

Original Paper

Translanguaging in Practice: Affordances and Note-taking in Large Lower-level University EFL Courses in Japan

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Abstract

This article will discuss language learning affordances and learning context viewed through the lens of a translanguaging approach to practice in large lower-level EFL classes at a Japanese university. By reflecting on a practice informed by translanguaging and grounded in communicative language teaching (CLT), this article will examine how learning affordances were dealt with in the form of note-taking by the teacher and students during lessons throughout the course of the semester. The author will draw connections between the practice of note-taking during EFL classes and translanguaging and consider the pedagogical implications on practice and second language acquisition (SLA).

1. Introduction

This paper aims to discuss an approach to language use (L1 and L2) in the language classroom and the practice of note-taking by the teacher and students, the ideas of which were informed by and resulted from the practitioner's self-inquiry and reflective practice as a form of practitioner research. Reflective practice has been characterized by four criteria that serve to clarify the meaning of "reflecting" on one's practice as (1) a "meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding", (2) "a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking", (3) in a "community, in interaction with others", and (4) "requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and of others" (p.845)¹. Note-taking as a collaborative and interactive process in my classroom emerged along with translanguaging as an approach, and both ideas were based upon my reflections and notes made during my teaching in Japan over the last 8 years. Reflective practice allowed me to reconceptualize note-taking in my practice, and in my view the practice of note-taking itself aligns and embodies each of Rodgers' four criteria of reflective practice.

I have taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Japan at the university level for over 10 years. Prior to my experience in Japan, I taught university age students English as a Second Language (ESL) at private language schools in the United States for 10 years. This article will focus on my experience teaching English at the university level in Japan, but my training and formative teaching experiences were based

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in the United States where communicative, student-centered approaches are widespread practices in an ESL context and surely influence my work in an EFL context. One's own language learning experience and study of linguistic features of specific languages as they relate to the learning and teaching of English also play a vital role in one's approach to practice in both ESL and EFL contexts.

The ESL context of multicultural, multilingual classrooms necessitated the need for using English only (EO) as the focus and medium of instruction, and English was the lingua franca between linguistically diverse students where oral communication and productive language skills were a daily need and prioritized based on needs assessment. My background of teaching ESL using an EO approach with multilingual students in the United States and my foreign language learning experience studying Italian in a multilingual, multicultural context in Italy which necessitated an Italian only (IO) approach, differs from my teaching and learning experiences in Japan. My teaching and learning experiences in Japan involve a degree of mixing Japanese and English, perhaps due to my lack of formal study in Japanese, and my informal Japanese language learning experiences (speaking, listening, reading, writing) have always required reliance on whatever linguistic resources I have at my disposal, including my nascent Japanese language skills. My use of Japanese in Japan frequently involves discussion about something written (*Kanji*) in Japanese which often means the exchange involves both Japanese and English, as opposed to using only Japanese or English. In other words, exchanges about language occurring in the context of the dominant language (Japanese) and about Japanese tend for me to involve a mixture of English and Japanese by both interlocutors, perhaps resulting from greater or weaker proficiency in one language skill (e.g., listening) over another skill (e.g., reading). A native-English speaking teacher (NEST) may lack proficiency in reading and writing Japanese, and likewise Japanese students may lack proficiency in speaking and listening to English in a context where reading and writing have been prioritized over oral communication. Japan's education ministry, MEXT, has begun to prioritize English speaking skills to correspond with increased globalization. The 2014 education reform plan points to a shift towards speaking and listening skills and being "able to fluently communicate with English speaking persons"². Japanese students' use (i.e., speaking) of English *in* Japan, theoretically with people having little proficiency in Japanese, might very well require the ability to flow back and forth between languages, as proficiency on both sides of the conversation may require the interlocutors to rely on whatever communicative resources they have at their disposal to achieve understanding. The motivation to use a translanguaging approach in my practice was also informed by; my own language experiences inside and outside the classroom, the need to have authentic engagement with my students despite limited ability in our respective L2s, the responsibility to design language courses that meet the needs of my students and reflect the needs of the university, and to practice teaching that is theoretically supported by research in second language acquisition (SLA). Distributing notebooks and making notes during interactions with students in the classroom serves as an approach to manage the natural mix of languages, scaffold learning, build rapport, and create greater awareness of the learning process.

