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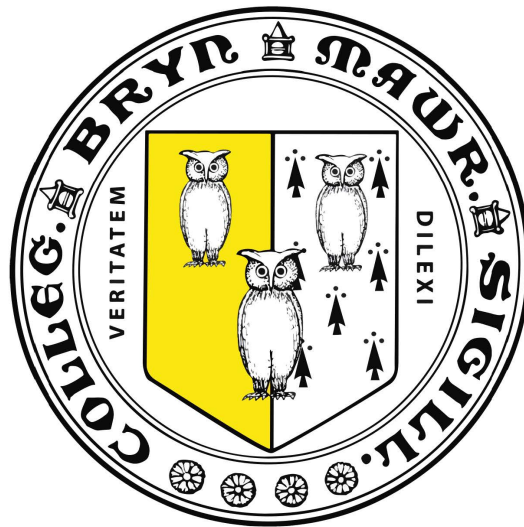
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***Translanguaging or Code-switching?: A Case Study of Multilingual
Activities in college-level Mandarin and Japanese Classrooms***

Huayu Liu

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics

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Abstract

Classroom translanguaging has recently gained popularity in ESL and foreign language classrooms, where students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In a nutshell, translanguaging researchers highlight an individual's linguistic repertoire, which goes beyond the boundaries of named languages and focuses on all language elements that an individual knows. As a pedagogy, translanguaging advocates linguistic equity because it encourages students to access their linguistic repertoire, which is not limited to the target language in the classroom. Yet, the viability of this approach in the classroom is unclear, and its distinction from code-switching can also be ambiguous. Therefore, this thesis studies this issue further by utilizing data from interviews with Mandarin and Japanese language professors in a higher-education setting. Through accessing multilingual moments in the classroom and the professors' understanding and attitudes toward translanguaging, this thesis finds that the translanguaging classroom is an impossible ideal in a higher education foreign language classroom context. And the limitation can be caused by institutional expectations, language hierarchies in the context, and the question of boundaries between named languages.

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to Professor Jennifer Phuong for introducing me to the concept of translanguaging in the course Education Emergent Bilinguals, which has sparked my interest in ways to support emergent bilinguals, the community that I am also part of.

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1 Introduction

The term *translanguaging* first appeared in the 1980s in Welsh Bilingual Education. The term came into usage in the 1980s and has since gained popularity in recent years. Coined in an educational context, translanguaging is often advertised as a unitary model of multilingualism that dissolves the boundaries of languages (García, 2011; Li, 2011; García & Li, 2014). Lewis et al. (2012) has made three main distinctions of translanguaging: Classroom Translanguaging, Universal Translanguaging, and Neurolinguistics Translanguaging. Classroom Translanguaging takes a pedagogic emphasis, stressing what happens in the classroom. Universal Translanguaging prioritizes the context outside of the classroom and relevant cultural aspects such as the frequency and context when bilinguals use more than one language. Neurolinguistics Translanguaging is the study of brain activities when people use more than one language. This thesis mainly focuses on classroom translanguaging. The increasing frequency of the term translanguaging in language education has made many language teachers question their monolingual way of teaching. Previously, an immersive environment using only the target language has been promoted as highly beneficial to language learners. While such a language environment may allow students to practice the target language more, the initial language barrier and discomfort may turn many students away. Therefore, this thesis explores the feasibility of translanguaging in the current school context.

In this thesis, García et al.'s (2017) definition of the term “translanguaging classroom” is adopted, “a space built collaboratively by the teacher and bilingual students as they use their different language practices to teach and learn in deeply creative and critical ways” (2). Within this definition, keywords such as “built collaboratively” and “different language practices” will

be examined in the case study of this thesis. The case study focuses on Mandarin and Japanese foreign language classrooms in three liberal arts colleges in the United States.

On top of linguistic practices discussed by García et al. (2017), other universal mediums of communication such as body gestures and pictures also fall under translanguaging practices that facilitate students' learning. Translanguaging, as a pedagogical strategy, allows students to draw on their full language repertoire, which has been identified as a key strategy to cultivating a multilingual and multicultural classroom where all students are encouraged to use their existing knowledge in all language practices that they are already familiar with. The emphasis on language repertoire goes beyond the boundaries between named languages, which is a frequently debated idea among translanguaging and code-switching researchers because it makes the two topics mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, the analysis of classroom translanguaging usually relies on the identification of named languages, which is something important to acknowledge.

In this thesis, the term translanguaging is used in a broad context and will be followed by a discussion of the distinction between code-switching and translanguaging. The two concepts are mutually exclusive because they have different definitions of the human system of processing linguistic information. While code-switching recognizes the boundaries between named languages and a speaker switches from one language to another, translanguaging highlights an individual's linguistic repertoire that contains all language elements that an individual knows. This distinction is especially intriguing to me while I explore the actualization of translanguaging in the classroom through interviews. While translanguaging studies have primarily focused on the Spanish-English pair in ESL classrooms in the secondary education context, the present thesis aims to address this gap by exploring the use of translanguaging in college-level classroom settings that feature Mandarin and Japanese foreign language classes.

Translanguaging manifests in different classroom settings varyingly. For instance, translanguaging takes different forms in foreign language classrooms and English-as-a-second-language classrooms. Many learners acquire one or more foreign languages in college, which is home to domestic students as well as international students from various linguistic backgrounds. English, as the language that dominates academia internationally, is used in many countries as the language of instruction even if English is not the regional dominant language (Mazak 2016, 6). Therefore, higher education is a fertile ground for translanguaging because of the relatively more diverse student population and the power dynamic among languages used in academic settings. Additionally, in higher education, many students have already developed at least one existing language that is mature. Through interviews with language professors, this thesis will provide a closer look at how students and professors make linguistic shifts in real time and the professors' attitudes toward translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in foreign language education. Based on the interview data, I will evaluate whether the multilingual practices in the foreign language classroom are closer to translanguaging or code-switching.

2 Research Background

In this section, I will do a literature review of existing research on translanguaging as a pedagogical approach. Although most research focuses on ESL classrooms, which is not the focus of my research, it is worthwhile to see how translanguaging manifests in the classroom and learn how researchers have approached studying this topic. It is also intriguing to compare ESL and bilingual classrooms to higher education foreign language classrooms in terms of

multilingual practices inside and outside the classroom. To lay the foundation for my case study, I will first explore existing definitions of translanguaging, followed by translanguaging in the classroom and the use of machine translation as a way of communication and between students and teachers.

