Exploring Japanese High School Students' L1 Use in Translanguaging in the Communicative EFL Classroom

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Ryosuke Aoyama
Kanagawa Prefectural Yokohama Senior High School of International Studies
<ryosuke.aoyama.11@gmail.com>

Abstract

In EFL contexts where students' chances to use English are limited to the classroom, minimizing their use of L1 to develop fluency in English is often encouraged in instruction. However, recent studies have reported that students' partial use of L1 in code-switching or translanguaging offers various pedagogical advantages. This research examines advanced Japanese high school students' use of and perceptions toward L1 (Japanese) in translanguaging during communicative L2 (English) activities. Drawing on both quantitative data from a survey answered by 190 third-year high school students and qualitative data from classroom observations and in-depth interviews with nine students from the same group, the study attempted to reveal context-sensitive findings about students' use of L1 in translanguaging in the EFL classroom. The quantitative survey results revealed that all the students, to varying degrees, partially used L1 during communicative L2 activities. Data from classroom observations supported the survey results and identified five salient speech functions of students' partial L1 use in the activities. In addition, the interview data showed students' nuanced reasons for and perceptions toward their partial L1 use during such activities, highlighting a unique communication layer for translanguaging. Based on the discussion of the findings, recommendations for pursuing contextualized communicative language teaching and translanguaging pedagogy in EFL classrooms are provided at the end of the paper.

In secondary English education in Japan, as the status of English as an international language has been established nationwide (MEXT, 2011, 2014), there have been intensified demands for developing students' communicative competence in English as opposed to focusing on language analysis through traditional grammar translation. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) stipulated that, to better provide opportunities for students to use their English skills in the high school English classroom, teachers should use English as the medium of instruction (MEXT, 2009). MEXT furthers this trend of promoting in-class communicative English activities and developing communicative competence in the target

language. The Course of Study, the national curriculum standard, mentions that English should be the medium of instruction in principle to promote students' rich use of English, and classroom activities in English should be the center of instruction (MEXT, 2018). The rationale behind MEXT's communicative orientation toward English language teaching, as it reflects the particularity of English as a foreign language (EFL) settings where students' opportunities to use English are restricted to the classroom, is arguably convincing: More exposure to the target language by "transforming classes into real communication scenes" (MEXT, 2009, p. 7) produces more successful learners of that language. During such in-class communication scenes in regular high schools, however, students' code-switching to their L1 or translanguaging tends to be spontaneous to communicate with their peers and complete the communicative tasks. Although it is evident that the students' overuse of L1 in the classroom hinders their L2 development, the literature confirms that exclusion of the learners' L1 in L2 classrooms is not always advisable (Spada, 2007). Also, in recent years, especially in the field of bi/multilingual education, there has been growing research interest in code-switching and translanguaging (e.g., Canagarajah, 2011a; García et al., 2017; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Neokleous, 2017; Turnbull, 2018), and the use of L1 in L2 classrooms has been reevaluated. However, close analyses of students' code-switching and translanguaging in EFL secondary contexts in Japan, where students and teachers are experiencing continuous reforms under the implementation of the above-mentioned English language education policy, are not abundant in the literature. Therefore, more context-sensitive research is needed to critically discuss the use of L1, which is a controversial topic for Japanese high school teachers of English (Aoyama, 2017). This study examines Japanese high school students' actual use of and perceptions toward L1 in translanguaging during communicative activities in the English classroom with the aim of filling this gap in the literature.

Literature Review

Secondary English Education in Japan, Communicative Language Teaching, and the Use of L1

Approximately every 10 years, MEXT issues the Course of Study as a set of teaching standards to stipulate goals, objectives, and teaching content for subjects taught in elementary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools in Japan. As for upper secondary English education, since the previous Course of Study was issued in 2009, an emphasis has been put on fostering students' English communication abilities, and the orientation toward communicative language teaching (CLT) has been reflected in the Course of Study (MEXT, 2009, 2018). MEXT (2018) reports that, in upper secondary contexts, there has still been a lack of satisfactory implementation of communicative English classroom activities that foster students' communication abilities in English, such as impromptu spoken interaction skills. Accordingly, the goals of English education were recently revised employing competency-based views in reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and MEXT is furthering its English educational reform throughout the country.

This communication-oriented English education policy observed in the past and present Course of Study in Japan exemplifies the nature of CLT: CLT is context-sensitive. Duff (2014) notes that CLT is not a uniform, but rather a multiform method, as it reflects diverse teaching contexts. Thus, to discuss CLT that is optimized for EFL secondary contexts in Japan, it is critically important to remove commonly held misconceptions about CLT that result from the simplistic interpretations that ignore particularity in teaching sites. According to Spada (2007), pervasive misconceptions of CLT that were frequently discussed in the literature include (a) CLT is an approach that exclusively focuses on meaning without any attention to language form, (b) CLT is an approach that avoids

error correction, (c) CLT is an exclusively learner-centered approach, (d) CLT is an approach that focuses on aural-oral proficiency, and (e) CLT is a monolingual approach in the target language that avoids the learners' L1. Related to the last misconception, Aoyama (2017) found the use of L1 under the implementation of the Course of Study is a controversial topic that reflected the various teaching beliefs of Japanese high school teachers. In his case study, even though all the teacher participants had a positive attitude toward MEXT's policy and favored communicative approaches, some teachers saw the value in using L1 selectively to scaffold students' learning such as understanding nuanced concepts of grammar and vocabulary and exercising higher order thinking skills, while others strongly argued that the use of L1 has an adverse effect on students' L2 learning, and thus it should be eliminated from the classroom. These varying attitudes toward the use of L1 are easily assumed to be due to the nature of Japanese EFL contexts, where students share L1 with their peers and teachers and the opportunity to use and practice the target language in their daily life is scarce and limited to the classroom. In such contexts, Ellis (2005) argues that maximizing L2 use in the classroom is crucial and providing opportunities for output in L2 is central to classroom activities.

