Discussion Skills phrases can be deployed as an L2 phrasal framework, through which learners can conduct their discussions but express the content of their ideas through L1.
[8] Discussion 2	Interactive, free-production group activity utilizing target language (no scaffolding).	

Note. The stages judged to be most suitable for this purpose were the Fluency stage [2], the Practice stage [4], the final Discussion Preparation stage [7], and Discussion stage [8].

activities. All stages of a standard Discussion class lesson have been outlined in the following table and include those stages identified as being compatible with pedagogical translanguaging activities (see Figure 1).

Teaching Journal

The following section of this report documents the experimental implementation of pedagogical translanguaging activities for each of the lesson stages previously identified as being compatible with such practices. Each stage will be designated as an *Intervention* which is followed by a *Rationale* section (explaining the intended pedagogical strategy for creating the translanguaging space), a *Recorded experience/event* section (detailing what exactly transpired whilst implementing the strategy), and concluded by a *Reflection* section (a discussion segment exploring thoughts and ideas produced in response to what occurred during the intervention).

Reflective Teaching Journal Entries for Lesson 7

Intervention: Lesson Stage [2]—Fluency

Rationale: Opening Translanguaging Space No. 1

The Fluency (or warm-up) stage involves learners working in pairs and orally responding to 3 questions based on the lesson topic (see Figure 2). It has been a standard procedure for students to discuss all questions in English, and from experience, question three (Q3) [*Share three interesting ideas or facts from the reading*] has never been popular among students; their interaction rate falls, and the answers given are always short and lacking in detail. Therefore, as a question that was producing very little student engagement, I judged that there would be minimal disruption to the learning if I were to commit this question to become the first weak or pseudo-translanguaging space in the lesson by making the students discuss Q3 in Japanese only. This would also serve as an icebreaking event at the start of this lesson to subtly introduce the legitimate use of L1 into the course.

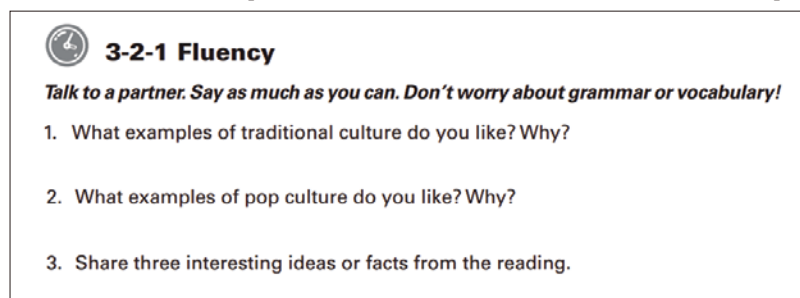
To aid the students' understanding of this intentional change, I produced a visual presentation slide to direct students to switch to using L1 for Q3 (see Figure 3).

Recorded Experience/Event:

When introducing the warm-up questions, I asked the students to answer Q3 in Japanese only.

Figure 2.

Textbook-based Warm-up Questions to Activate Schemata on the Lesson Topic.



From: Kita et al., (2022). *What's Your Opinion? Interactive Skills for Effective Discussion Book II* (2nd ed., p. 48).

Figure 3.

Presentation Slide Displaying Warm-up Questions with Additional Directions to Open Translanguaging Space 1.

3-2-1 Fluency (p.48)

🌐 **3-2-1 Fluency**

Talk to a partner. Say as much as you can. Don't worry about grammar or vocabulary!

English 1. What examples of traditional culture do you like? Why?
(e.g. Sumo, Ikebana, Tea Ceremony, etc.)

English 2. What examples of pop culture do you like? Why?
(e.g. Manga and Anime, J-pop, Baseball, etc.)

日本語で (in Japanese) 3. Share three interesting ideas or facts from the reading.
Discuss question 3 using Japanese only.

Adapted from: Kita et al., (2022). What's Your Opinion?
Interactive Skills for Effective Discussion
Book II (2nd ed., p. 48).

The students were slightly confused by this instruction, pausing and looking at me with expressions that appeared to say, “Why do you want to hear us speak Japanese?” I had to repeat myself, trying to do my best to appear confident in assuring them that this was a legitimate part of the lesson. I revealed the adapted presentation slide, which reinforced my verbal instruction, after which they accepted the direction without further question and proceeded with the activity. Not surprisingly, when using L1, there was a definite uptick in interaction when they reached Q3, with some pairs continuing to talk after the three-minute timer had elapsed. Overall, they appeared relatively comfortable switching from English to Japanese mid-way through an activity.