2.1 Definitions of translanguaging

Before moving on to how translanguaging manifests in the classroom, I wish to provide a list of definitions of translanguaging from scholars from 2009 to 2017. A lot of scholars have categorized and compiled translanguaging literatures and keywords in recent journals. By following the evolution of the definitions of translanguaging, we can see how the emphasis has changed throughout the years. This section will reference Zheng & An (2022)'s article published in *Foreign Language Education* and the definitions of translanguaging they have compiled. The chart below is adopted and edited from Table 1 in Zheng & An (2022):

García (2009)	“The act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential” (p. 140).
Creese & Blackledge (2010)	An approach that raises the standards of pedagogy. It refers to a pedagogy that allows a multilingual individual to engage in multilingual and multicultural communication to match their identity positioning.
Canagarajah (2011)	A natural phenomenon that multilingual students engage in when using multiple language practices. In a multilingual context, students (and teachers) strategically use their full linguistic repertoire in the classroom.
García (2011a)	“The ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (p. 401).

Li (2011)	<i>A translinguaging space</i> “breaks down the artificial dichotomies between the macro and the micro, the societal and the individual, and the social and the psycho in studies of bilingualism and multilingualism” (p. 1234).
García & Li (2014)	The process when the speaker uses their entire linguistic repertoire to gain knowledge, make meaning, express thinking, and discuss how to use language.
Mazak (2016)	Translinguaging is a language ideology, a theory of bilingualism, a pedagogical stance, a set of practices, and it is a transformational practice that is changing people’s perception and use of languages.
García et al. (2017)	“A space built collaboratively by the teacher and bilingual students as they use their different language practices to teach and learn in deeply creative and critical ways” (p. 2).

Table 1. Definitions of translinguaging from selected literature between 2009 and 2017.

From Table 1, it is not hard to see that the agents who translanguage are mostly students, teachers, and members that share a linguistic community. The settings include everyday life and classroom environments. Additionally, there is an emphasis on repertoire, not individual languages, indicating a withering away of boundaries between languages and instead focusing on each bi/multilingual individual’s language practice and exposure. In my thesis, I have chosen García et al. (2017)’s definition of a translinguaging classroom not only because it is relatively more recent, but it also underlines both the student and the teacher’s role in regulating the language practices in the classroom. Additionally, this definition emphasizes both the teaching and learning aspects in the classroom, which I hope to confirm its feasibility through interviews with the language professors.

While Table 1 includes definitions of translinguaging by leading scholars in the field, this term is loaded with idealized goals (breaking the boundaries of named languages, using one’s entire linguistic repertoire, etc) that may be tricky to actualize in real life. Therefore, in this

thesis, I will conduct interviews with foreign language professors in a higher education context to see if the aspirations of translanguaging are attainable in actual foreign language classrooms. Before that, I will dive deeper into existing research on classroom translanguaging.

2.2 Classroom translanguaging

Classroom translanguaging is broad and can display varying degrees based on specific classrooms. The purpose of translanguaging is to leverage (or maximize potential) students' linguistic repertoire (all the language practices of a student) to help each individual learn better and grow as a multilingual. This idea is often used during second language acquisition, where students already know at least one language and want to learn another one. Throughout the learning process, they frequently use one language to learn another. Yet, researchers and educators such as García and Li (2014) argue that bilinguals do not *code-switch* from one language to the other, indicating two different linguistic systems; instead, they *translanguage* using one single linguistic system. The paradigm shift in translanguaging is controversial in scholarly discussions of possible shortcomings of mixing different languages due to the fear of imperfect language acquisition (Bullock & Toribio 2009), and whether boundaries between languages can really wither away remains highly debated. Additionally, other critiques concern the actual practice of translanguaging in the classroom. Is it possible for all students to use their full linguistic repertoire in the classroom? Or is their linguistic performance restricted by their specific context? The interviews that follow will explore these questions from the professors' perspectives.

Flores & Schissel (2014) have categorized translanguaging into sociolinguistic and pedagogical perspectives. While the sociolinguistic perspective describes the fluid use of

language among multilingual communities, the pedagogical approach focuses on teachers' approach to promote the use of multiple languages in the classroom. As a pedagogical approach, translanguaging involves using students' entire language repertoire towards learning, in contrast with a monolingual immersion classroom, where only the target or dominant language is spoken and allowed. The fluid use of language is a common practice among multilingual communities, but when language learners speak languages other than the target language in classrooms, the teachers usually ask their students to switch to using only the target language in an immersion program. Perhaps, sociolinguistic and pedagogical perspectives of translanguaging are intertwined in a classroom setting where the teacher and students don't share common language practices for communication.

Translanguaging, as a daily practice, is a natural activity for every multilingual individual (Canagarajah 2011). There are many ways teachers can honor this natural practice through the incorporation of translanguaging strategies in language classrooms. For instance, it may appear in the form of allowing the use of machine translation technology, using multilingual pedagogy, including photos and universal signs for visual aids, and so on.

For students who are familiar with more than one language, many families choose to send them to multilingual schools, which allow them to develop all languages simultaneously. However, within the bilingual/multilingual framework of pedagogy, there has been considerable debate regarding whether teachers should keep the languages separate or use them at the same time. Researchers who advocate for language separation have argued that this strategy helps the child learn the two languages better (Jacobson & Faltis 1990). Others recognize advantages of the incorporation of more than one language in the classroom, such as an increased level of inclusion, facilitation of participation, and so on (Lin & Martin, 2005; Arthur & Martin, 2006).

Just like these multilingual classrooms, foreign language classrooms in higher education can also benefit from a more multilingual approach to teaching. But first, it is important to establish what it means for people to be bilingual or multilingual.