Code-switching and Translanguaging

Code-switching, the act of shuttling back and forth between one language or language variety and another, has been a frequent topic for L2 classroom research in diverse teaching contexts (e.g., Nukuto, 2017; Rahayu & Margana, 2018; Samer & Moradkhani, 2014; Sampson, 2012). In traditional models of bilingualism, bilingual speakers were seen to have two separate language systems based on "the monolingual or fractional view" (Grosjean, 1989, p. 3), which leads to defining bilinguals as deficient L2 users. Accordingly, code-switching was considered as an interference error, not as a linguistic resource for communication. Grosjean (1989) argued that the monolingual view of bilingualism regards the bilingual as "two monolinguals in one person" (p. 4), which is never the case. Instead, he stressed the importance of viewing a bilingual person as a unique and specific language user, not a person with two separate language systems but "an integrated whole" (p. 6), and it is questionable to measure their linguistic proficiency against monolingual standards. This inclusive view of bilingualism enables code-switching to be seen as a communication strategy bilingual speakers use, rather than a sign of weak language proficiency. Although Grosjean's argument could be considered outdated in terms of the neuroscience of multilingualism and its recent advances, the monolingual bias and the concept of bilingualism based on traditional models such as additive and subtractive bilingualism have persisted in the field of TESOL and second language acquisition (García & Kleyn, 2016; Ortega, 2014).

As more recent studies after the "multilingual turn" (May, 2014, p. 1) have furthered the theory and pedagogy of multilingualism and second language acquisition, the term translanguaging increasingly draws the attention of researchers. Although the frequently studied educational contexts about translanguaging are English as a second language (ESL) settings, due to its significant and influential impacts on local, context-sensitive language education outside ESL contexts, the pedagogical possibilities of translanguaging have recently been explored in Japanese EFL tertiary education (Sano, 2018; Turnbull, 2018). According to García and Kleyn (2016), translanguaging practice refers to "the deployment of a speakers' full linguistic repertoire" (p. 14), which transcends the boundaries of named languages created by social and political phenomenon. While code-switching is based on the external view that bilingual speakers use two different languages alternatively, translanguaging, which centralizes bilingual speakers without viewing them from the perspective of the language norm, offers an inclusive and internal view that they have one unique linguistic repertoire deployed selectively according to the context where communication happens (García et al., 2017). Translanguaging thus enables bilingual users to see their language choice as a part of their whole language repertoire, empowering them as language

users. Similar to code-switching, its pedagogical advantages are obvious: it can scaffold students "to make connections and comparisons, ask deep questions, and practice and play with language" (García et al., 2017, p. 11). García et al. also note that translanguaging helps students to see learning academic discourse as "just adding another set of language features and practices to their growing repertoires" (p. 11).

The Functions of L1 in EFL Classrooms

The previous studies that examined students' L1 use in the EFL settings suggested its pedagogical implications, identifying the functions of students' L1 use in the classroom. Sampson (2012) reported in a study of EFL adult learners in Colombia that their L1 use served various functions in the L2 classroom. These include (a) L1 equivalents for the lack of L2 lexical items, (b) metalanguage for classroom activities, which is "discussion *about* the tasks and other procedural concerns" (p. 297), (c) floor holding during conversations, (d) reiteration requests, (e) socializing to develop group solidarity, and (f) L2 avoidance. Based on these findings, the study suggested that students' use of L1 by code-switching does not necessarily reflect their ability level, and rarely indicates their unwillingness to use L2. Instead, it serves the purpose of the aforementioned communicative functions. A more recent study reports that Norwegian EFL students ranging from 15 to 17 years of age showed positive attitudes toward their L1 use in the classroom, detailing its advantages for L2 learning (Neokleous, 2017). The students' voices revealed that their L1 use scaffolds their deeper learning and comprehension, boosting their confidence and providing a sense of security, and improving classroom atmosphere. Highlighting the students' appreciation of the application of L1 in the classroom, Neokleous's (2017) study suggested the importance of using L1 judiciously and taking into account students' preferences about L1 use to create an ideal L2 learning environment.

Methodology

This study uses "translanguaging" as its theoretical framework to explore Japanese high school students' language features during communicative English activities. In the translanguaging model, as García and Kleyn (2016) explain, a speaker's linguistic repertoire is seen as constantly transforming through social interaction with peers. Therefore, translanguaging pedagogy is "always collaborative and student-centered" (p. 22). This notion of translanguaging provides a rationale for this study, which focused on participant students' naturally occurring interaction with their peers in communicative English activities. The study uses the terms L1 and L2 to represent Japanese and English respectively to explain "the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable" (García, 2009, p. 44). However, the translanguaging model García and Kleyn (2016) use is a strong version of translanguaging, which does not focus on L1 or L2. This is because bilingual people do not speak languages, but selectively use features of their linguistic repertoire (García & Lin, 2017). Thus, the framework used for this study could be considered as a weak version of translanguaging in that the language boundary between L1 and L2 is set for the data analysis, presentation, and discussion.

