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A Sociocognitive Analysis of Translanguaging in an ESL speaking classroom

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ABSTRACT

A paradigmatic change from monolingualism to plurilingualism in language education has given rise to the concept of translanguaging. In response to this, a growing amount of research has been carried out to revisit the role of first language on second language (L2) learning. However, there is a lack of studies conducted to explore in detail the dynamic nature of translanguaging within a classroom context. Thus, to fill this gap of knowledge, this study aims to provide an exhaustive analysis of translanguaging practices in an L2 classroom from the sociocognitive frame of reference. The research focus is on how translanguaging affects the students' process of learning speaking skills. A group of 31 undergraduate students and their respective teacher in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course were involved in this study. Data were collected through comprehensive classroom observations, a series of interviews, a demographic survey as well as relevant curriculum documents and student-participants' academic records. Findings from the sociocognitive analysis have revealed that translanguaging is a complex process of ongoing physiological activities of adaptation and alignment. Students translanguaged as a means to be continuously and progressively tuned to the affordances available in the

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environment. This consequently influenced their personalised set of learning actions in the speaking classroom.

Keywords: Translanguaging; speaking skills; sociocognitive.

INTRODUCTION

The global use of English as a lingua franca has inevitably piqued the interests of researchers, particularly within the field of education, to constantly find ways to improve English language learners' communicative performance. In Malaysia, English has been taught as a second language (L2) and is a compulsory subject at all levels of education (Che Musa et al., 2012; Mara & Mohamad, 2021). Being a country with multi-ethnic communities, Malaysian learners are normally bilingual, trilingual or even multilingual, with emphasis given to English language for their work life benefits (Abd Jalil et al., 2023; Too, 2023). To ensure that learners achieve the required level of communicative proficiency, all the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are being highlighted in most English language curriculum. Nevertheless, as speaking skills are more common in everyday communication, these skills often take precedence over the other skills in the L2 classrooms when teachers constantly encourage the language use among learners (Omar et al., 2020). Learners, for example, are involved in collaborative work where they have to interact with one another to complete the assigned tasks. These instructional practices are in accordance with communicative language teaching (CLT) that the Malaysian education system largely supports (Hassan & Gao, 2021).

Despite the fact that speaking skills are being highlighted in many L2 classrooms, the issue of poor oral communication skills among Malaysian graduates is still alarming. Many local employers have complained that Malaysian graduates seem to have difficulty verbally expressing their thoughts in English. They are often found to be lacking in confidence and overanxious every time they have to communicate in that language (Abdullah et al., 2024; Omar et al., 2020). This lack of English competencies among many Malaysian graduates has significantly resulted in a high rate of youth unemployment (Abdullah et al., 2024). Some studies reported that the insufficient amount of speaking in English has caused this problem. This is especially true when students appeared to favour their mother tongue in the L2 classroom and put little effort to communicate in English (Nadesan & Md. Shah, 2020; Omar et al., 2020). This view is in contrast with the current movement that believes the practice of deploying learners' linguistic repertoire which includes their first language (L1), or known as translanguaging, can provide scaffolding for L2 learner's language development (Canals, 2021; Heltai & Tarsoly, 2023). Thus, this present study intends to delve into the situated in-class process of learning to speak English at a Malaysian public university, to apprehend the underlying complexities of translanguaging.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Sociocognitive Perspective

Research into Second Language Learning (SLL) has been recently transformed into a more dynamic and integrated approach of language learning, whereby language is viewed as a part of an integrated system comprising cognition, perception and social action (see De Bot et al., 2017; Shaddad & Jember, 2024). Sociocognitive theory, for instance, holds that the process of language learning is vastly complex, gradual, nonlinear, dynamic, and inextricably intertwined with individual experiences, cultural knowledge, emotions, and social identity (Atkinson,

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2002; Atkinson et al., 2018). This contemporary approach proposed by Dwight Atkinson considers both cognitive and sociocultural aspects of learners during the process of learning, making it useful for providing a holistic and all-encompassing explanation of translaguaging phenomenon in this study.

There are three key principles of Atkinson's sociocognitive perspective: 1) the inseparability principle, 2) the learning-is-adaptive-principle, and 3) the alignment principle.