Bilingual individuals are often regarded as speakers of more than one language. There are many ways to interpret the system of bilingualism. In García and Li (2014), the authors make three main distinctions in bilingualism: traditional bilingualism, linguistic interdependence, and dynamic bilingualism. Under the traditional bilingual framework, bilingual speakers have two autonomous linguistic systems, showing no contact between the two languages. This theory has been refuted by linguists such as Cummins (1979), who proposes that the proficiency of two languages are not stored separately in the speaker's brain, and that there is a Common Underlying Proficiency between the two languages in the central operating system. Yet, although the latter framework highlights more contact between the two languages, they remain separate linguistic systems that sometimes the speaker might code-switch from one to another. In response to this idea, Herdina & Jessner (2002) suggest the Dynamic Systems Theory, which highlights the interconnectedness of all languages that an individual knows, allowing the speaker to translanguage naturally. This translanguaging framework underlines the unity of all languages into a single system, which the speaker pulls from accordingly based on the context.

Not only is it most natural, dynamic bilingualism also allows individuals to utilize all linguistic knowledge they possess. Although this dynamic bilingual framework is encouraged and beneficial for the development of a student's entire language repertoire, this system is difficult to actualize in many contexts. As García and Li (2014) have stated in *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism, and Education*,

Societal forces, and in particular schools, enforce a call, an interpellation, by which bilingual speakers are often able to recognize themselves only as subjects that speak two separate languages. In so doing, bilingual speakers become complicit in their own domination as they often conform to monolingual and monoglossic practices that constrain their own bilingualism to two separate autonomous languages, although at times they may resist by engaging in fluid language practices. (p.15)

The challenges that bi/multilingual speakers face in the education system might discourage them from embracing their first language. Indeed, the power-play between an individual's first language and the dominant / prestigious language in society continues to affect the linguistic diversity of bilingual speakers. Therefore, the educators' role in the construction of the appropriate linguistic ideals in education is essential to the preservation of this highly-valued linguistic and cultural diversity.

So far, the discussion in the literature cited has described the ESL classroom where English is at the top of the hierarchy. This discussion is relevant in this thesis because it creates a comparison and contrast with the higher education foreign language classroom, which is the focus of this thesis. Unlike the ESL classrooms, the linguistic hierarchy shifts in a foreign language classroom, where the target language lands on the top of the hierarchy and the dominant language of the school follows, followed by home languages of the students. Nevertheless, in foreign language classrooms, students translanguage in class, but they are often limited to languages in their repertoire that are higher in the linguistic hierarchy in the classroom. In other words, students only translanguage using the languages that the professor and the majority of students speak, which is again subjected to language hierarchy in the context of the classroom. This is important to recognize because translanguaging researchers (Table 1) mostly discount the boundaries between languages and instead highlight the repertoire that each student possesses, which contains equal language elements. Yet, as we have seen in different types of

classrooms, the presence of language hierarchy is prominent and rather insurmountable. Students cannot freely translanguage in the classroom due to the limits of borders between different languages and cultures that are so ingrained in the modern world.

2.3 Machine translation in the classroom

In the context of a translanguaging classroom, machine translation comes into play when teachers and students don't share common languages. Especially in ESL classrooms, it is not unusual for students to come from a variety of language backgrounds while the teacher can solely speak English. In this case, tools such as Google Translate are used inside and outside of the classroom to assist students' language learning and communication between each other.

Especially, since the global pandemic and the interruption of in-person instruction in 2019, learning how to coexist with technology and use it to its fullest potential is a strength that is increasingly important in today's context. Especially in education, technology has made many advances in the classroom. For instance, the incorporation of calculators as a complement in math classes is a successful example of the introduction of technology into the classroom.

Calculators not only allow students to visualize math functions, but it also provides a means for students to check their answers for arithmetic problems. Is there a tool like a calculator that can help students learn in language classrooms? In contrast to numbers (which are more universal), languages are generally harder to translate considering the specific cultural nuances in different countries. Therefore, teachers play an important role in regulating the use of translation tools. In practice, there are several translanguaging tools that instructors can use to bridge communication with students in the classroom. This section will explore machine translation as a translanguaging device.

Multilingual students often use machine translation tools to assist their language learning, or to follow along with the class. Particularly, when the teacher does not share a common language with the students, translation applications are often used to fill the gap. For advanced learners, the use of machine translation may allow students to understand the nuance of translation and expand their vocabulary. Specifically, the awareness of mistakes and inaccuracies of translated texts is useful for advanced language learners because recognizing and understanding the mistakes machine translation has made also offers an opportunity to grow as a learner. Yet, the inattentive use of machine translation is often associated with unintentional plagiarism and an unfair practice when used in graded assignments (Somers et al. 2006, Case 2015). Therefore, many language teachers consider translation technology an impediment to language learning (Gaspari & Somers 2007). While there are always caveats to every technological tool, students learning to use it in the right way and for the right task is a salient skill that instructors can teach students.

A successful example of a teacher's incorporation of translation tools for students to translanguage is presented in Vogel et al. (2018), where the researchers conducted a case study of the use of Google Translate during writing activities of a six-grade emergent bilingual who came to the United States from China. In this study, the researchers worked with the teacher to implement translanguaging pedagogy for the one student. By studying the incorporation of machine translation in the classroom, Vogel et al. wished to reconceptualize machine translation tools and reframe them as a tool that enables language learners to advance their existing repertoires. Together with the teacher, the researchers came up with what they call the Google Doc graphic organizer method (Figure 1). Instead of asking the student to translate directly from Chinese to English, the student was prompted to write the response in Chinese first, followed by

a response generated in his own words in English, and end with the English Google Translated text from the Chinese text. This is a great example of implementing translanguaging in assignments that allows language learners to utilize their existing knowledge in another language while still practicing using the target language.

Responses to "THE EMPTY POT"			
Reading strategy (阅读策略)	中文	在回应自己的话 (Respond in English in your own words.)	English (Google Translate)
Did someone realize something? How might this change things?	男孩注意到了他的种子长不出来，这样他可能会失去变成皇帝的继承人的机会。	The boy found the seed is not growing, he think he may not be the emperor's heir.	The boy found his species does not grow, he felt could not be the emperor's heir.
What have you learned about a character? How do you know this?	男孩是一个很诚实的孩子，因为他的种子是长不出来的，所以他就拿着一个空的花盆去见皇上。	the boy is a honest kid, because the seed is can't growing, so he just take a empty pots go to see the emperor.	The boy is a very honest boy, because his seed is not out long, so he took an empty pot to see the emperor.
What themes do you notice? Why?	这个故事围绕着小孩和种子，因为这个故事大部分在讲小孩想了什么办法让种子长大。	The story is about the boy and his seed, because the story talking about what the boy wanted to let the seeds grow method.	The story revolves around children and seeds, because the kids want to tell the story mostly in what way to let the seeds grow.