To explore students' L1 use in translanguaging (García & Kleyn, 2016) during communicative L2 activities and their attitudes toward it, a case study approach (Duff & Anderson, 2015) was undertaken. To "gain an insider perspective on the processes that accompany translanguaging" for better translanguaging pedagogy (Canagarajah, 2011b, p. 6), the study sought to gain nuanced, grounded understanding by a survey, classroom observations, and follow-up individual interviews with students. To achieve this, the study was framed by the following two questions: (a) How do Japanese high school students use their L1 in translanguaging during communicative English

activities? (b) What are Japanese high school students' attitudes toward their L1 use in translanguaging during communicative English activities?

Setting and Participants

The study took place at an advanced-level prefectural senior high school in Japan. Focusing on foreign language education, the school provides small classes with around 20 students for English courses and other foreign language courses. In addition, many programs that provide students with authentic language and intercultural learning opportunities characterize the school, such as study tours abroad and sister school exchange programs in cooperation with several schools in countries where the studied languages are used. Overall, students' motivation to learn foreign languages is relatively high. The average score of the TOEIC IP test the third-year students took at the beginning of the semester was 618, which indicated that they were advanced learners of English for their age. The study targeted a third-year two-credit English integrated skills course called International Communication (IC), with nine third-year Japanese high school students being the primary participants of this study. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the school, the participants, and their parents.

Data Collection

The researcher first conducted a simple one-question survey (see Appendix) with the aim of obtaining a general understanding of students' frequency of L1 use during communicative L2 activities in class. One hundred ninety students who took the aforementioned course participated in the survey. With the result of the survey in mind, the researcher examined students' actual L1 use during the communicative activities in the course, observing 10 classes of 50 minutes over two different groups of 39 students in total. The observed students were among the 190 students who took part in the survey. The researcher observed the students' interactions with peers during communicative activities in the classroom, writing field notes to transcribe the students' L1 and L2 speech. The communicative activities used in class for this study were content discussions on topics in the textbook, such as robots and artificial intelligence in students' lives. The discussions were guided with prompts, for example, "Are robots less stressful to interact with than humans?" or "Will having robot automation make life easier for humans?" Done in pairs or small groups, the activities aimed to develop students' ability to exchange opinions about the assigned topics in English. To elicit students' interpretation of, intentions of, and perspectives toward their actual L1 use in translanguaging analyzed through classroom observations, the researcher asked students from the observed groups if they were willing to participate in a post-lesson individual interview. Nine students agreed to participate, and their voices became the primary data source of this study. During the interviews, the researcher showed each participant student the analyzed data about the students' translanguaging practice from the classroom observations, asking if they used L1 in the same way the data showed, and if so, why and how they used L1 during the communicative L2 activities, and what they thought of their L1 use in L2 classrooms. Regarding the interviewing strategy, this study used semi-structured interviews, since this method allows the researcher to be flexible and responsive to participants' answers, and thus to explore emerging themes that contribute to discovering new findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Also, the interviews were conducted in Japanese in order to elicit rich, nuanced information from the participants.

Data Analysis

To answer the research questions, a qualitative approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) was employed. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain, qualitative data analysis aims to make sense out of data by "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read" (p. 202). To achieve this, the content of field notes from the classroom observations and transcribed data from the individual interviews were analyzed in a qualitative data analysis software,

MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2018. Through conducting an initial open coding without a specific focus and a secondary analytic coding with the aim of grouping the open codes, the researcher identified salient patterns and emergent themes, which were relevant to the research questions. The researcher translated the Japanese responses into English for exposition in this paper. The translation was checked for accuracy by a teaching colleague who was familiar with the context of this research and was bilingual in English and Japanese.

Findings

The Frequency of Students' L1 Use

To gain a holistic understanding of students' L1 use in class, the quantitative one-question survey asked 190 students to report on how often they use their L1 partially during communicative L2 tasks such as discussions in English. The results are shown in Figure 1.
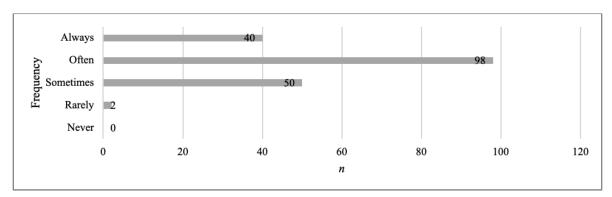

Figure 1. Students' Reports on the Frequency with Which They Use L1 Partially During Communicative English Activities. *n*=190.

The results suggested that all the participant students, in varying degrees, used their L1, Japanese, in class. The majority acknowledged the frequent partial use of Japanese during activities, with no one reporting the total exclusion of Japanese.

The Actual Use of L1 During Communicative English Activities

Classroom observations were conducted to examine the students' actual L1 use in translanguaging during the communicative L2 tasks in class. The observed L1 utterances by the students were classified according to functions of speech, with five salient categories being identified. The categories are (a) fillers, (b) backchannelling, (c) asking for help, (d) equivalents, and (e) metalanguage.

The students' partial L1 use was often observed as a form of fillers. These short Japanese fillers appeared just before longer utterances in English. The common observed fillers include *etto* [well], *nanka* [like], and *nandaro* [What is that?]. Short, word-level L1 use also occurred when the students were actively listening and showed their interest toward the speakers. For example, *hē* [I see / really (with falling intonation)], *naruhodo* [I see], *sōdane* [right], and *tashikani* [right] were used as backchannelling devices during English conversations.