The Inseparability Principle

This principle is based on the idea that the social and cognitive aspects of language acquisition, learning and use are inseparable and separating them for a detailed analysis is unavailing. This stems from the fact that human brains are an open system that dynamically adapts to worldly events on a moment-to-moment basis (Atkinson, 2011). Following Gee's (1992) principle of social mind that supports wisdom (cognition) is both "in the head" and "in the world", Atkinson (2010) explained the concept of integrated cognition in two terms: extended and embodied cognition. The former connotes that the human mind intuitively extends its own system to operate, while the latter implies the active role of the body in manifesting inner self (Atkinson, 2010, p.599).

The Learning-is-adaptive Principle

This principle holds that humans are social by nature and cognition facilitates humans to adapt with the environments to survive (Atkinson, 2010). This has brought different views of learning in SLL research; whereby learning, rather than treated as solely an individual process, is a social action that demands adaptivity, to help learners develop and grow in their ecosocial environments.

The Alignment Principle

This principle denotes humans' unpremeditated abilities to orchestrate their interactions with other people and materials in the environments, for their mutual benefits (Atkinson, 2010, 2014; Atkinson et al., 2007). Alignment is construed as the major engine of SLL as it indicates the state where learners become unreservedly engaged in the complex process of learning (Atkinson, 2010). The embodiment of alignments can be discerned through various forms such as language, affective states, body orientation, gaze, shared attention and problem solving, as well as paying attention to myriads sociomaterial cues and artefacts (Atkinson, 2010, 2014; Atkinson et al., 2018).

Translanguaging as an Integrated Activity

When it comes to the role of L1 in L2 learning, there are controversies and challenges surrounding its interpretation, especially in research areas. Some researchers question the need to use the term translanguaging when familiar terms exist such as code-switching and code-mixing to explain the phenomenon of bilingual and multilingual language use. In response to this, Goodman and Tastanbek (2021) argued that code-switching is too monoglossic, in a sense that it draws false distinctions between languages and creates unnecessary hierarchies between them. Code-switching treats languages separately, with each of them having their own linguistic system and codes (García & Wei, 2014). This has led to implied social injustice in the language education system, whereby L2 is always seen as "standard" or "target" language

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and other languages as secondary despite their professed significance (Blackledge et al., 2014; Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021; Nagy, 2018).

Unlike code-switching, translanguaging appears to be in conformity with sociocognitive philosophies when it offers a more holistic point of view or heteroglossic nature of language use (Wei, 2023; Nagy, 2018). Originally coined by Cen Williams, the term translanguaging initially implied the deliberate and structured use of two languages within a lesson (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021; Lewis et al., 2012). The term was later modified to also encompass the mode and purpose of those linguistic activities (Nagy, 2018), before it was changed again for a more broadened scope --- to illustrate the dynamic alternation between language varieties that transcends culturally defined language boundaries (Goodman & Tatanbek, 2021; Wei, 2023). Conteh (2018) pointed out that translanguaging has rather moved the focus of research from understanding the processes of interaction to pedagogical potentials. The notion that translanguaging is an integrated activity of cognition and social action allows language learners to embrace their social identities and utilise their linguistic repertoire to the fullest; and hence, eliminate the deficit ideologies of adhering to the norm of an idealised near-native speaker (Nagy, 2018).

Translanguaging and Learning Speaking Skills

Recent movement in L2 research that regards language as a series of social practices and actions by speakers that are embedded in a web of social and cognitive relations (García & Wei, 2014, p.9) has marked a pedagogical shift in language education. Many L2 teachers have appeared to advocate the use of learners' knowledge of other languages (including L1) in the classrooms, treating it as resourceful rather than harmful to their communicative language development (Shin et al., 2019). Consequently, teaching speaking takes place in a way that embraces translanguaging, whereby learners' home language(s) are acknowledged to enhance learning (Ali, 2021; Shin et al., 2019).

While there is no doubt that translanguaging practices are now widespread in the area of teaching and learning L2 speaking, its implementation in the classroom has never been straightforward, especially in rural places where research and training are slowly updated. The teachers are usually accustomed to the "English-only" policy in language classrooms for a long period of time, making adopting this new change in their instruction truly challenging. Similar situation can also be witnessed in Malaysia, whereby, despite all the efforts made by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to support a more inclusive curriculum that promotes effective communication skills among graduates, there are still traditional pedagogical approaches being put into practice. Aziz and Kashinathan (2021) stated that due to exam-centric curriculum, many Malaysian teachers "force" their students to speak in English regardless of their unreadiness to use that language. Moreover, a heavy emphasis on language mechanics and use has caused the students to use memory-related strategies to speak the language, resulting in unnatural and over formalised speech production (Rusli et al., 2018).
In view of this, this current study aims to analyse the dynamic of translanguaging practices in an L2 speaking classroom from the sociocognitive frame of reference. This includes the nature of the translanguaging activities and the effects that it has on students' learning of L2 speaking. Based on the said objectives, the following research question has been formulated:

In what ways does translanguaging affect students' learning of L2 speaking?