FIGURE 6.2 Student work sample #2

Figure 1. The Google Doc graphic organizer method (Image from Vogel et al. 2018).

However, this method has its limitation: if a student does not have a basic foundation in the language and uses translation software without a teacher's guidance, they may not benefit as much compared to those who already have a considerable foundation in the target language. Therefore, these types of translanguaging practices should be customized according to each student's level, which is where the educator comes into the picture. Although it might be tricky attempting to use machine translation in class to participate verbally, conscious and moderate use of Google Translate to aid writing practice allows the language learner to process and evaluate the accuracy of the translated text by using existing knowledge of another language. When used

correctly, this method has the potential to provide aid for a classroom of students coming from various linguistic backgrounds in ESL classrooms.

While machine translation is a useful tool, many language instructors are hesitant to utilize it in their classroom. For instance, a study by Case (2015) has surveyed language professors on their attitudes toward machine translation in a technologically-advanced university in Sweden. As a result, the author found that language instructors usually think the use of machine translation tools depends on the nature of the task and the student's linguistic level. For instance, professors generally don't want students from the introductory level to use machine translation tools to work on homework assignments because they may be confused. Additionally, the author suggested that many teachers were leaning toward changing the assignments into more oral-based tasks and asking students to correct grammar errors from the translated texts. Overall, most teachers have a negative idea about the use of machine translation and prefer students not to use them: "Many language teachers considered the use of machine translation in academic contexts to be cheating and a hindrance to language learning" (Case 2015, 4). The current study will take a similar approach and inquire about language professors' attitudes toward translanguaging activities such as machine translation in a higher education setting. It would be interesting to compare the differences considering the time gap of about eight years and the distinct context of the two studies.

3 Purpose of My Study

In my junior year in college, I took an educational linguistic course called Educating Emergent Bilingual. As part of the class, I went into Philadelphia's Chinatown to do a field

placement at a middle school ESL classroom once a week for a semester. In that ESL classroom, there were students who spoke Spanish (6 students), Arabic (2 students), Mandarin (1 student), and Pashto (1 student). With only one student who each speaks Mandarin and Pashto, I've often noticed them feeling lost, but not sure where to seek help. To accommodate students with various linguistic backgrounds, the teacher incorporated translations in the four languages on her slides.

Seeing the embrace of multiple language practices in an ESL classroom in real life has inspired me to dive deeper into the pedagogical practices and teacher's role in student's linguistic development and worldviews. Although the acquisition of a new language is important, learning how to become proficient bi/multilingual is increasingly important for language learners in today's context. Therefore, I want to turn to higher education foreign language classrooms to investigate the use of different languages by instructors and students in the classroom, and see how they are different from the ESL classroom setting. Particularly, I wish to see if multilingual practices are closer to concepts of translanguaging or code-switching. Before this categorization, it is essential to acknowledge the distinctive language hierarchies between the classroom and the larger context as well as how professors view the use of languages other than the target language inside and outside of the classroom.

As explored in *Section 2.1*, translanguaging has a variety of definitions. Keywords such as the "dissolution of boundaries between languages" and "using one's entire linguistic repertoire" have frequently appeared in many researchers' work. Upon first learning this idea, I was deeply convinced and fascinated by the honoring of each student's home languages and linguistic experiences because it was something that was never available to me as a bilingual individual. Therefore, although I cannot agree enough with the benefits of students feeling comfortable in the classroom because they are free to communicate in language(s) they already

know, it seems unclear to me how this strategy is realized in a classroom where teachers and students come from distinctive linguistic backgrounds. Like the ESL classroom that I observed last semester, the two students who spoke Mandarin and Pashto rarely got the chance to speak in their home languages in class because no other person understood their languages. Additionally, the nuance of the language hierarchy in different types of classrooms may also render translanguaging impalpable.

The machine translation aided language instruction I have seen in the ESL classroom made me curious about the potential of tools like Google Translate in a classroom with multilingual students. In a higher education setting, machine translation aided language instruction is not as prominent, but machine translation remains widely used outside of the classroom. Being bilingual (Mandarin and English) myself, I have often encountered mistranslation when using machine translation applications. Although these mistakes might confuse students who are beginner-level learners of a language, they can also be constructive tools that prompt growth for students who are at the higher levels. For instance, students may actively recognize common misuse of vocabularies in the translated text and think about the reasons behind the mistranslation, offering more opportunities for students to learn additional terms and practice the target language. However, many of the case studies on machine translation focus on the elementary and secondary levels, lacking research in a higher-education setting. University students, who generally have established a solid first language, can benefit significantly from the use of machine translation for previewing lessons and as a translanguaging tool.

Through conversations with 4 college-level foreign language professors, I hope to gain understandings to the following questions in this thesis:

1. How is translanguaging, as a pedagogical practice, actualized in the classroom?
2. What are some of the instances professors switch to languages other than the target language? Why?
3. What are professors' attitudes toward translanguaging / code-switching? How to distinguish the two based on classroom activities?
4. What are the professors' views on machine translation tools? How do these tools contribute to multilingual efforts?

4 Methods

4.1 Study Sites

This study makes use of interviews with language instructors in Bryn Mawr College, Haverford College, and Swarthmore College (later referred to as Tri-Co). The Tri-Co is located in the suburban area outside of Philadelphia in the northeastern United States. While Haverford and Swarthmore are co-ed colleges, Bryn Mawr is historically an all-women's college. In the Tri-Co, English is the dominant language used in academic settings. Students from the Tri-Co need to take at least two semesters of a foreign language to meet the graduation requirement. There are many languages to choose from among American Sign Language, Romance and East Asian languages including Spanish, Russian, French, Italian, Japanese, and Mandarin. The present thesis will focus on Mandarin and Japanese.