Also, the students often resorted to Japanese to appeal for help when they wished to express the English words or phrases that they did not know or could not say immediately. For example, "*Sassuru* tte nanteiundakke?" [How do you say *reading between the lines*?], "*Wasureppoi* tte nanteiuno?" [How do you say *forgetful*?], "*Kaidan o noboru* tte?" [What's *going up stairs*?], and "*Teishotokusha* tte nanteiuno?" [How do you say *low-wage workers*?] In most cases, these L1 questions were followed by the answers from other students in the group or their teacher. The

students then switched back to English again, repeating the given word or phrase and continuing their talk. In another case, one student asked for help but immediately came up with the English word: "*Tashikameru* tte nandakke? Check?" [How do you say *check*? Check?]. This student returned to talking in English right after one of her peers responded to the Japanese question.

Another form of salient L1 in translanguaging used by the students was classified as equivalents. Equivalent L1 use is partial use of Japanese while communicating in English which, in this study, tended to be word-level, phrase-level, and clause-level L1 use while avoiding using the L2 counterparts. The observed L1 equivalents include "My dog is very *kowagari* [*timid*]," "If people work too hard, they will become *noiroze* [have a *mental breakdown*]," and "The doctor was not accurate when I had *haien* [*pneumonia*]. The diagnosis was *natsukaze* [*a summer cold*]," with phrase-level and clause-level L1 use being "When I am busy, I can … *jikan o tanshuku* [*save time*]" and "It's easy to communicate with robots because *sasshitari shinakutemo iishi* [*we don't have to read between the lines*]." Also, L1 equivalent words sometimes followed their L2 counterparts as opposed to replacing them. For example, one student said, "After I heard you talking, [I came to think] robots may be produceful [*sic*]…, *seisanteteki* [*productive*]*?"* and this was followed by her teacher's recast, "Productive." It was obvious, by her uncertain facial expression and an unnatural pause, that the student switched to Japanese and explained the English word she was unsure of. On the other hand, another student used Japanese just as an additional explanation of an English word she was confident using: "It's useful for manual labor, *chikara shigoto* [*manual labor*]." This example appeared to be unique considering the fact that the most frequently observed L1 equivalent examples were simply replacing English words or phrases, seemingly due to the lack of the lexical items in the students' language system. Explanations for the use of these L1 equivalents were mentioned during the post-lesson individual interviews with the students.

The last frequently observed form of L1 use was as metalanguage, which refers to L1 use for talking about the tasks themselves (Eldridge, 1996; Sampson, 2012). During communicative tasks, the students used Japanese to talk about the task procedures, clarify and confirm the discussion questions and foci, and facilitate and maintain the tasks with peers. For example, before initiating the English discussion, one student said, "Watashi wa 'for' no hou desu. Dozo. [I'm for, go ahead.]" Again, before the discussion, another student asked a peer about a discussion topic, "Nanka robotto dake ga shindan suruno wa iika waruika tte koto dayone? [Is it like whether it's good or bad for us to rely on robots diagnosing patients?]. When questions about the discussion questions or foci were articulated in Japanese, the answers were also given in Japanese, which were followed by English discussion. Some students used Japanese partially to facilitate the tasks, for example: "Meccha jikan tsukatteta, hokano hito dozo. [I took too much time. Someone else, go ahead, please.]." One student, as a discussion leader, tried to conclude the discussion in English but did not know how to do it and said, "Thank you for…*nandaro* [*how do you say it*?], …Thank you! *Shimekata ga wakaranai* [*I don't know how to end this*]." One thing that should be noted regarding these examples of translanguaging is that although they used Japanese as metalanguage, the actual tasks were maintained mostly in English. It was observed that the students tried to use English as much as possible when engaging in the actual discussion.

The Students' Voices Regarding the Use of L1
The researcher conducted individual interviews with nine students from the observed groups to explore their reasons for and perceptions toward their partial Japanese use during communicative tasks in English. The analysis of the coded interview data found three salient themes, which are presented below.

Communication strategies. All the interviewees touched upon their partial Japanese use as a strategy for learning and completing the assigned tasks. When asked for the reasons behind the use

of L1 equivalent in the sentence: "My dog is very *kowagari* [*timid*]," the student who made the statement said:

I couldn't come up with the English word. I was like "My dog is very… what's the word?" and I ended up using Japanese for that. The word "timid" was simply not available in the dictionary in my brain and I thought if I explained that word differently in English, it would take too much time.

As the above quote indicated, circumlocution in English appears to be challenging for the students. Another student said,

I tried to explain an English word I didn't know in a roundabout way using different expressions in English. But it didn't work well and I couldn't get my message across and made it even more difficult and complicated for the listeners to understand… They were confused like "What…?" and I knew that by seeing their faces. Every time I try, I get that kind of facial expression.

In addition, motivation for using partial Japanese seems to come from the availability of peers' support. When asked for the reason for asking for help in Japanese, one student said, "I want to get my message across all in English but if I say a Japanese word, someone in my group gives me the English word. I use my friends as my dictionary." Another shared a positive perspective on the equivalent L1 use:

I feel I have to speak like this [mixing Japanese while talking in English] when I have no idea what to say in English. And if someone supports and helps me with the parts I had to say in Japanese, I can learn. I think it's better than just remaining quiet because you don't know the words in English.