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach; a useful method to explore and understand social problems in an all-encompassing manner in real-life settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For data collection, a triangulated approach through the use of multiple instruments was employed in the study to enhance the validity of data analysis. The details are as follows:

Classroom Observations

A group of 31 undergraduate students and their respective teacher in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classroom were observed for a full semester (4 months). It was a two-credit hour course that students were required to attend twice a week. However, since the focus of the study is on speaking skills, only speaking lessons were observed by the researchers, resulting in 8 classroom observations. During the observations, the researchers highly focused on the students' interactions and behaviours, as it might provide important information about the translanguaging activities that occurred in the classroom.

Interviews

This study used two different types of interviews:

- *Semi-structured and Focus Group Interview*

This interview took place at the end of the semester, after all the classroom observations were completed. Six voluntary students and their teacher were individually interviewed to get their opinions about translanguaging activities in the classroom. A focus group discussion was also conducted with the same student-participants to encourage comprehensive data collection which may not be achievable in the individual interviews (Kitzinger, 1994, 1995; Nyumba et al., 2018).

- *Unstructured Interview (stimulated recall)*

Stimulated recalls in the study were conducted immediately after every classroom observation to get the students' explanation about their specific translanguaging activities observed in the classroom. The ability of these interviews to revive the memories and thoughts of the participants (Shubert & Meredith, 2015) might help inform the researchers about the influence of translanguaging on the students' learning of speaking. However, unlike the semi-structured interview that involved six predetermined students, these stimulated recalls involved random students in the classroom as the researchers could not envision which participants would demonstrate significant actions or behaviours that were worth being explored.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used in the study to promote a holistic data analysis. It was given to the students prior to the classroom observation, to gain their demographic information. To enhance clarity, this questionnaire was set in both English and Malaysian language.

Curriculum Documents and Students' Academic Records

To understand the design of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course, this study relied heavily on the university policy and course outline. Moreover, the student-participants'

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university entrance test and summative assessment record were also analysed for their linguistic profile.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings according to the main sources of data: 1) semi-structured interview with the teacher, 2) semi-structured interviews with the six students, and 3) classroom observations (with stimulated recalls). It should be noted that the findings from the questionnaire and relevant documents and records in this study were treated merely as supporting data that provided additional information for an in-depth sociocognitive analysis.

Findings from the Semi-structured Interview with the Teacher

Several questions were asked in the interview to elicit the teacher's perceptions about translanguaging. Based on her responses, it can be suggested that the teacher highly supported a monolingual teaching approach when she appeared not well acquainted with the use of language(s) other than English in the classroom. Her comments when the researchers asked for her opinion about the use of other language(s) in teaching speaking:

> *It is a good question actually. Umm... [pause]. Although I use 95% English and only 5% Malay in the class, I think Malay language at some points does help their learning of speaking. So, yes, umm… I think I would use it to explain, for example. Because sometimes the students did not really understand when I explained in English, they just did not get it.*
>
> (Teacher in the semi-structured interview)

A long pause and the use of fillers such as "umm" might indicate the teacher's uncertainty and lack of perfect information (Kirkland et al., 2022). However, her claim of using first language (L1), Malay, to clarify difficult ideas to the students shows that she did acknowledge the importance of L1 for scaffolding. The teacher also expressed that she felt closer to her students every time she used Malay in the classroom. She stated:

> *So, when I decide to use Malay in my class, I feel that I have become closer to my students, more approachable.*
>
> (Teacher in the semi-structured interview)

Although the teacher rarely practised translanguaging in her teaching, she still approved the practice among the students in the classroom. She believed that the students' existing linguistic knowledge can be a powerful resource for negotiating meanings. She commented:

> *For the discussions, I usually allow my students to speak in Malay, as long as they know their limits. I mean they can use Malay to understand English, but not to replace English. That's the rule.*
>
> (Teacher in the semi-structured interview)

It was revealed that the teachers' personal experience of learning a foreign language has significantly influenced her understanding of the use of an L1 in learning an L2. She disclosed:

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> *I was brought up in the United States. When I came back to Malaysia, I barely understood Malay. So, I know how it feels to learn a language that is foreign to you using the language that you have already mastered. Just like how I used English to understand Malay.*
>
> (Teacher in the semi-structured interview)

To conclude, although the teacher approved the practice of translanguaging in the classroom, she still, to some extent, believed in the value of monolingual approach in teaching speaking. This was evident when she prioritised the target language in the classroom and put some restrictions to the use of L1.