Based on the score of placement tests, students get placed into a matching level of a language. There are two tracks for first-year Mandarin: intensive and non-intensive. In the Tri-Co, first-year Japanese is offered at the intensive level only. While the intensive track is

offered to students who have no preexisting exposure to Japanese as a foreign language, the non-intensive route is for students who have taken Mandarin before college and heritage speakers who have not yet reached the second-year level based on the result of their placement tests. Because the study is in a higher education setting, some students have previous experiences learning the language in high school and middle school. Therefore, the first-year introductory language classes are divided into intensive and non-intensive levels. Based on the results for the placement test, students go into either the intensive and non-intensive classes. Typically, heritage speakers and students who have undergone a rigorous foreign language training in high school are placed in the non-intensive classes, which consist of two lectures per week. On the other hand, students who are first-time learners follow the intensive track, meeting two lectures and two drill sections per week. While Mandarin classes contain both tracks, only the intensive first-year Japanese track is offered.

Language learners in the Tri-Co come from diverse and international backgrounds. The three colleges have a sizable international student population from all over the globe. For instance, international students who come from China make up a large portion of the Japanese class. Additionally, there are also many heritage speakers who have grown up hearing the target language. Therefore, the student body's diverse backgrounds form a symbiotic relationship with the language departments, making professors' approach to teaching especially intriguing in the Tri-Co and may add a unique perspective in the classroom translanguaging research.

4.2 Participant recruitment and sample

For this study, four professors of Mandarin (2) and Japanese (2) are interviewed. They are recruited via direct email request. And the participants are not compensated to participate.

Interviews are conducted over Zoom. All participants in this study are native speakers and experienced educators whose teaching experiences range 12~26 years. All of the participants have obtained advanced degrees and received formal training in the US. Two participants started teaching English as a second language (ESL), and later made the switch to teaching their native language. Their students fall under many categories: heritage speakers, native speakers, and foreign-language learners.

This study focuses on the teaching practices of professors who teach introductory language classes. This focus was chosen for several reasons. First, in an introductory class, students generally don't have a strong foundation in the target language. If language instructors wish to take a monolingual approach to teach the language, they are challenged with the task of familiarizing the students with a set list of vocabulary and conveying that vocabulary using the target language. For students who have no previous knowledge of the target language, translanguaging strategies are likely necessary to get them on the same page. Additionally, first-year students are also mostly likely to seek help from the Peer Tutors. Second, since it is the start of learning a new language, language teachers are inclined to set up the classroom and come up with a plan that aligns with the departmental values. To set their students up for success, experienced teachers calibrate their lesson plans according to the specific backgrounds of the student population. Lastly, language rules in the classroom are likely established in the first-year classroom. Some professors might allow students to speak in other languages in the classroom while some might be strict about keeping the "target-language-only" rule during class time.

4.3 Interviews and analysis

The interviews followed a set questionnaire with improvised follow-up questions. The interviews started by asking about the background of the professor. Then, the participants were

asked to recall their approach to teaching students who have no preexisting knowledge. The questionnaire is designed to allow participants to reflect on their approaches to teaching and why they conduct their classes the way that they do. Therefore, the questions are sometimes scenario-based to elicit answers on the topic of translanguaging without explicitly stating the target of the study. Sample questions include (full question list in Appendix 1):

- a. What language do you teach and how many years have you been teaching the language?
- b. To teach students who have no existing language background, how do you familiarize the students with the target language?
- c. When a student is confused, how do you approach explaining concepts to them? What language(s) do you use?
- d. What is your view on machine translation (e.g. Google Translate) in the study of foreign languages?
- e. Do you think it is important for students to immerse themselves in the target language? Why?

The recordings of interviews are analyzed following common themes of the response with particular focus on translanguaging moments in the classroom and outside of the classroom.

It is important to note that this study certainly does not represent all linguistic practices in foreign language classrooms in the higher education setting, and a senior thesis cannot do justice to extensive teaching experiences that the participants have shared. The small sample size is also unlikely to lead to a claim that is representative of all language professors and pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, the main themes discussed below have consistently appeared across interviews.

5 Findings

In my interviews with the four language professors, all participants have responded that they have used languages other than the target language in some way either in class or outside of class. Although most of them are not familiar with the term translanguageing (three out of four participants), all participants reported that they have used other language practices (mostly English) at some point in class when they see students confused about grammatical concepts. One participant, who has heard of the term translanguageing, thinks it is a great concept, but she thinks the actualization of this idea in the classroom is rather tricky and almost “impossible to prove.” Moreover, she also casts doubts on the disintegration of language boundaries and whether the multilingual moments in her classrooms can be considered as translanguageing. More than one professor also shared that they use English rather frequently during class and in office hours. According to the participants, the switch to English is usually tied to the limited class time, institutions’ expectations to use (or not use) languages other than the target language, addressing misunderstanding and mistakes in a clear way, and eliminating confusion among students. Some professors have also shared their opinions toward machine translation, and how they perceive the new technology may help or deter students’ progress in acquiring a foreign language. This section will cover several common themes that have come up consistently in my interview conferences with the four language professors in the Tri-Co.

5.1 Translanguageing as a pedagogical method

This section will report some instances the participants have shared when they utilized languages other than the target language. First, efficient use of class time came up frequently

during the interviews. Since language students are only exposed to the target language during class time, professors generally have a need to make the most out of the limited class sessions. Therefore, the professors may translanguage to help students understand complex grammatical concepts. For instance, when being asked which language they use during instruction, one of the Mandarin professors answered in the following way:

(1)

Participant: English is the primary instruction language. When I teach new items, I always explain it in English. Class time is limited. We can't afford going back and forth trying to figure out what the word means. So it's much easier to explain the concept in English and then once we're done with the explanation, we will use as much Chinese as possible. And we practice what we have learned. Like the vocab and grammatical structure we practice in Chinese, but the new explanation I usually do in English.
(Mandarin professor)

This participant chooses to use English in her classroom for the sake of saving class time. She also highlighted the challenges that introductory Mandarin learners face due to the Chinese character system. Mandarin lessons usually start with *pinyin*, the official romanization system for Standard Mandarin Chinese, to familiarize students with the sounds of Mandarin before diving into the study of Chinese characters. In order to ease students into the language, the professors shared that grammatical structures are first explained in English, then practices of the target language will follow after students understand the concepts and are comfortable saying sentences out loud. Therefore, this Mandarin professor prioritizes grammatical and speaking practices after students fully understand the concepts and learn the correct pronunciation of the words. In other words, as we can see in excerpt (1), language professors *translanguage* in class by speaking in English to help students understand grammatical points and temporarily overcome the language barrier, allowing class to be conducted in a more efficient way. Because all the students share

understandings of English in their repertoire, the professors tend to use this common language practice as a way to help students further language practices in the target language.