1.1 Context

In Japanese universities, Native-English speaking teachers (NEST) and Non-Japanese teachers are often called upon to teach large English classes that prioritize listening and speaking skills in large group classes where the students all share the same L1 (Japanese). The teachers are solo practitioners responsible for course design and teaching as opposed to the context of collaborative team teaching with another teacher. In my specific context, the students are enrolled in required English classes and have low proficiency in English, based on a university placement test. The class is comprised of students enrolled in various health related departments as there are no language arts or English majors at the university. This paper hopes to unpack some of the issues that pose challenges or *opportunities* to teachers and students that result from a context of large oral communication classes where the teacher is not proficient, or has *no* proficiency in the student's L1 (Japanese), and the students, particularly first year university students, who may have had little or no opportunity or need to use the L2 (English) in their secondary education English language

classes. Learners are therefore faced with the daunting task of listening and speaking in English (L2), perhaps for the first time, with fellow classmates (sharing the same L1) and a native-English speaking teacher who may or may not speak the student's L1. Likewise, the teacher is faced with the daunting task of meeting the language needs of students and providing academic support in English or whenever possible in the students' L1 despite the teacher's lack of experience or ability in Japanese.

The inevitable communication challenges between students and teachers who lack proficiency in each other's languages foreshadows future exchanges throughout the course and highlights the possibility of authentic language use in these exchanges, despite the traditional formal classroom setting. By accepting the reality of the language dynamic present in my classroom, and the moments that dynamic fosters, the teacher can encourage students to use their linguistic resources in either Japanese or English without fear of disapproval or failure. Teachers compare and study the linguistic and phonological features of the students' L1 in order to design lessons that help students better deal with the challenges of learning English. Furthermore, teachers can compare the L1 and L2 from a more humanistic perspective, in order to build rapport and signal that students are central to the classroom learning experience and that their language skills are valued and respected. Despite "English-only approaches in the classroom, the deployment of multilingual resources and repertoires has long been a reality in many TESOL classrooms around the world"³.

While there are other contextual considerations that affect teaching and learning, such as the physical space of the classroom and institutional needs and goals, this paper will focus on the people in the classroom and the materials that are used and generated in a context that permits use of the L1 to better understand and use target language (TL) materials. In the context of oral communication classes, the choice of a textbook designed to facilitate and improve listening and speaking skills will also offer challenges and opportunities for learning that can be further exploited depending upon the approach of the teacher. Monolingual learning materials (e.g., the textbook) may at once be a learning resource and challenge for students unaccustomed to monolingual TL resources as might a bi-lingual English Japanese textbook present itself to be a challenge for the NEST. Low-proficiency students, especially those in large classrooms, might be overwhelmed by materials in the TL with no L1 support. A NEST could choose to use skill specific monolingual materials to improve listening and speaking in the L2, but might some support or use of the students' L1 serve those goals?

1.2 First impressions

Despite my lack of Japanese language skills, the question of whether or when to use Japanese (the student's L1) is usually answered well before entering the classroom. If information about the course is written in Japanese the teacher is translating or requesting someone to translate that information for them, therefore using their language skills or resources to "say something" (e.g., a student's name) in the student's L1 during the first lesson. Information about the course such as; the course name, the room number, the syllabus, students' names, academic departments, etc., is provided in Japanese. This information is understandably distributed and maintained in Japanese to satisfy the needs of the institution and students registered for the course. A teacher unable to read Japanese is expected to manage these administrative details as part of the job. Time and resources permitting, the teacher may choose to translate the pertinent information. Nowadays, the task of translating text from Japanese to English has become simplified, so a teacher can easily begin to work with information deemed essential to planning the lesson or course.

While some teachers may regard course and student information as an administrative formality, other teachers may view this as a critical first opportunity to make a connection and begin establishing rapport with students by knowing (or at least saying) their names correctly and taking attendance on the first day of class. Other details about the course or students may also serve to inform the teacher and therefore their plans throughout the duration of the course or at least for the day. For example, group and pair work could be enhanced if the teacher knows the student's ages, hometowns, gender, etc. prior to the lesson and this

information may only be available in Japanese, presenting a possible problem for the NEST. Translating information before the course may seem obvious and simple, but it is worth mentioning that the teacher is accessing their language repertoire, especially but not limited to Japanese and English, to serve the needs of the students and manage the start of a new course in a manner that is professional and considerate. So, the simple task of translating a syllabus or roster from written Japanese to English or *romaji*, perhaps to successfully implement an activity designed to facilitate learning in an oral communication class, build rapport, or manage the class in an effective efficient manner may be more significant than it initially appears.