Findings from the Semi-structured Interview with the Students

If the interview with the teacher showed that L1 was not highly favoured in the classroom, the findings with the students were quite the reverse. All the six students interviewed (addressed as Student 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) agreed that they always looked for opportunities to use their L1 when learning to speak English. A few of them claimed that translanguaging helped to keep their English conversations going. For example, Student 1 stated:

> *If there were certain words that I didn't know, or I forgot, I would just use Malay. Because when we talked, we had to be fast. We couldn't google the words like we did in writing. We didn't have time.*
>
> (Student 1 in the focus group interview)

Some other students argued that they used L1 to construct English sentences, using it as a "model" to form an English structure. While this can resort to a harmful act of direct translation, the amount of support provided by the L1 in terms of allowing the students to experiment with the target language, should not be ignored. A student reported:

> *I think it [first language] was helpful, in a sense that it helped me to construct sentences in English. I mean, if I didn't know how to say things in English, I would first think of saying it in Malay. Then, I would translate them into English.*
>
> (Student 2 in the semi-structured interview)

Moreover, this study also found that translanguaging helped improve the students' joint understanding. Some students claimed that their L1 provided continued assistance for them during the speaking lessons, especially when they struggled to understand each other when discussing a task. They said:

> *For example, during the discussions [for the role play], we often used Malay because it was easier to understand. Once we were clear with what we had to do, then we would use English.*
>
> (Student 4 in the semi-structured interview)

> *During the activities in the classroom, when we had to do the partner tasks [the role play], we normally discussed in Malay. But we still switched to English at times. You know, maybe because we were used to the Malay language. It was easier to discuss things in Malay than English. It was easier to understand.*

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(Student 6 in the semi-structured interview)

To conclude, the majority of the interviewed students in the study believed that translanguaging played a fundamental role in their learning of English speaking. These students did not only use their L1 to make progress in the lessons, but also to overcome L2 difficulties.

Findings from the Classroom Observations (and stimulated recalls)

For the sake of clarity, the data from the stimulated recall interviews will be presented together with the classroom observations. These interviewed students will be titled according to the alphabet.

The findings of the classroom observations revealed that translanguaging was occasionally used by the teacher in the classroom. The teacher translanguaged mostly to provide cognitive scaffolding while explaining the subject content. The following excerpts demonstrate the situation:

> ***Teacher:*** *"Likewise", what's the meaning of "likewise"? How do we use it in a sentence?*
> ***Students:*** *... [Silent])*
> ***Teacher:*** *Okay, for example, if someone says to you "hi, nice to meet you" and then you said, "likewise". Do you understand what I am saying? It's like "me too".*
> ***Students:*** *... [Indistinct noise]*
> ***Teacher:*** *Okay, if in Malay, when people say "hi, seronok tau jumpa awak" then you say "saya pun sama". It is like you are trying to say that you have the same thought as the other speaker. Okay?*
>
> (Classroom excerpts, Week 6)

The teacher was also found to use translanguanging as a means to check the students' understanding of the L2. For example:

> ***Teacher:*** *Entertainment. Say it.*
> ***Students:*** *Entertainment*
> ***Teacher:*** *Entertainment*
> ***Students:*** *Entertainment*
> ***Teacher:*** *Good. What is entertainment?*
> ***Students:*** *... [Indistinct voice]*
> ***Teacher:*** *What is entertainment in Malay, class?*
> ***A student:*** *Hiburan?*
> ***Teacher:*** *Yes, good. Hiburan. How about an exhibition? What is an exhibition in Malay? We always have exhibitions here at the university. Remember last time we had a multicultural exhibition?*
> ***A student:*** *Pameran?*
> ***Teacher:*** *Yes, pameran.*
>
> (Classroom excerpts, Week 6)

Interestingly, the findings also revealed that the teacher sometimes translanguaged to joke around with the students. For example, in Week 5, the teacher appeared to utter a phrase *"pendek kata syarat utama dia adalah tahan maki"* or "in short, you have to be willing to be