This shift into English is not limited to introductory classes, but explanations in English are also essential in intermediate and advanced language classes. In a conversation with another Mandarin professor, she shared: “In first-year classrooms, only using the target language is the goal, but when you get to second and third-year courses, some mistakes are habitual. So (as the teacher) I need to make the mistake really clear and make sure they correct themselves. If there are some straight-forward explanations in English, then just tell them.” This professor uses English in higher-level classes to clear up misunderstandings that might be ingrained in the students to make sure they will not make the same mistakes. Therefore, we can see that translanguaging is also an important approach for professors to clarify mistakes that students make especially both when it is ingrained in their minds and when they are first learning the language. Additionally, professors only provide explanations in English because it is the dominant language in the context of the classroom. In other words, English is the metalanguage (a language used to describe another language) that the language professor uses to explain grammatical errors to intermediate and advanced language learners. And the metalanguage is often the dominant language in the context of the classroom. It takes a while to provide grammatical explanations in the target language and it is also not efficient to do so in the classroom. Consequently, this linguistic practice in the classroom has its limitations because it is not using all students’ full repertoire (Mandarin, Hebrew, etc).

It is also important to note here that when analyzing an individual’s repertoire, it is hard to do so without mentioning named languages, which further questions the efficacy of translanguaging as a linguistic concept. When brainstorming questions to ask the participants, I

found it hard to come up with questions that single out the use of students' repertoire other than the target language in the classroom. Therefore, I had to distinguish the target language from other languages, which is itself a separation of language boundaries. Additionally, what is considered a multilingual practice is also dependent on the concepts of multiple languages, which implies boundaries between languages. As will be discussed later, the use of machine translation also reinforces the distinction of different languages as users can visually see one language translated into another using machine translation tools. I will return to this limitation of this study in the discussion and conclusion section.

Apart from considerations of implementation and efficiency in the classroom, more than one participant also shared that their teacher training prioritized using mainly the target language during instruction. The immersive learning approach, which all participants were trained to do, has deterred them from using other languages in class at the start of their teaching career, but through my interviews, I have noticed a tendency to use other languages more as the participants were later in their teaching career. Moreover, participants also mentioned they agree with the immersive learning pedagogy because it allows students to be in a critical language environment that induces language acquisition. Yet, it is critical for the teacher to monitor students' performances closely in class to make sure they are on the same page. As the Japanese professor describes in the following interview excerpt:

(2)

Participant: When I was learning how to teach Japanese as a foreign language, there was a TPR (Total Physical Response) and immersion program. Let [the students] immerse in the language as a shower, and the brain will form surrounding the language. So that was the number one priority at the time. I really agreed with the idea at that time, but at the same time, if the learners do not have enough time to think in that language, just listening and dreaming, the time

will be wasted. So they really have to know how to learn and we, as teachers, how to teach using only one language, like an immersion program. So I really believe that teaching in that language is useful, but it really depends on *how*.

(Japanese Professor)

Like the Mandarin professor in (1), this participant also mentioned the constraint of class time and the concern of students wasting practice time of target language in class. This participant shares the belief regarding only using the target language as the ideal and optimal style along with two other participants, but in practice, immersive learning can be challenging when students feel lost and are not following in class. Specifically, when students are feeling confused, professors need to get their ideas across to the students efficiently in class. Although in some instances, they can get away with showing pictures and gesturing, using a common language remains the most convenient way to explain challenging grammatical points in class.

Additionally, although trained to use mainly the target language during instruction, as the participants' teaching experiences increase, she is able to detect the students' confusion more easily and use more English when explaining difficult and confusing grammatical points. Therefore, pedagogical practices like immersive learning and classroom translanguaging are usually used as guiding principles, and actual classroom practices are based on the specific situation as well as students' backgrounds. Although neither practices are followed perfectly in real life, they remain useful tools in foreign language classrooms.

Apart from self-motivated choices to use the dominant language, one participant has also highlighted the pressure and expectations coming from the school, which stops them from translanguaging:

(3)

Huayu: Do you teach differently at different universities?

Participant: When I was at the State university, I was under training, so the model was to use only the target language in instruction... I worked at many different institutions. Sometimes, when I design the demo lesson, I do my best to not use any English. But not all institutions appreciate this type of approach, so it's really tricky. Some like this type of approach, some don't. So if someone tells you what their preference is, that would be good. When I have no clue, I will use the pedagogy that avoids English.
(Mandarin Professor)

Whether translanguaging is allowed depends on institutional context, which again shows the pressure from a hierarchy. From this participant's narrative, we can see that different institutions have different rules for the approach to foreign language instruction. Depending on the university's expectations and learning goals for the students, professors need to make lesson plans accordingly. However, as this participant has shared, when the expectation is unclear, "the pedagogy that avoids English," or the monolingual approach, is chosen as the default. This shows that the monolingual approach might still be associated with the superior approach compared to pedagogy that uses other languages, which proposes another layer of complexity in the use of translanguaging in the classroom.

Similar to the tricky implementation of immersive learning in a language classroom, translanguaging also seems heavily dependent on the context of the classroom. Perhaps, it's not that immersing in the target language is the most important but that students and professors should be on the same page. According to García et al.'s (2017) definition, a translanguaging classroom is one that is "built collaboratively by the teacher and bilingual students," but the successful approach to using translanguaging as a pedagogical approach usually depends heavily on the institutional and even the larger societal hierarchy as well.

5.2 *The power hierarchy of translanguaging in a language classroom*

A translanguaging classroom is a place where students and teachers are free to access their full linguistic repertoire. Given the discussion and different views that are presented in the previous section, it is obvious that translanguaging as a pedagogical approach depends heavily on the context. For instance, the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy can be affected by the power dynamic between professors and students, as well as that between professors and institutions, let alone the hierarchy of languages.