The choice of what *language/s* to use or not to use is relevant, if not thought-provoking, or even controversial. Stakeholders and students may expect or assume the NEST will conduct lessons entirely in English. "Most English classes taught in Japan, both in high school and in university, tend to focus on monolingual instruction of English when a non-Japanese teacher is teaching"³). If the NEST attempts to use the student's L1 it could disrupt those expectations or first impressions. Furthermore, the teacher's choice to use the students' L1, however imperfectly, in a classroom setting could challenge pre-conceived notions of appropriate language use or how languages are learned. "The dominant monolingual language pedagogies of conventional FL classrooms do not fundamentally recognise the way in which the L1 and L2 in a learner's mind fuse and integrate naturally"⁴). Solo practitioners are often left to their own linguistic devices or rely upon their language repertoires. Beyond a simple task of translation, the teacher is accessing their experience and knowledge of Japanese names, phonology, spelling, *Kanji* characters, etc., and even knowledge of other languages (e.g., Italian pronunciation is similar to Japanese). The teacher's need, right, and authority to access their language repertoire is unquestioned. Should students not be equally *allowed* to access whatever resources they have (i.e., Japanese *and* English) to meet their language goals or should they be expected to use only the TL (English) during the lesson?

Students as well will naturally be dipping into their own linguistic repertoires in the first moments of the first lesson, and undoubtedly throughout the semester, and perhaps seeing, hearing, or speaking the course name or teacher's name in English for the first time. Linguistic repertoires can be seen as ways of interacting and managing the learning environment. The classroom and the learning that occurs there has been described as an "ecosystem" where "from an educational linguistics perspective, environmental and cognitive processes interrelate and both play a role in second language development" and "that higher mental functions arise from social interactions with peers and more knowledgeable others" (p.599)⁵. The relationships between all of the participants begin to take shape from the first lesson and this new environment is greatly influenced by what languages are used and allowed.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Affordances and translanguaging

The term affordance was adapted to foreign language education by van Lier, drawing connections between ecology and a sociocultural model of language learning in the classroom context. Originally, the term affordance was associated with James Gibson who described an affordance in the environment as "what it offers the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill (Italics in original)" (p.127)⁶. The concept of affordance as described by van Lier in a language learning context "assumes an active learner establishing relationships with and within the environment. In terms of language learning, affordances arise out of participation and use, and learning opportunities arise as a consequence of participation and use" (p.92)⁷, and "while being active in the learning environment the learner detects properties in the environment that provide opportunities for further action and hence for learning. Affordances are discovered through perpetual learning, and effective use of affordances must also be learned. Perceiving and using affordances are the first steps on the road toward meaning making" (p.598)⁵. Within this process of relationship building and meaning making, the languages we use greatly influence our ability to act in the environment.

The issue of whether a teacher should, or can use the student's L1 in L2 education might never arise.

Teachers, students, and institutions may simply conform to the traditional practice of "monolingual instruction of English when a non-Japanese teacher is teaching"³. MEXT in its 2014 reform plan expresses that "classes should be conducted principally in English in High School"². Despite the well-intentioned uses of English Only techniques⁸ to support EFL learners in Japan, the white elephant in the room is that teachers and students are using the L1 in classroom⁹. This is unavoidably the case in a context where the participants in the classroom struggle with each other's L1 and during classroom interactions resort to whatever linguistic means they have at their disposal. In other words, students and the teacher can use both of their L1s or L2s to bridge communication gaps, build rapport through the shared experience of trying to communicate in an L2, and support and attend to each other's language needs as well as the need to communicate.

The recent increase in interest in the use and incorporation of multiple languages in language education has been referred to as the "multilingual turn"¹⁰. The shift towards a more linguistically inclusive approach has implications for policy, research, and practice. The acceptance of translanguaging in the classroom is a reflection of this shift in foreign language education. Rather than viewing the L1 and L2 as "separate entities between which there is little to no interaction" translanguaging "allows for the natural integration and use of all languages in the learner's linguistic system"¹¹, ultimately in order to achieve output in the L2. "Translanguaging typically refers to our use of any or all of the resources (words, bits of grammar, paralinguistic features, etc.) in our full linguistic repertoire – including all the languages we speak – to maximise communicative potential"¹². In practice, "when we and our learners engage in acts of translation, multilingual explanation or comparison between what we often call the L1 and English, we are translanguaging"¹². While translanguaging in practice as an approach is concerned with language in use, translanguaging also refers to theory and pedagogy in language education and the social space of the classroom. The use of translanguaging in the classroom, especially as it relates to EFL in Japan, is relevant because it raises questions about use of the L1 and L2 in the classroom and calls into question the very nature of the classroom experience, the roles of the teacher and students in the classroom, and what is *afforded* to the teacher and learner through translanguaging.