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mocked". This phrase is rather popular in Malaysia, especially among the Malays, as it was uttered by an actor in a famous classic Malay comedy movie – Do re mi. The following excerpts provide the illustration:

> ***Teacher:*** *If you wish to work in the field of customer service, you have to be strong. Like really strong. Pendek kata syarat utama dia adalah tahan maki [in short, you have to be willing to be mocked].*
> ***Students:*** *[laughing]*
>
> (Classroom excerpts, Week 5)

Meanwhile, many students were regularly observed doing the translanguaging in the classroom, especially during the discussion tasks. When the researchers interviewed one of them, they said:

> ***Researcher:*** *Okay, just now during the role play, I saw that you were discussing with your friend [partner], mostly in Malay … .and rarely in English…why?*
> ***Student L:*** *[laughing] Um, actually it's because it's easier to understand if we speak in Malay…but there were certain words that we spoke in English…*
> ***Researcher:*** *What do you mean certain words?*
> ***Student L:*** *Um I mean simple words [phrases], like 'how to do this?' 'Let's start now'…It's not like we were not trying to speak in English. But, we know little about English words.*
> ***Researcher:*** *So, are you trying to say that Malay is very important to you in learning to speak English?*
> ***Student L:*** *Yes, of course. I don't know about others, but I don't think I can even do the task without using Malay.*
> ***Researcher:*** *What do you mean?*
> ***Student L:*** *Well, if we [student L and her partner] did not use Malay, I think we would have taken so much time to complete the task. Neither of us are good English speakers. So, we had to use Malay to understand each other, to discuss the task.*
>
> (Student A in the stimulated recall interview, Week 7)

Although the teacher seemed to appreciate the use of more L2 in her class (see 4.1), the researchers never witnessed her openly preventing the students from using the L1 during the lessons. However, many students were observed during the discussion tasks, became reluctant to use the L1 to discuss when the teacher was near, and quickly switched into English instead. The researchers then interviewed one of them:

> ***Researcher:*** *Just now, I could see that you gave a hint to your partner when the teacher came to your table. And suddenly, you two were seen trying very hard to converse in English. What happened?*
> ***Student J:*** *[laughing]… I was afraid that the teacher would not be happy if she found out that we discussed it in Malay. So that's why…*
> ***Researcher:*** *Do you think the teacher would be unhappy if she found out?*

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> ***Student J:*** *I think so. Because it is an English class, so of course the teacher will expect us to speak in English.*
>
> (Student B in the stimulated recall interview, Week 5)

To conclude, the practice of translanguaging in the speaking classroom was, for the most part, unpremeditated rather than pedagogical. Both the teacher and students operated the L1 merely as an apparatus to fulfill learning, and not as a resource that learners can attentively draw on in the course of learning.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the research findings are discussed in relation to the existing literature relevant to the study, along with the theoretical approach of sociocognitive theory, and their respective views on speaking.

Based on the findings, it can be asserted that the observed L2 speaking classroom was by and large, still influenced by the traditional pedagogical approach. The teacher's total control over the learning events was apparent when a nearly exclusive use of the target language was put into practice and students were hesitant to rely on their first language, assuming that it was disapproved of in learning to speak English. According to sociocognitive theory, language is viewed as a part of an integrated system comprising the mind, body, and world - as an instrument for social actions, and a dynamic and adaptable means of making a change in a situated world (Atkinson, 2011). People naturally depend on their social and cultural tools while learning to communicate their needs (Atkinson, 1999; Hovy & Yang, 2021; Tomasello, 2014). Therefore, when the teacher imposed a hierarchy on language use in the classroom, it not only stops the students from embracing their impulsive translanguaging activities, but also curb their cognitive functions by restricting their freedom to take initiative and responsibility for their learning process.

The teacher's attitude towards translanguaging might have stemmed from her uncertainties regarding that concept. In line with her traditional teaching approach, she possibly presumed that the students' first language can interfere with their target language production. Derakhshan and Karimi (2015) mentioned that second language learners tend to transfer the forms, meanings and culture of their L1 when attempting to speak the target language. Errors often occur when the structures are different, causing interference that prevents the learners from achieving nativelike accuracy (Almuslimi, 2020). This perception might have instilled a sense of guilt in the teacher for using the L1 in her teaching, fearing its detrimental effects. While L1 interference can be inevitable, to deny the students from having a free access to their L1 during the process of learning the L2 can inflict greater damage. L1 is learners' preexisting linguistic repertoire that deeply rooted in an integrated system of L2 learning (Canagarajah, 2011). It coordinates with the L2 as a unified cognitive commodity that manoeuvre the learners in a way that constructively benefits them as social beings.