In the framework of translanguaging, languages are not deemed as bounded units, but they are merely part of an individual's repertoire. One doesn't say they speak *xyz* languages and code-switch from *x* language to *y* language, but they have their unique repertoire that contains linguistic elements that are equal. Is this idea of translanguaging possibly too idealized considering the hierarchy in the present world? One participant shared her opinion when I asked about her opinion on translanguaging:

(4)

Participant: I agree with the concept of translanguaging. The traditional way of foreign language class is: you are in a Japanese class, so you should only speak in Japanese. That's it. But this approach allows students to have access to their linguistic repertoire. So I like that concept and want to apply it in my class. But then, I can't accommodate students because I don't understand Hebrew and I don't understand Mandarin. So I have to ask students to use only English for everybody to understand. That's not translanguaging. So I like the concept, but it's impossible to practice.
(Japanese Professor)

In the narrative above, this participant has a positive attitude towards translanguaging because it allows students to use a common language (in this case English) other than the target language to express themselves. Yet, the Japanese Professor sees translanguaging as "impossible to practice"

because students and teachers' linguistic repertoire don't always align perfectly in a foreign language classroom. In that case, some students usually have to make the sacrifice to only access the part of their repertoire that the professor shares because the latter usually has more power in the classroom. Additionally, in a Japanese class, Japanese remains on the top of the hierarchy, which poses a power dynamic between students (learners of Japanese) and the professor (the person with the most knowledge in Japanese).

Like this professor, all the other participants that I have interviewed want what's best for their students, which means sometimes they need to balance between optimizing practice of the target language and making sure that students are understanding the grammatical concept and learning the language. Therefore, all professors want to use the target language as much as possible, and they want students to not feel too lost in the process so they choose to use English to explain challenging grammatical concepts.

In the analysis and conversation above, I started to realize that my examination of translanguaging has been based on distinguishing the target language from other languages—with clear boundaries between languages. Is this truly what translanguaging is? Or is this linguistic practice closer to code-switching? The same participant of (4) responded with the following:

(5)

Participant: So I would say that my understanding of translanguaging is different from code-switching. We have so many students from Chinese-speaking countries. Since many of the people's linguistic repertoire is limited to English and Japanese, Chinese is usually not used. That means this foreign-language-classroom setting is forcing students from Chinese backgrounds to choose English and Japanese. That's a restriction on these students. So the concept of translanguaging is to have access to the full linguistic repertoire in someone's mind. Right? So if the situation forces someone to limit their linguistic repertoire, I think that translanguaging

cannot happen. So I would say these practices are code-switching. I don't agree with translanguaging in this context.
(Japanese Professor)

As this participant in (5) has correctly pointed out, translanguaging, as a pedagogy, is rather restricting and involves many limitations when it comes to what counts as translanguaging. This Japanese Professor interprets the multilingual practices in her classrooms as code-switching instead of translanguaging. As mentioned in the background section, researchers like García and Li (2014) differentiate code-switching from translanguaging by claiming that students don't switch from one language to another language, but they use one system to process their linguistic input and output. Yet, this Japanese Professor points out a big population in her class—the international students who speak varieties of Chinese, who are prevented from using their entire linguistic repertoire in the classroom because neither the professor nor non-Chinese speakers in the classroom can understand Chinese. Perhaps, a translanguaging classroom may be too generalizing considering that it is often impossible for students and professors to together build a space that accesses the extensive repertoire of all members.

5.3 Attitudes toward machine translation

Other than learning more about multilingual practices in the classroom, the professors' views on machine translation tools and students' use of these tools for learning and as a means of communication have also come up frequently in my interviews with the four participants. Usually used by students during and after class, machine translation tools are viewed as a tool that allows students to use their linguistic repertoire. Therefore, they will be discussed using this framework in this thesis.

The use of machine translation in language courses has become extensively common among language learners and instructors. For language learners, translation tools are usually used as a way to look up new words and confirm answers. For language instructors, machine translation applications such as Google Translate are useful when trying to translate words into languages that students understand. In the case of the middle school ESL classroom that I observed last semester, the teacher often used Google Translate in class as a way of communication when she found students confused. Specifically, she would translate English text during class to confirm students' understanding. Especially in a classroom with students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, the incorporation of Google Translate during instruction benefits students enormously in the understanding of certain keywords.

Yet, the ESL classroom is different from the context of college-level foreign language classrooms in how and when translation tools are used. For instance, the students and language professors from the Tri-Co share English as a common language. Therefore, the use of machine translation tools often takes place outside of class when students are doing homework. My interviews with the four Mandarin and Japanese professors have shed light on language professors' views on students' use of machine translation. The interview results reported in this section can by no means be generalized to reflect all language professors' opinions regarding machine translation. However, the following themes have appeared consistently in my conversations with the four language professors.

5.3.1 Proficiency levels and machine translation

Through analyzing my interview data, I have found that the acceptance of the use of machine translation in a college setting closely relates to a student's ability of the language. Specifically, participants may evaluate a student's language ability by accessing their capacity to

detect and correct mistakes in the translated text. If a student is able to notice and correct mistakes that the translation tool has made, they may benefit more from the usage of machine translation and are able to learn extra vocabularies. However, if a student inattentively copies the translated text without paying attention to mistakes in the sentence, it is unlikely the student will gain any knowledge from using the tool. This aspect is stressed by a Japanese professor:

(6)

Huayu: What's your view on machine translation?

Participant: As a native speaker, it's so clear that students use Google Translate. But if they become advanced level students, they can fix the mistakes and learn from the translation. If they use it that way, they will benefit from it. Students can learn kanji and expressions from the translated text. However, if a student can't learn from the mistakes that translation tools make, then better not to use it. It's never good.
(Japanese Professor)

This Japanese professor has pointed out that it is very obvious to professors if a student has used any translation tool in their homework assignments. Therefore, when a student uses Google Translate in an introductory language class, the teacher is very likely to call out the student. In the context of Japanese, students are introduced to a set number of kanji, or Chinese characters, in the course. If an introductory-level student uses kanji characters that are not within the repertoire of the class, it usually rings a bell in the professor's head. For students to learn new kanji, they would need to annotate with *furigana*, or the phonetic notation accompanying kanji characters, along with the Chinese characters. Language proficiency is not the only difference between students at the introductory and intermediate levels. More experience often correlates with superior study habits and strategies. While introductory-level students may copy translated text without parsing out its meaning, intermediate-level students generally have more experience with the language and can do a better job of proofreading sentence combinations.