As mentioned in the previous section, the equivalent L1 use occurred in the form of not only completely replacing the English vocabulary with the Japanese, but also adding the equivalent Japanese after the English words to make sure the listeners understood. The very student who made the statement, "It's useful for manual labor, *chikara shigoto* [*manual labor*]." explained the reason behind this translanguaging:

There are occasions the listeners look completely blank when you use a word you recently remembered, for example, the word "compensate" or a difficult one like "co-existence," even though you found the perfect situation for using these words, aren't there? If that is the case, I switch to Japanese. Yes, that happens often. I know I should've paraphrased those words in English but I couldn't.

Another student also expressed her reason for such partial L1 use: "Yes, I do that [equivalent L1 use]. I'm worried if I can get my message across when I say it in English. I wonder if everyone knows the word I use, and if not, it might go more smoothly if I use Japanese, I guess." These students' voices show that they selectively use Japanese as a strategy for maintaining communication in English not necessarily due to the lack of their own linguistic resources in English. Rather, their Japanese use in translanguaging reflected their ability to use flexible communication skills to alter their ways of talking, taking into consideration their listeners' responses and competences.

Learner and instructional factors. Another finding surrounding the students' partial L1 use in translanguaging pertains to the particularity of learners and instructions in high school in Japan. For example, affective factors influenced their linguistic choices during the communicative English tasks. When asked for the reason for their using Japanese fillers instead of English ones, one student mentioned, "The act of speaking English comes with a certain amount of embarrassment. If I keep talking and talking in English, that makes me feel a little bit embarrassed, and to mitigate the embarrassment, I think I used fillers in Japanese."

Another student said, "[During the classroom tasks] We're talking with our friends who we talk with in Japanese in our daily life. There are people I think are feeling embarrassed with talking in English." In line with these comments, another elaborated on the use of fillers:

If I say, "I see" or something like that, I feel a bit strange. No, it's actually not strange but it's like embarrassment, I mean it's because of the classroom atmosphere. Maybe if more than half of the students said, "I see," I would say "I see," but if they say naruhodone *[I see] or* wakaru *[You're right], I'm Japanese, so I'm influenced by the majority.*

As this quote suggests, it appears that group dynamics play a role in their translanguaging. In other words, the students influenced each other in making their linguistic choices. For another example, a student mentioned,

I think everyone [in my group] said like nanka *[well] and basically the discussions weren't completely in English, were they? Everyone used Japanese a little bit and if they were completely in English I would try, but I wonder if I was consciously trying to use English all the time.*

Another student reported that she selectively uses Japanese fillers according to the person she speaks to:

Depending on the person I talked to, for example, with Yuki or Nana, I use "well" or "you know" [in English] because I know them very well, spending time with them for three years, I know they can communicate in English. If I use nanka *[well] to them, I know it's not good for them. But there are also students who mainly think in Japanese and use English partially. When I work with them, I feel it's okay to use Japanese.*

Sometimes, the students' Japanese became dominant in group discussions where the focus was solely on the content, which required critical thinking skills. One student shared her desire to use English more:

In the last class, when we discussed the dialects, I was wondering if we were supposed to use English or Japanese. This class has been my only chance to extensively use English at school these days, so I tried to speak in English but others spoke in Japanese. If everyone else starts speaking Japanese, there's no way for only you to keep talking in English, don'tou think? I really wanted to try speaking English but it was in Japanese. I sometimes wonder if this should be done in English or Japanese. I wasn't sure last time. I would appreciate it if the teacher would say "We can talk about it in Japanese because the content is really important for today's discussion," or something like that.

Along with the affective factors and the peer influences, the limitations of the classroom tasks induced the students' Japanese use during the English discussions. More specifically, the time constraints of the classroom tasks presented challenges for the students trying to exclude their partial Japanese use. One student elaborated on her word and phrase level L1 use:

I want to use English as much as possible during the limited class time, but the last thing I would want to happen is that I fail, because of the lack of my vocabulary, to express myself or to hear my peers' opinions during discussions with the time limit of like one minute. And that's followed by the teacher's asking us to share with the whole class what we discussed in the group. I don' really like it when I can't have discussions with my peers just because I have stumbled in English, but I do have something to say, so I use Japanese to fill the gap quickly. I'm under pressure.

Another also noted with regards to her word and phrase level L1:

As for myself, I think I end up using Japanese when English doesn't come out quickly. I think I can explain words in a roundabout way in English but it takes time. Everyone is listening and waiting [for their turns] so I guess that makes me feel like going with Japanese. I know it's not good.

In addition, she touched upon the use of Japanese when talking about the task instructions with her peers:

When I explain [what the teacher has said] to my friends, if I do it using simple English, it doesn't go smoothly. They want to know [what to do] quickly because the class will continue on without us. If that's the case, I end up using Japanese but I don't know if that's good.

As these quotes indicate, there were time limits set for the classroom tasks, along with what the students were expected to do in the tasks, that is, in this case, for everyone in the small group to contribute to the discussion. These tasks were followed by the sharing of the content of the group discussion in the whole class. The students' voices indicated that how long they were given for the tasks and what they were expected to do during and after the tasks induced their Japanese use in translanguaging. Their Japanese use in the tasks could simply be seen as a strategy for communication; however, it is how the tasks are designed that plays a critical role in their use of Japanese in class.