Although the aspiration to emulate native-like proficiency in spoken English is unquestionably commendable, to make it as an intended objective can inadvertently make the learning process become notoriously difficult. This phenomenon is particularly evident among adult learners, whose neurobiological mechanisms exhibit comparatively less adaptive than those of younger individuals (Blanco & Sloutsky, 2019). Viewed from the lens of the sociocognitive framework, language serves as a conduit for constructing meaning, encompassing making sense of life events, interpersonal relationships, and the self (Atkinson et al., 2018). People use language to externalise their thoughts and emotions, so that they can function in all aspects of society and serve their collective needs. Providing that learners have

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achieved a proficiency level that enables them to thrive in diverse sociological contexts, the attainment of native-like fluency is therefore no longer a salient issue.

With regards to the students' positive attitudes towards the use of L1 in learning spoken English, it can be inferred that such attitudes might have arisen from their recognition of L1's efficacy in providing them with assistance when dealing with the intricacy of the L2. Atkinson (2002, 2010, 2011) affirms that language learning is an exceptionally complex system that is neither socially-driven nor cognitively-driven, but is intricately interwoven within a constantly evolving sociocognitive space. It embodies a social action that can be perceptively grasped mainly by performing the situated activities (Atkinson, 2002; Churchill et al., 2010). Therefore, when the students were instructed to do some speaking activities in the classroom, their nervous system might have been activated, prompting them to adapt and align with the challenges posed by the L2 tasks. That is, like other organisms that depend on their environmental cues for survival, these students relied on their sociocognitive resource of L1 to facilitate the enactment of appropriate learning strategies.

Despite the students' good disposition to employ their first language when learning to speak English, the findings have informed that such a practice was less favourable by the teacher. This resulted in the use of L1 just merely to fulfil learning; it had no deliberate and purposeful approach to enhance learning. In reference to Wang (2016), translanguaging can serve several purposes including explanatory, managerial and interpersonal. Explanatory aims at providing cognitive or metalinguistic scaffolding; managerial focuses on developing effective learning; while interpersonal geared towards negotiating meanings. In this study, the teacher's use of translanguaging exhibited explanatory and managerial functions when it was used mostly to explain difficult L2 concepts, and to promote active engagement with the students through jokes. The students, on the other hand, displayed a more interpersonal use of translanguaging when they usually used it to discuss with each other, especially during the collaborative task.

Given that both the teacher and students in the study were fully aware of the facilitating conditions of translanguaging activities when they resorted to it; this phenomenon represents the instinctive adaptive functionality in individuals (Atkinson, 2010, p.610). Human cognition is intricately intertwined with the external milieus, wherein their mental endeavors find manifestation through corporeal states and actions (Atkinson 2010; Canagarajah 2007; Churchill et al., 2010). In essence, these participants consistently reconfigured their L2 ecosystem while at the same time deploying their cognitive resources of L1 to help them operate accordingly in the classroom: the teacher to perform her teaching; and the students to perform their learning. This suggests that even in the absence of a structured strategy, translanguaging acts as a powerful agent that mediates learning, particularly in fostering student engagement.

CONCLUSION

Given that alignment embodies the integral connection of mind, body, and environment within a complex L2 system (Atkinson, 2010, 2011; Atkinson et al., 2007), ensuring continual well-coordinated interactions between learners and their L2 classroom context is therefore crucial for promoting effective learning. This can be achieved by validating translanguaging --- supporting learners' full interpretative repertoire during the process of meaning making in the L2 speaking classroom. Teachers can develop pedagogical approaches that resonate with learners' "language of experiences" to invigorate their cognitive flexibility, challenging their brain to navigate different linguistic structures and patterns (Adinolfi & Astruc, 2017; García & Wei, 2014). A more "culturally-inclusive" classroom also encourages learners to take an

active role in their learning when they are given a sense of ownership as co-producers of knowledge to monitor their own performance (Yon, 2022). This may help break their silence in the classroom as a result of their limited L2 proficiency. However, to ensure positive outcomes, it is advisable for teachers to explicitly inform their learners about the mediating role of L1 in learning the L2 to encourage constructive use of translanguaging.

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