Reflection: Lesson Stage [2]

I have tentatively labeled this as a *pseudo-translanguaging* space, as the overall warm-up activity facilitates the very weak translanguaging practice of abruptly alternating L2-L1 between questions. There is also a mild form of translanguaging that takes place within the interactive exchanges of Q3 itself; students read the English text whilst also discussing it in Japanese, in a process similar to that which Baker (2011) alludes to in his definition of translanguaging.

Whilst I had anticipated students would switch over from using L2 to L1 (Japanese) quite willingly, I did not anticipate that I myself would initially feel slightly awkward and somewhat professionally negligent about asking them to use L1 in an English language class. It appears as though I may require some psychological reconditioning to become more comfortable during this period of administering and implementing pedagogical translanguaging practices.

Overall, it appears as though we have mutually accepted that L1 can be used in Discussion class; it is no longer to be kept “hidden” in fear of reprimand, as observed by Canagarajah (2011b). Therefore, I will incorporate this new translanguaging space in subsequent lessons. However, there are adaptations to be made for future lessons: to ensure students have remained on task throughout the activity, I will nominate some of them to provide verbal feedback to me (in English) at the end of the activity about what they discussed in Q3. This additional English reproduction stage will bring the practice more in line with Baker’s translanguaging notion of learners “processing and digesting” the content (Baker, 2011, p.289). Furthermore, I must think about how to better explain the purpose of these interventions to students, specifically why they must use their L1.

Intervention: Lesson Stage [4]—Practice

Rationale: Opening Translanguaging Space No. 2

The Practice stage usually involves the semi-controlled practice of the Discussion Skill phrases (see Figure 4), using specially selected extended practice questions designed to elicit the target Discussion Skills phrases (see Figure 5). Again, as with all stages of the lesson, it has been a standard procedure for students to discuss all questions using the target language in English. This stage always appears to be one of the most productive in terms of achieving its objectives; therefore, I was reluctant to interfere directly with the processes of this stage. However, I judged that further reinforcement of target language acquisition could be achieved with the addition of some type of consolidation activity involving the students’ L1 in a strong translanguaging space immediately after the L2 practice activity. Using Cenoz and Gorter’s (2022) theory of raising learners’ “metalinguistic awareness” (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022, p.31), I devised a simple two-step activity that involved students translating the target language (Discussions Skill phrases) into Japanese (the opening of a translanguaging space), followed by a free practice of the same practice questions but conducted completely in Japanese. I produced another visual presentation slide to prompt students to translate the target language phrases as well as initiate practice of the same questions but using L1 (see Figure 6 and Figure 7). This will form the second translanguaging space.

Recorded Experience/Event:


After students completed the regular practice activity, I asked them something to the effect of, “So, does anyone know how to say these Discussion Skill phrases in Japanese?” They had never been asked this type of question about the Discussion Skills phrases, and once again, they looked around at each other, appearing perplexed as to why the teacher was interested in hearing them speak Japanese. After about 30 seconds of talking amongst themselves, several

Figure 4.
Textbook-based Target Language Discussion Skills Phrases for Lesson 7.

Joining a Discussion	
Asking Others to Join a Discussion	Joining a Discussion
Who would like to start?	Can I start?
Would anyone like to say something?	Can I say something?
Would anyone like to ask a question?	Can I ask a question?

From: Kita et al., (2022). *What’s Your Opinion? Interactive Skills for Effective Discussion Book II* (2nd ed., p. 48).

Figure 5.
Textbook-based Practice Stage Questions.

 **Practice 2**

Discuss the following topics. Use today’s phrases to join the discussion and ask others to join the discussion.

- *Japanese Cities* What is the best city in Japan for international tourists to visit?
- *Food in Japan* What is the best food in Japan for international tourists?
- *Sports* Which is more interesting – sumo or baseball?
- *Music* Which is more interesting – J-pop or foreign pop music?

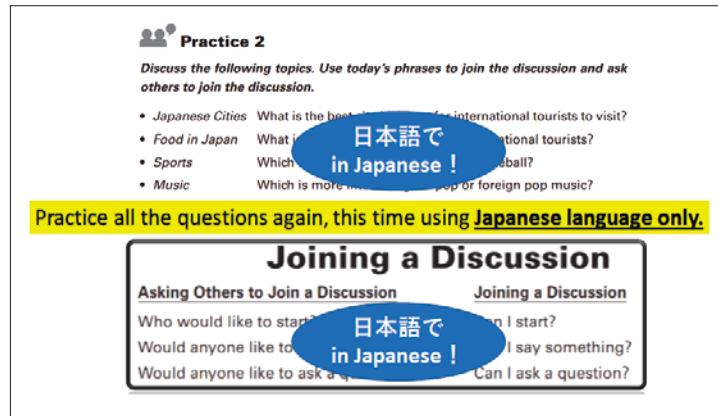
From: Kita et al., (2022). *What’s Your Opinion? Interactive Skills for Effective Discussion Book II* (2nd ed., p. 49).