L1 sidetracking: A communication layer for translanguaging. As the previous section regarding their actual L1 use during the communicative tasks showed, the students frequently used L1 for communication other than the contents of discussion. These include, for example, talking about what they were supposed to do for the tasks, asking about specific language items, or facilitating the discussions. The use of these L1 features were also coded and coined "sidetracking" from the students' voices during the interviews. A student reflected on her partial use of Japanese and mentioned, "For me, there is a main track [for the communicative tasks in English] and when I turn off the main track to ask how I should say this word [in English], I think I use Japanese. It's like I end up using Japanese when it's not related to the contents [of discussion]." Also, she explained the use of Japanese for understanding the discussion prompts, talking about the procedures and facilitating the discussions:

This is like I said earlier, the main track and the side track. This usage falls under the side track, I guess. After all, English doesn't seep into my everyday life as much as Japanese, so it's like when it comes to the language that instantly comes out, it's still Japanese.

As her quotes show, during the classroom tasks, she differentiates and shuttles back and forth between the two parallel layers: the main track, the discussion contents in English and the side track, everything else surrounding the tasks in Japanese.

In line with the above quotes, another student elaborated on the reasons behind her partial Japanese. She thought that she used Japanese to ask her peers for English vocabulary during the discussion and said, "I feel like I've come back to my normal life [when I use Japanese to ask questions about English vocabulary]. It's like being away from the space of debates and discussions for a short period of time and I go back to Japanese to ask, 'What is this in English?'"

Also, touching upon the use of Japanese to facilitate activities while the researcher was showing her the data about her translanguaging practice, she mentioned:

This is the one I said, right? I think this [use of metalanguage] also makes me feel like I've returned to my normal life. It's not like losing focus, but that's the moment when I turn off the discussion topic, well I think I did that partially because I wanted to make the group atmosphere good or I did that without thinking like, "I guess it [Japanese] is okay here."

Here, with discussion tasks being the main track, a "normal life" indicates sidetracking from the main track. This encapsulates how students intuitively differentiated classroom tasks designed for English discussions from everyday communication with peers.

Students' Perspectives Toward L1 Use

The interviews revealed the students' varying beliefs and values surrounding their use of Japanese. Expressing the difficulty of exclusively using English in class, one student acknowledged the value of partially and selectively using Japanese:

[When I tried to use English all the time in class,] I couldn't explain what I wanted to say [in English] very well and felt frustrated, thinking I wish I could use Japanese. I think it's okay to use Japanese a little bit because you can get your message across and if I want to have conversations more smoothly, I think I should use [Japanese].

Holding mixed feelings toward the use of L1 by saying, "I know, ideally, I should use English but I end up using Japanese," another student elaborated on her use of Japanese:

I think using Japanese for a sentence or words shows that you tried to use English as much as possible but failed just a little bit. I try to use English whenever possible, but of course, it's more effective to communicate in Japanese. When I use English, my expressions end up being too simple compared to Japanese. For example, when it comes to course evaluations, I can only write "It's fun," or something like that. I know my English skills are not good enough, but I think it's okay to use Japanese when having deep discussions.

As the above quote indicates, the partial use of Japanese in translanguaging can be seen as evidence of students' effort to communicate themselves in English. Also, another student mentioned while explaining word-level L1 use, "Using Japanese makes people laugh. It's like hahaha, and we're like, 'We couldn't say it,' and everyone starts thinking like, 'What's the word in English?'" These students' voices show that the partial use of Japanese reflects students' willingness and effort to use and learn English as much as possible in class, as opposed to their reluctance to communicate in English or to participate in the communicative tasks.

On the other hand, the interview also revealed students' negative perception toward the partial use of L1. One student, acknowledging that her beliefs and actual practice in class are contradictory, mentioned:

I can't help [but use Japanese partially in class] but I have a negative feeling [about using Japanese partially in class]. We're in an English-rich environment and teachers use English for us from start to end in class, some teachers use both English and Japanese though. I think it's unfortunate to end up being like this [using Japanese in class] without us trying hard enough. I think it's all about students' motivation.

Asked if she uses Japanese when asking for help, another student answered:

Yes, I do. I also use English but there are occasions where I spoiled myself by using Japanese. I wonder if I was slacking. I really wish to use English all the time for IC classes. I know I can improve my English more if I only use English in class instead of partially using and mixing Japanese and English. If I exclusively use English, I do think I can really improve. I know it's hard though.

These students, during the interview, indicated their belief that they should use English more and reduce Japanese in class, but as they explained, it's not easy. The individual interviews not only identified varying students' perceptions toward the partial use of L1, but also observed, within individual students, a gap between their beliefs and their actual practice in class.

Discussion

The data analysis answers the following questions: (a) How do Japanese high school students use their L1 in translanguaging during communicative English activities? (b) What are Japanese high school students' attitudes toward their L1 use in translanguaging during communicative English activities? This section discusses, based on the data analysis, students' perceived and actual use of L1 in translanguaging in class, influential factors surrounding their L1 use, and their perceptions and values toward it.