As a learning tool, machine translation tools can serve to clarify confusing sentences for students, but there is no guarantee for a correct answer. Because of this aspect, some language professors hesitate to allow their students to use these tools. In my conversation with a Mandarin professor, she stated explicitly that she encourages her students to use a dictionary (physical or digital) to look up a single word, and look for example sentences that use the word. That way, they can “really figure out the meaning of that word.” However, she still prefers students to ask her directly or use what they have learned in class to express themselves even if they occasionally use English. Two professors have also shared that they do not recommend Google Translate in general, but it is “inevitable” that students will use it. Therefore, they would “make corrections and hope [students] learn from the adjustments.”

Since assistive tools have become the norm in education, the professors that I have interviewed all expressed hope for their students to form a symbiotic relationship with these tools and learn how to best coexist and learn with them. Although tools such as Google Translate are useful learning instruments, my interviews with the four language professors have shown that how to best incorporate them as pedagogical tools is rather tricky in practice. Moreover, machine translation seems contradictory to the concept of translanguaging because it translates from one language to another. The participation of machine translation nowadays will increase and become more prevalent in the educational context. Therefore, my interviews with the language professors have enlightened me in ways not limited to language education but education at large.

6 Discussions & Conclusion

Translanguaging invites students and professors to use their linguistic repertoire in the classroom as they do in their community (Paris, 2012). Compared to foreign language classrooms in the Tri-Co, the middle school ESL classroom that I have observed fit closer to the translanguaging framework in the pedagogical context. In the ESL classroom, students who don't share a common first language are forced to communicate in their developing second language, which is English in this case. They use machine translation tools to convert texts in their first language into English to express themselves in the classroom. English remains at the top of the hierarchy in the ESL classroom because it is both the target language in the classroom and the dominant language in an American context. On the other hand, in the higher education classes studied in my thesis, the foreign language is at the top, followed by English, then Mandarin (the language with the most speakers), and so on. The limitation of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool that both the ESL classroom and foreign language classroom share is the underutilization of linguistic elements (or languages in the context of code-switching) that are underrepresented (or lower in the hierarchy) in the context. When analyzing the linguistic practice in these classrooms, it is difficult to look past boundaries between languages and the power dynamic based on different contexts. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge this limitation of translanguaging and contemplate the cultural diversity that is usually attached to the bounded units of language.

The current thesis utilizes interview data derived from only four professors who teach Mandarin and Japanese in higher education institutions in the United States, which can by no means cover all aspects of a translanguaging study. It is a preliminary case study that helps me, the writer, visualize how translanguaging is used as a pedagogical practice in the classroom, and

it also expands discourse in this idea that has gained popularity in recent years. Deeper knowledge of how different educational settings use translanguaging in the classroom is needed to determine the potential of this pedagogical method. Further research into this topic could investigate and compare multilingual practices in settings such as bilingual schools in various countries, which could develop insight into how the language hierarchy in the context of the classroom affects language practices in content and language classes. An especially interesting comparison can be derived between students whose first language is the dominant language surrounding the institution and other students who are in the process of developing the dominant language while retaining their first language.

García et al.'s (2017) definition of a translanguaging classroom honors the collaboration between students and teachers on linguistic practices based on their repertoire, which is deemed as a good idea by all of the participants. Yet, based on my interview findings, the actual incorporation of language elements other than those of the target language remains difficult and heavily dependent on context. Although providing explanations for grammatical concepts in English enhance students' understanding and make class time more efficient, this shift is often limited by the expectations from the institution and immersion program being deemed as the historically superior teaching method in a foreign language classroom.

The quantification of multilingual pedagogy is still heavily dependent on the analysis using languages (the distinction between the target language and other languages), which fails to overlook the boundaries between languages. Who draws the line between which practice counts as translanguaging and what does not? This question that emerged from my conversation with one of the Japanese professors kept me thinking. Many people, including myself, have the named languages ingrained in their minds. The use of machine translation, in a way, further deepens the

boundaries between languages because it prompts the translation from one language into another. The paradigm shift to a dynamic system of multilingualism (Herdina & Jessner, 2002) remains new and foreign in the current context of language education. This is not to say that translanguaging is not a great pedagogical idea. It moves beyond an evaluation that proposes “the more languages that you speak, the superior you are as a multilingual,” and encourages people to evaluate one’s linguistic practice in the classroom with considerations of the depth of unique and diverse cultural practices as an individual.

Beyond categorizing the higher education foreign language classroom to either translanguaging or code-switching, I want to acknowledge the benefits of the two ideas because they both create a welcoming space for students to bring in their funds of knowledge in their community and outside of the classroom. Perhaps, what this case study has taught me is that perhaps it is helpful to transcend these paradigms and take advantage of their merits to create a more welcoming space for students and teachers. If we were to combine the fertile research on these two approaches, MacSwan (2017)’s alternative view of *the integrated multilingual model* may be helpful to integrate translanguaging and code-switching research because this model incorporates code-switching as an instance of translanguaging. After all, all professors that were interviewed want their students to not only learn linguistic knowledge but also create an accepting environment that prompts growth. It is through learning successful techniques such as the Google Doc graphic organizer method in Vogel et al. (2018) that educators and researchers can come together and construct a space where each student feels supported and is willing to learn.

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Appendix 1: Translanguaging Research Interview Questions

- Could you please tell me a little bit about the language you teach and how many years have you been teaching this language?
- What pedagogues did you learn through training or experiences being a language teacher and how do you implement them into your teaching? What worked and what didn't work?
- What are the students' language backgrounds in your classroom?
- To teach students who have no existing language background, how do you familiarize the students with the target language?
- Do you tend to use mainly the target language during your instruction?
- Do you think it is important for students to immerse themselves in the target language? Why?
- If students don't get concepts or instructions, how do you approach explaining to them? Do you use the target language or other languages?
- Have you used languages other than the target language in class? If so, what made you make the exception?
- Do you ask for a student's permission before using another language?
- Using other languages in office hours vs. during class, do you feel one is more natural than the other?
- What are some other universal signs and languages that you use to help students learn a concept?
- What is your view on machine translation (e.g. Google Translate) during class times and for homework?

- Any additional questions?