"Under a translanguaging approach, L2 learners are not considered to be acquiring a new additional language, but are instead adding to the integrated linguistic system of which their native language, and any additional languages, are already a part. In ESL and EFL learning, then, all of the languages in a learner's repertoire are encouraged and utilised in the classroom for the purpose of developing the weaker TL"¹¹. Discussion surrounding the use of the L1 or L2 would be incomplete without mentioning bilingualism and emergent bilingualism, terms closely associated with translanguaging. Scholars suggest a spectrum of bilingualism ranging from a "native-like control of two languages", a maximalist position, to having "one highly developed language and one in the early stages of development", a minimalist position¹³. The term "emergent bilingual" was proposed by Garcia as "students who are in the beginning stages of moving along the bilingual continuum"¹⁴. Turnbull expands the definition to include foreign language students "as any person who is actively in the process of acquiring knowledge of a second language and developing bilingual languaging skills for use in a given situation relevant to their individual needs to learn the TL"⁴. It can be argued that university students in Japan, having completed at least 6 years of mandatory English courses in their secondary education, fall somewhere along a bilingual continuum. Similarly, a teacher living in Japan for any length of time would fall somewhere on the bilingual continuum. Bilingualism and multilingualism are closely linked to translanguaging, suggesting we reconsider what bilingualism is, and how and by whom "bilingualism" has been traditionally defined. "Translanguaging postulates that the languages in a learner's mind belong to a single integrated system that speakers draw upon to create and convey meaning at appropriate times" and "their relevance, or indeed even the existence, is rarely seen or acknowledged in most FL classrooms"⁴.

In this paper, I argue the teacher is uniquely positioned to take advantage of linguistic affordances in both the L1 and L2 to promote language learning and can help guide students by raising awareness

to affordances. Support, use, and acknowledgement of multiple languages in EFL education to facilitate language learning is central to a translanguaging approach to pedagogy. If students are using their L1 (Japanese) in the TL (English) lesson, the teacher can notice and write down words and expressions that are overheard, especially frequently occurring expressions or words. Even when the teacher is unable to understand the student's L1, the teacher can identify use of the L1 and ask members of the class to assist with recording this information, essentially noticing a learning affordance and utilizing a notebook for note-taking to capture the moment. The act of note-taking essentially puts a pause on what has been orally communicated and potentially lost and tries to preserve it and draw attention to it. Teachers can attend to what students are saying in the L1 *and* L2 and consider output in the L1 *and* L2 as an opportunity for learning and teaching. Also, the teacher's noticing of their own language gaps when using the student's L1 can be considered as learning opportunities and affords the students an opportunity to teach the teacher with whatever language skills are available in their linguistic repertoire. In a classroom where knowledge and learning are co-constructed and affordances arise, whether they be planned by the teacher or spontaneous, a system for note-taking aids the process. "Translanguaging is a social accomplishment" and "translanguaging not only involves a person drawing from all the languages in his/her repertoire to communicate, it also involves shuttling between the languages brought by the other to co-construct meaning"¹⁵⁾.

2.2 *Dialogue and communicative language teaching (CLT)*

In this section I discuss some criticisms of communicative language teaching (CLT) and the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom and how a teacher might address those criticisms by incorporating interactive, collaborative note-taking in lessons. Regarding use of the student's L1 in the L2 classroom by students (and teacher) it is argued that that students are deprived of opportunities to hear or practice speaking in the TL (English) if Japanese is allowed in the classroom. In other words, it reduces the amount of input and output in the TL. On the surface this appears understandable, but does a context that disallows use of the students' L1 always equate to more input and output in the L2 by low proficiency students and the NEST? Could a context that encourages translanguaging (e.g., Japanese and English) lend itself to more output or input in the L2 due to the fact that the students and teacher would ostensibly be producing more output in a setting that permits multiple languages? Might an English only environment inhibit some students from speaking in the L2, especially in a context with a NEST, out of a fear of failure to meet native-like expectations. In other words, a '*more is more*' (i.e., allowing L1 *and* L2 by the teacher and students) stance as opposed to a '*less is more*' (allowing English only by the teacher and students) stance.