Figure 6.
Presentation Slide Displaying the Target Discussion Skills Phrases with Additional Directions to Open Translanguaging Space 2.



Adapted from: Kita et al., (2022). *What's Your Opinion? Interactive Skills for Effective Discussion Book II* (2nd ed., p. 48).

Figure 7.
Slide Displaying Additional Prompts to Initiate Practice of the Same Questions Using L1.



Adapted from: Kita et al., (2022). *What's Your Opinion? Interactive Skills for Effective Discussion Book II* (2nd ed., pp. 48-49).

students volunteered a translation of the phrases. Not being a competent Japanese speaker myself, I tried my best to repeat what I had heard (to the amusement of the students) and then I asked back, “Does everyone agree that these translations are correct?”, to which they all nodded (but, of course, I had no idea if they were right). Students were even more surprised by my next instruction: “You can now discuss any of the practice questions again, but in 100% Japanese—don’t forget to use the translated Discussion Skills”. After another silent pause, I gradually began to hear a trickle of Japanese phrases, interspersed with giggles. The L1 they were producing sounded slightly stilted as if they were making a cognitive effort to spontaneously translate all previously learned Discussion Skills as well as apply the newly acquired target language phrases. I then revealed the presentation slide to students as additional guidance and cement understanding, after which the exchanges soon turned into full-blown L1 discussions, accompanied by bursts of raucous laughter. After the 2-minute activity had finished, students appeared to be in a state of amused bewilderment. I asked them how it felt to use the Discussion Skills in Japanese, to which I received replies like, “weird” ... “interesting” ... “unnatural.”

Reflection: Lesson Stage [4]

As per standard lesson procedures, students always learn and apply the target language in English; however, this activity forced them to engage in subsequent practice of the target language, but through L1 (Japanese). I have tentatively designated this process as *L1 retropracticing*. The L1 retropracticing process allowed them to remap and further assimilate the target language using the cognitive architecture of their L1, enhancing their metalinguistic awareness following Cenoz and Gorter’s (2022) notion. Moreover, I felt this activity took students experientially beyond the usual subject matter limitations set by their English language abilities, as they could use L1 to articulate and explore ideas more deeply (ideas that could be imported back into English discussions later on).

This intervention appeared to lower students’ affective filter, as it evoked a range of emotional and physiological responses (for example, laughter) promoting a more relaxed learning environment and possibly increasing students’ *willingness to communicate* (WTC) (McCroskey, 1992). Furthermore, taking only a total of 4 minutes, incorporating this activity directly after the practice stage had minimal impact on overall lesson timing and pacing.

Adaptions to be made for future lessons: I need to ensure that students are able to make appropriate translations of the target language into Japanese. Therefore, I shall prepare pre-translated target language phrases, ready to present as confirmation. Finally, I need to think about how I, as the teacher, can *close* this translanguaging space to transition more smoothly to the next stage.

Intervention: [Lesson Stage [7]—Discussion 2 Preparation
Lesson Stage [8]—Discussion 2

Rationale: Opening Translanguaging Space No. 3

Stages 7 and 8 are closely linked, that is, the Discussion 2 Preparation stage enables students to generate content and ideas, ready to use in the un-scaffolded, free-production Discussion 2 stage. I deemed that it may be beneficial to create the final space across these two stages in a single translanguaging activity that would resemble a preparatory *hybrid* L1–L2 (Japanese-English) translanguaging discussion just before the main discussion. This consists of deploying the functional target language, that is, organizational English Discussion Skills as an L2 framework of phrases, around which students can conduct their discussions and add the L1 content of their ideas. I anticipate that I will encounter difficulties verbally articulating what I need the students to do for the

Figure 8.
Presentation Slide Introducing the Hybrid Discussion with Questions and Discussion Skills Phrases to Open Translanguaging Space 3.



Adapted from: Kita et al., (2022). *What’s Your Opinion? Interactive Skills for Effective Discussion Book II* (2nd ed., pp. 48, 51).

Figure 9.