As for the first question, the quantitative survey results indicated all the students partially used L1 during the communicative L2 activities to varying degrees. The observation data supported the survey results and identified the students' partial L1 use for various purposes. This is not an unexpected result at all considering the fact translanguaging practice occurs naturally in English classrooms and cannot be suppressed by English-only policies (Canagarajah, 2011a). The classroom observations, in line with Sampson's (2012) study, revealed that the students' nuanced use of L1 for various purposes during the communicative tasks, which was classified as (a) fillers, (b) backchannelling, (c) asking for help, (d) equivalents, and (f) metalanguage. Through using these speech functions, the observed students showcased their ability to leverage their linguistic resources in their language system, which exemplifies translanguaging practice García and Kleyn (2016) refer to. The students' translanguaging practice highlighted their dynamic multilingual communication triggered by the classroom discourse where L1 is shared among the students. This was further justified by the follow-up interview data showing that their partial L1 use in translanguaging played strategic roles for efficient communication, complementing their lack of linguistic resources in their target language or assisting students in appealing for help in compensating for such resource deficits. What should be noted here is that the observed strategic practices such as using L1 equivalents and asking for help in L1 in translanguaging lead to the students' L2 learning, providing opportunities to ask about L2 words or phrases and to have their questions answered by their peers or teacher. Such pedagogical benefits for collaborative L2 learning are also noted in the SLA research influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, where L1 is considered as an essential support for learners' negotiating form and meaning (Spada, 2007).

The motivation for partial L1 usage, however, is not always tied to their lack of linguistic resources in the target language. The classroom observations and interviews revealed that students also used L1 to give explanations about L2 words and phrases they thought would be difficult for their peers. This illustrates the students' awareness of audience and their ability to take into consideration their listeners' linguistic resources, highlighting their high level of communicative competence in utilizing what language is understandable between the interlocutor and the audience.

The communicative tasks in class allowed the students to create a unique communication layer for their languaging. Coined "sidetracking," utilizing a communicative space where they selectively use L1 in translanguaging was confirmed. In line with a translanguaging space, the side track offered a communication layer for deploying various communicative and learning strategies noted in the literature (e.g., García et al, 2017; Sampson, 2012; Turnbull, 2018). As the observation and interview data showed, students' sidetracking only occurs when they are on the main track, where they engage in the contents of discussion in L2. In other words, sidetracking without a main track does not exist, and L1 use in class that is completely unrelated to L2 learning is not discussed here. With this in mind, the data analysis suggests that the students' sidetracking practice exemplifies their dynamic multilingual competence, highlighting their high level of engagement in the assigned tasks while confirming the discussion prompts provided by the teacher, clearing up the procedural concerns, and facilitating the discussions. It also highlights the students' motivation toward learning

L2 vocabulary and phrases, as opposed to their mere unwillingness to use or learn L2 in class. This finding compliments Sampson's (2012) study that found students' use of L1 rarely indicates their unwillingness to use L2 in class. There are various factors in the classroom inducing and affecting their sidetracking practice, which are discussed below.

As the data analysis showed, the students' L1 use was triggered by various factors pertaining to their L2 learning context. The partial L1 use, such as Japanese fillers inserted in longer English utterances was induced by affective factors, where the students felt embarrassed dominantly using English with peers who shared the same L1 in the classroom. The fact that Japanese communication is the norm in their everyday life, with interpersonal communication in English being rare outside English classes, seems to make in-class English communication with Japanese peers artificial. Such unnaturalness in L2 classroom tasks has a big impact on how they project themselves to peers when choosing which language to use fillers from. As the interview data revealed, L1 fillers used among peers of the same L1 were used to lower the affective factors generated by the students' learning context. This indicates the students' effort and motivation to keep L2 communication going while mitigating such affective factors. Also, group dynamics played a role in encouraging their partial L1 use. The students' voices revealed that their linguistic choice of using L1 fillers was influenced by their peers' performance, and one student's L1 fillers led other students to use them more. Their L1 use induced by peer influences, as the data analysis implied, might also indicate the students' motivation and desires to conform and communicate harmoniously in assigned tasks. The factors discussed would not have been easily created in other contexts, such as ESL classrooms where students use the target language in their daily life or where they don't share the same L1 with peers.

Along with the factors discussed above, the data analysis observed that the time constraints of the classroom tasks presented challenges for students to keep the conversation only in L2 and instead promoted their use of communication strategies in L1. Under time pressure, the use of L1 was deployed to save time when completing the tasks. Dominating the floor by using communication strategies in L2 such as circumlocution was avoided under time pressure in order not to inconvenience their peers, which highlighted the students' respect and attentiveness to their peers. Utilizing the shared L1 seems to be considered an optimal strategy to address communication difficulties when completing the tasks, which seems quite natural in EFL contexts. However, had there been task scaffolding to alleviate time pressure with an explicit instruction to use communication strategies in L2, the students might have been able to use L2 more dominantly with less aid from L1 when addressing their lack of L2 resources. The students' attitudes toward using partial L1 in translanguaging during the tasks revealed their motivation and desire to use L2 and their acknowledgment of the need to use L2 more, which answers the second research question. The details are discussed in the following paragraph.

The classroom observation confirmed the strategic roles students' L1 played in maintaining communication and learning L2. Also, the individual interview data provided students' voices acknowledging the usefulness of partial L1 through such strategies. These findings are consistent with the literature in that students' L1 serves various communicative and learning purposes (García et al., 2017; Neokleous, 2017; Sampson, 2012). Students' attitudes toward their partial use of L1, however, were found to be varying, complex, and even dilemmatic, revealing their desire to use L2 more in class. While some students acknowledged the value in using L1 partially in the classroom tasks, others explicitly expressed their concerns about L1 limiting their L2 learning opportunities. This may come as no surprise, considering their learning context, where contact with L2 is limited outside of classrooms. However, as the findings showed, even the students who had negative perspectives toward L1 used L1 in the classroom tasks. The gap between the students' beliefs and their practices surrounding their partial L1 use was highlighted in the study.