When the focus and goals of instruction are oral communication in the TL and serving the TL needs of the students in the class, the strategic and meaningful use of the L1 towards that end should be central to the teacher's practice in a context that supports translanguaging. An argument for an English only (EO) approach is "the EO instructional mode is directly informed by SLA theories of input, output, and interaction. It is equally clear that there is a conflict between SLA theory and the use of L1 in the classroom. Using L1 in the classroom to explain meaning, impart instructions, check understanding with peers, during tasks, for example, is at odds with the goal of maximizing L2 input and output since doing so devalues the role of negotiation of meaning as a language learning strategy" (p. 9)¹⁶⁾. Skilled practitioners may be able to teach EFL students using an EO technique, however, the details of the context (e.g., class size, proficiency of the students/teacher in the L1/L2, materials, skills focus, etc.) are significant factors to consider, especially in a monolingual context. A monoglossic stance where students are not permitted to use their L1 while speaking in the TL classroom deprives them of accessing language abilities that they already have that could assist in their proactive use and acquisition of the L2; moreover, the development of rapport, and expression of identity.

Research and scholarship surrounding the use of L1 in the classroom often references Krashen's

Comprehensible Input Hypothesis¹⁷⁾ and Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis¹⁸⁾. The relationship between *comprehensible* input and *comprehensible* output and SLA is beyond the scope of this article but it is generally accepted that both are required for SLA. Nonetheless, the discussion surrounding these concepts continues to evolve within the field of language education. When low proficiency students are unable to negotiate meaning or comprehend input or output in the L2, teachers are trained to scaffold learning, make adjustments, and push learners. The use of the student's L1 by a NEST with low proficiency in that language can be seen as a stronger form of scaffolding as the proficiency levels of all participants requires a push in each other's L2. This is also a form of social performance in which the teacher puts themselves in a linguistically inferior position to the student. Hence this can be seen as shifting power dynamics and changing relationships. Referencing Krashen's input hypothesis, van Lier proposed "to change the name in our SLA terminology from 'input' to 'affordance', as "input comes from a view of language as a fixed code and of learning as a process of receiving and processing pieces of this fixed code" (p.90)⁷⁾. Affordances on the other hand focuses our attention on language acquisition as a naturally emergent aspect on interaction between participants in the language classroom.

Groupwork and pair work, which are core activities in CLT, afford the teacher the opportunity to observe and notice language use in both the L1 and L2. CLT is based on the idea that "students are involved in meaning-focused communicative activities" and that "in order for these activities to be truly communicative, it was suggested that from the very beginning, students should have the desire to communicate something ... they should use a variety of language rather than just one language structure. The teacher will not intervene to stop the activity; and the materials he or she relies on will not dictate what specific language forms the students use either. In other words, such activities should attempt to replicate real communication" (p.70)¹⁹⁾. A criticism of CLT is that it has "eroded the explicit teaching of grammar with a consequent loss among students of accuracy in the pursuit of fluency" (p.71)¹⁹⁾. So, how might managing L1 and L2 through note-taking help to support meaning-focused communicative activities and focus on form in emergent learner language as part of a dialogic and communicative approach?

2.3 Note-taking

In this section I will distinguish my innovative use of note-taking and how it relates to translanguaging, language acquisition, and the goals of scaffolding learning and rapport building in class. The practice of note-taking and noticing serves to underscore the aims of improving or working on the L2 (English) and can raise awareness or interest in one's own language learning journey. Note-taking gives the teacher and student an opportunity and the physical space (within a notebook) to focus on form, if so desired, by addressing language in use during communicative activities. Proponents of conversation driven, communicative approaches to language teaching have suggested strategies to "exploit the language that emerges in classroom interaction so as to incorporate a focus on form, without sacrificing real communication"²⁰⁾. Such strategies include retrieving "what the learner has said. Otherwise it will just remain as linguistic 'noise'. This might mean simple making an informal note during a speaking activity, or, at times writing the learner's utterances on the board"²⁰⁾. I have implemented a more systematic, interactive, and collaborative note-taking practice in my lessons that encourages focus on language (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) without disrupting communicative activities.