Presentation Slide Displaying a Model Translanguaging Hybrid Discussion Pattern.



Adapted from: Kita et al., (2022). *What's Your Opinion? Interactive Skills for Effective Discussion Book II* (2nd ed., p. 48).

hybrid discussion; therefore, I produced two more visual presentation slides, the first to open the translanguaging space (see Figure 8) and the other to model the discussion pattern structure so that students can engage in the translanguaging task more efficiently (see Figure 9).

Recorded Experience/Event:

After successfully completing the Discussion 1 stage, I warned the students that they were going to need to use their Japanese language skills to prepare for the final Discussion stage. The reaction to this was mixed, but I got the overall impression that they were curious and wanted to try out whatever I had planned. This practice was completely new to them, but after displaying the model presentation slide, I asked two of the more confident students to demonstrate an exchange, after which the whole group was keen to begin. As with the intervention at stage 4, there was considerable excitement and elevated levels of interaction, especially when making the L1-L2 switches. The hybrid discussion ended after 5 minutes, at which point the discussion groups appeared sufficiently energized with ideas, ready to conduct the discussion again in English. Subsequent spoken use of the target language (Discussion Skills) by students, on the whole, was produced accurately and with very little hesitation. Discussions also appeared to progress in a more sustained manner, with students wanting to speak right up until the final bell.

Reflection: Lesson Stage [7] & [8]

Many aspects recorded in the previous intervention stage were present in this stage also, such as enhancing metalinguistic awareness, lowering the affective filter, and enabling students to fully explore and share ideas and content knowledge through L1, before exercising them in English. Moreover, this particular hybrid discussion task allowed students to experience a strong form of deliberate, teacher-directed translanguaging, designated as Cognitive Academic Translanguaging (Jones, 2017).

Incorporating this activity directly after the Discussion 1 stage had minimal impact on overall lesson timing and pacing, taking only a total of 5 minutes. I will, therefore, include this in subsequent lessons as the final safe translanguaging space in the lesson plan.

Conclusion

This report set out to document the practical considerations of applying pedagogical translanguaging practices through the creation of translanguaging spaces in an English discussion course in a Japanese university setting. Judging by the findings made during the writing of the teaching journal, it is important to consider not only what translanguaging practices should be employed but how such practices may be incorporated within a course without unduly impacting the pre-existing pedagogical infrastructure. Once these aspects have been considered, however, the process of designing and applying context-appropriate pedagogical practices based on the latest translanguaging theory can result in both observable and convincing outcomes. For example, as reported in the reflective journal here, the application of an effective pedagogical translanguaging discussion activity (the intervention at Stages 7 and 8) enabled learners to comfortably switch between English and Japanese in a planned and deliberate manner (Jones, 2017). This means that students could achieve the aims inherent to the Discussion class, that is, to demonstrate the ability to engage with the task cognitively on multiple linguistic levels and to simultaneously synthesize their knowledge of the Discussion Skills patterns in English (Hurling, 2012). Moreover, during this preparatory phase of the discussion, as students were interacting in L1, this constituted a legitimate form of *strategic planning* and *rehearsal*, as defined by Ellis (2005, 2009). Therefore, as the resulting oral performances demonstrated, the bilingual pedagogical practice of translanguaging can produce learners who are noticeably more stimulated, confident, and primed to express their views in the context of a monolingual English discussion.

Despite these apparent successes, however, certain aspects remain unclear and could not be addressed in this report, such as the issue of identity: did exposure to pedagogical translanguaging practices, as demonstrated in this teaching context, in any way persuade learners into becoming more accepting of their bilingual status? This is a complex issue, and it would be impossible to gauge this from data gathered from the narrow, short-range interventional study presented here. However, whilst I doubt that any significant progress has been made, I believe that through the course of translanguaging, the learners' internal L1–L2 barrier (established over years of segregated language instruction) has been partly “disrupted” (García, 2009). This disruption, caused by the controlled practice of incorporating two languages into a single academic task, has potentially triggered a shift within learners; a shift in the balance of power between the L1–L2 dichotomy, an equalization of languages, so to speak, which, on a subconscious level, could work to cultivate a learner's bilingual identity over the longer term.

The results of this interventional study and the body of current literature make it abundantly evident that more empirical inquiry in this field is both necessary and feasible. Furthermore, it is hoped that the results of any future study could potentially lead to changes in other curricular contexts offered by Rikkyo University, such as the English debate course, where students would be able to benefit from exercising their inherent bilingual abilities and all from the safety of a translanguaging space.

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