Implications and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine Japanese high school students' use and perceptions of L1 in translanguaging during communicative activities in the English classroom. Revealing context-sensitive findings, this case study pursues transferability to similar teaching contexts. To achieve transferability, the students' voices, attitudes, and classroom practices were presented, which provided "sufficient descriptive data" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298). Three important implications, based on the findings and their transferability, can be drawn for English teachers in Japan and similar teaching contexts.

First, the findings of this study suggest the importance of reevaluating students' languaging during communicative activities in class. In light of the students' dynamic, complex languaging utilizing their linguistic resources in both L1 and L2 in this study, the holistic concept that bilingualism is "not monolingualism times two" (García, 2009, p. 71) extends to and offers insightful implications to Japanese EFL contexts, where the increasing importance of the monolingual approach is observed in the Course of Study. Even though teachers avoid using L1 to maximize students' L2 exposure and to facilitate communicative activities in L2, students' performance should not be seen through the lens of a traditional monolingual view. As Grosjean argues (1989), the monolingual view that bilingual speakers have two separate language systems considers the contact of their two languages as "accidental and anomalous" (p. 5). Rather, as this study showed, the liaison of learners' linguistic resources leveraging communicative competence in two languages is inevitable and normal.

Use of the bilingual communicative space was coined sidetracking by students' voices, and it shed light on the unique communication layer during L2 communicative activities where students utilize their L1 in translanguaging. Acknowledging the sidetracking layer in light of the notion of translanguaging helps to prevent English teachers from overlooking the pedagogical benefits of students' translanguaging practice for L2 learning. Considering the spontaneous nature of translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011a), teachers need to examine how students' L1 use through sidetracking conduces to their L2 development, as Spada (2007) suggests. In English-only classrooms in particular, L1 sidetracking during the communicative L2 activities tends to be seen negatively, and it does not seem to be ideal language practice for classroom communicative activities MEXT (2009, 2018) envisions in the Course of Study. However, as this study suggests, sidetracking did not reflect the students' unwillingness to use L2, but rather was a byproduct of their attempts to use and learn L2, and it served as various communicative and learning strategies. Therefore, it would be judicious for teachers to carefully appraise what is actually happening when students are sidetracking during assigned tasks so that teachers can design appropriate scaffolds to enhance students' L2 learning experiences.

Second, examining influential factors that induce students' use of L1 is essential. This study identified three factors, which include affective factors, peer influences, and task designs. Teachers' encouraging students to use L2 more and saying "No Japanese" to them, failing to take these factors into consideration would not enhance students' L2 learning experiences and outcomes in the long run. Through observing students' performance and identifying factors inhibiting students from achieving the performance they pursue, designing and providing specific, practical instruction with appropriate scaffolds to students is critical for contextualized CLT and, in turn, for students' gradual L2 development. For example, intentional, explicit, and continuous instruction on fillers, backchanneling devices, and expressions to ask for help in L2 might mitigate students' affective factors and help them feel more comfortable using such communication strategies in L2. Addressing students' affective factors is critically important to enhance classroom atmosphere,

especially when there is a strong peer influence. As for the factor related to task designs, this study suggested that teachers need to be careful about the allocation of time for the communicative activities. Depending on the goal of activities and students' performance, allowing students whatever time they need to take risks in practicing L2 would benefit students' L2 development. Providing appropriate scaffolds for students before the activities, such as what Ellis (2006) calls "strategic planning" (p. 24) relating to language or content focus while utilizing the language repertoire available to them, would be an alternative option to enhance students' L2 learning experiences. These suggestions are context-sensitive applications, extensions, and elaboration of Willis's (1996) claim, "Don't ban mother-tongue use but encourage attempts to use the target language" (p. 130) with a translanguaging point of view in mind.

Lastly, students' attitudes toward their use of L1 should not be overlooked. The usefulness of their partial L1 as communication and learning strategies was acknowledged; however, the students' complex and dilemmatic attitudes toward L1 use in class were also revealed. The interview data suggested that use of L1 connotes not students' unwillingness but rather their desire to use L2 more. Therefore, teachers, while providing the aforementioned instructional scaffolds to optimize students' L2 output and to address their needs, should embrace students' occasional, spontaneous sidetracking practice in translanguaging to allow them to make self-scaffolding possible. Also, teachers should reflect on and learn from students' sidetracking practice in class to design effective L2 instruction. The opportunity for teachers to observe such students' sidetracking practice would have the potential to become a "critical incident" (Farrell & Baecher, 2017, p. 2) for reflective language teaching. Viewing naturally occurring L1 sidetracking in translanguaging as students' strategies and as a catalyst for teachers' reflection to design optimal L2 instruction would be a necessary first step for pursuing contextualized CLT in EFL settings.

About the Author

Ryosuke Aoyama is an English teacher in Japan, currently working at Kanagawa Prefectural Yokohama Senior High School of International Studies, where he heads the Foreign Language Department. His research interests include translanguaging, world Englishes, language ideology, NNEST identity, and L2 writing.

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Appendix

Student Survey

英語の授業における部分的な日本語の使用に関するアンケート

[Survey on the partial use of Japanese in English classes]

ペアやグループで英語による会話·ディスカッションなどの活動において、部分的に日本語を使うことはありますか。[Do you use some Japanese in pair/group work activities such as conversations and discussions in English?]

1. いつも[Always] 2. よくある[Very Often] 3. ときどき[Sometimes]

2. めったにない[Rarely] 5. 決してない [Never]