By introducing and encouraging note-taking in the Japanese EFL context of large lower-level university English classes which prioritize oral skills and are taught by NESTs who are not proficient in the student's L1 (Japanese), connections can be drawn between the practice of note-taking and concepts associated with second language acquisition. Addressing what the author means by note-taking to distinguish it from conventional meanings is necessary. "Notetaking has long been a stalwart competence in academic learning, particularly in tertiary education"²¹⁾, and "Notes can be defined as short condensations of a source material that are generated by writing [or typing] ... while simultaneously listening, studying, or observing" and

notes "serve as an archive that can be returned to at a later time to review, remind, be integrated into work, and/or be used as a stimulus for creativity"²²⁾. The note-taking described by Siegel is consistent with note-taking practiced in my classroom, however, the context and purpose of note-taking differs in my practice.

Siegel and other researchers focus on academic note-taking in contexts such as English medium instruction (EMI) or English for academic purposes (EAP) and the challenges L2 learners have in listening to academic lectures and recording notes. In the conventional context, the purpose of notes is for recall *after* a class has taken place. In my application as part of an oral communication class focusing on speaking and listening skills, the note-taking is meant to be an extension of the dialogue and language focus that transpires in real-time *during* the lesson. If students engaged in groupwork or pair work activities use their L1 (Japanese) and make note of their language gaps or the teacher notices those gaps when speaking to pairs or groups, the language can be addressed collectively and can serve as a launching off point for further discussion. Noticing, and collectively recording and remembering incidences where there is a linguistic gap from either the teacher or student represents a valuable use of classroom time. Note-taking and notebooks can serve to remind students and provide an interactive space to attend to these language gaps.

By modelling and participating in the note-taking practice the teacher is conveying the importance of trying to capture oral communication in the form of notes, comments, questions, sketches, etc..., when the opportunities arise. Furthermore, this practice underscores the importance of dialogue in language learning and to hopefully elevate or remind students of their status as authorities in at least one language (Japanese). Students realizing their own authority has the potential to recalibrate the traditional power dynamic in the language classroom, accurately reflecting the reality of the low proficiency students and teacher, and creating the atmosphere for more open exchange of ideas and information. Furthermore, the notebook and notes within can serve *as a dialogue* between the teacher and the student in the form of comments or questions thereby extending the conversation beyond the classroom walls and promoting reflective practice as the notes and comments can be revisited after they have been recorded.

The practice of note-taking during lessons by students *and* the teacher is well suited for a classroom that embraces a translanguaging stance. Hall refers to "when and how principled translanguaging takes place in TESOL classrooms, for example, by: fulfilling pedagogical goals such as scaffolding the development of new language; facilitating empathy, rapport, collaboration and interaction between learners; and supporting learners in making connections between the classroom and their wider context, including the maintenance and development of their identities"⁹⁾. In addition to the pedagogical and learner affect implications, translanguaging can support specific functions in the classroom such as, "fulfill 'medium-oriented' functions (e.g., teaching or explaining grammar or vocabulary), 'framework functions (e.g., organizing and managing the classroom through giving instructions, setting tasks etc.), and 'social' functions (e.g., building rapport and social relationships)"^{23,24)}.

3. Teaching Procedures

3.1 Note-taking procedure

Having explained the pedagogical reasons, in the section I will discuss the note-taking procedure. The procedure involves the teacher producing and providing an A4 size paper *booklet* (notebook) assembled from 3 folded A3 sheets of paper to form a notebook. The cover page of the notebook is blank except for a heading to record the student's name (in English and Japanese) and student number. Within the notebook, there are 2 blank sections or spaces on each page with a heading for the date and lesson number, for each lesson of the 15-week semester. The decision to provide students with a notebook is based on the belief that distributing an identical resource might encourage or suggest a shared sense of learning and collaboration between all members of the class, including the teacher, and recognizes the importance of *taking* note, noticing, and recognizing new language. Furthermore, the notebook is a uniform resource that lends itself

to building or inferring a sense of community and can suggest through its use, especially when used by the teacher, that the students themselves are valuable and capable linguistic resources. Students are therefore not required to buy or bring supplemental materials for the course apart from a textbook.

Notebooks are collected by the students at the beginning of each lesson and returned to the teacher at the end of each lesson. Absent or late students are easily identified as their notebooks remain uncollected at the beginning of class, simplifying this task of attendance taking and saving time in administrative duties. The content, contributions, and information recorded in the student's notebook during the lessons is determined by the student, as is the choice of language used. The notebook is provided as a space to make notes about the lessons, record words, ideas, or information that comes up during the lesson, or make a comment or ask a question. In that sense, the notebook can serve as a written means of communication with the teacher. The teacher can reflect on the lessons while responding to students' questions or comments or can raise concerns and initiate a conversation with individual students (e.g., students that appear isolated from others, students that do not bring textbooks), perhaps gaining a deeper understanding of individuals' needs. A handout can also be easily provided to a previously absent student by inserting it in the notebook, which affords the teacher an opportunity to demonstrate attentiveness to an individual student, and perhaps the class as a whole. Notebooks are collected at the end of each lesson, but the choice to make notes or not has no bearing on the student's grade and the notes recorded in the notebooks are not shared by the teacher with anyone other than the specific student.

Introducing, explaining, and modeling the use of notebooks is an essential responsibility of the teacher, who is uniquely positioned to do so given the nature of the context and their need to due to the lack of competency in the students' L1. The teacher actively participates in the process of note-taking as a teacher *and* learner. The teacher makes notes and supports the learners in the L2 and receives support in the student's L1 from the students. In explaining the notebook and note-taking procedure, the teacher may encounter the need to explain or speak the student's L1, especially if students indicate they are unclear about what has been said in the L2 (English). The teacher's lack of proficiency in the student's L1 (Japanese) and the student's lack of proficiency in the L2 (English) affords the teacher an opportunity to learn context (classroom) specific language in the L1 (Japanese) and teach context (classroom) specific language in the L2 (English). The teacher can ask how something *might* be conveyed in Japanese by asking his students and then recording their response (sometimes varying responses) in the teacher's notebook. In this sense, the very act of introducing the notebook serves as an opportunity to demonstrate the process of note-taking and illustrates the complexity of acquiring spoken language.

Giving instructions and managing the class in English represents an opportunity that comes up early and often serves as an authentic source of input in the L2 (English) and potentially an opportunity for the teacher to learn the equivalent Japanese by soliciting the language and recording it in his notebook. As this collaborative, real-time, approach to note-taking may be new to students, the teacher will need to explain, demonstrate, and model this procedure in his practice over several lessons. Note-taking and the use of notebooks becomes an essential activity in every lesson. By way of example, the teacher might ask students in English to "pass their notebooks forward" at the end of class. If *some* students are unsure about the meaning of "pass your notebooks forward" and the teacher does not know how to say this in Japanese, it affords the teacher an opportunity to ask the students how to say the phrase in Japanese. The teacher displays a need for understanding (knowing) in Japanese and English, as it will certainly be recurring, and is taking the opportunity to ask his students and record their response(s) in his notebook.

The teacher's notebook is centrally located in the classroom making it possible to ask students seated nearby to assist the teacher by writing in Japanese (e.g., *Hiragana*) to teach or scaffold the learning of the teacher. This exchange could be spontaneous or planned, but in either case represents an authentic shared use of language represented by a dialogue with one student, or a group of students, and can be

shared with the whole class by referencing the note-taking and making connections to both the L1 and L2. Whether these exchanges are spontaneous or planned, there are pedagogical implications that result from a supportive, student-centered, environment that encourages dialogue. What do the teacher, and ultimately the students do with the language that is being spoken and heard, or misheard as is often the case, when the new language is beyond the listener's ability? In a learning environment where rapport and dialogue are prioritized, the teacher can model and attempt to demonstrate through the practice of note-taking.

3.2 *Scaffolding and note-taking*

Scaffolding in education and specifically foreign language education is a concept that is deeply rooted in supportive, social learning environments. Thornbury states "scaffolded learning is not a one-off event, but is embedded in repeated, semi-ritualized, co-authored language-mediated activities, typical of many classroom routines such as games and the opening class chat. Finally, any definition of scaffolding needs to highlight the fact that this kind of interaction is a site for *learning opportunities*, and is not simply a way of modelling, supporting, or practicing interaction"²⁵). Note-taking in this context infers that language (i.e., words phrases, features of a language) have been noticed that are beyond one's ability or understanding, whether in trying to speak or listen, and by using the practice of note-taking to capture that moment makes scaffolding manifest.

In the previous example "pass your notebooks forward", the teacher and students during the process of recording new language in their notebooks may need to ask for repetition, clarification, meaning, or spelling of the new language. In addition to writing down the language in the notebook the teacher/student is speaking and listening and using this new language and being aided by a more knowledgeable other. A teacher may ask students for assistance with Japanese at any point during the lesson (i.e., giving instructions, using the textbook, during speaking and listening activities, etc.) and the teacher can then write down the language in his notebook or have a student write down the Japanese in his notebook. The sharing of materials can serve to underscore the collaborative and co-constructed nature of the learning by the teacher and students when they are able to scaffold each other's learning.

When one student is assisting the teacher's learning by writing in his notebook, the teacher can show the whole class or utilize the blackboard or projector to re-create the scaffolded experience. On the other hand, the teacher can scaffold students by using their notebooks. During group or pair work, the teacher can make suggestions or ask questions and the booklets offer an available resource for the teacher. The teacher can encourage the student to make a note, or the teacher can write down suggestions directly in the booklet for the individual student, pair, or group. Writing and even drawing in notebooks serves to make visible co-constructed learning and represents sharing and support that is central to scaffolding. As before, language points that are common across different groups can be noted in the teacher's notebook for future discussion or review or the teacher can address the whole class at that moment, perhaps utilizing the blackboard or projector. Translanguaging affords greater opportunities for scaffolded learning and is especially meaningful as it is in response to an authentic need to communicate. Furthermore, these moments build rapport and the notebooks and note-taking provide space to highlight those moments and learn from each other.

3.3 *Note-taking: rapport building and role fluidity*

Rapport has been described as "the relationship that the students have with the teacher and vice versa" (p.113)¹⁹. From the students' perspective "successful rapport derives from the students' perception of the teacher as a good leader and a successful leader," and "well-organized and well-prepared" (p.113)¹⁹. The teacher can establish a relationship with students by note-taking through participating and collaborating with his students throughout the course. The teacher's learning and noticing and recording of language during the lesson can have several beneficial effects. Students are recognized as language authorities when the teacher solicits information from the students, either individually or as a whole class. Through

solicitation and note-taking the teacher is at once able to *show* that 'making mistakes' is part of language learning. In my experience *telling* students to make mistakes rarely changes their behavior or belief to the contrary.

Conversation plays a role in supporting and scaffolding language development and the interactive nature of conversation also plays a role in creating a classroom community. The teacher's translanguaging and practice of requesting help from expert students regarding the teacher's need to know Japanese explicitly establishes their roles not just as students but as authorities and co-learners/co-teachers. "Conversation assumes a degree of equality between participants that blurs questions of status and social distance"²⁶. Freire describes the importance of dialogue as it relates to learning and the roles of teacher and students, "Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach"²⁷.

As I have argued above, note-taking aids in the retention of new language but also serves to highlight the roles of the participants and contributes to creating a classroom atmosphere that is focused on and supportive of learning. The teacher reviews each notebook prior to the next lesson for comments or questions as well as to get a general sense of what was noted during the lesson. Incidentally, the task of checking notebooks is not time consuming if organized effectively and the practice of reviewing lends itself to a reflective practice. The acts of collecting, distributing, and reviewing the notebooks suggests to the students that they are being attended to and heard, thus contributing to classroom rapport. Disallowing use of the student's L1 during class would deprive the students of the joy of teaching and the teacher of learning in a space that is designed for co-constructed learning. The notebook, and note-taking, serve to bridge the traditional divide between students and, as Harmer suggests, if rapport "isn't working well, our ability to help students learn will be seriously compromised" (p.114)¹⁹. As noted, a context where both the teacher and students are low proficiency in each other's L1, suggests an environment rich in affordances for language input and output, that can benefit from a systematic, collaborative effort to manage learning by participating and encouraging note-taking in a notebook. If language is co-constructed, allowing a free exchange of one's linguistic resources to achieve English language goals, especially if those resources are managed and used in a strategic and meaningful way, it might also contribute to rapport and have a beneficial influence on learner affect.

4. Conclusion

Taking notes and maintaining a notebook by the teacher and students collectively and in collaboration helps us respond to the affordances available in the learning environment, and the practice of note-taking itself can have a beneficial effect on the classroom experience and contribute to second language acquisition. I have introduced a reconceptualization of note-taking as a co-constructed and interactive process that enables rapport building and scaffolding learning in the classroom. Giving students permission to use their L1 and L2 communicative repertoire is an essential aspect of this process. Translanguaging gives confidence to low-level learners as their authority in the L1 is used in the note-taking to teach the teacher. Hence, power distance is reduced and leads to genuine rapport between teachers and students. This creates a collaborative atmosphere in which students are more likely to engage in communication. Hence, this approach has the potential to increase classroom communication and L2 output. Furthermore, the note-taking focuses learners on linguistic forms, enabling scaffolded learning and deeper reflections on language. The author intends to investigate this innovative use of note-taking to expand classroom affordances as a collaborative and communicative tool by carrying out research focusing on student perspectives on the practice of collective note-taking and translanguaging.

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