Revisiting functional adequacy and task-based language teaching in the GBA: insights from translanguaging

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Abstract

Research and practice in task-based language teaching (TBLT) as a cognitively oriented second language (L2) pedagogy have grown substantially over the last three decades. A concurrent development in language education that thrives along the sociocultural paradigm, translanguaging, is also gaining great traction due to its potential in helping to form a holistic communicative repertoire among L2 learners. Despite their different theoretical underpinnings and ideological perspectives, TBLT and translanguaging share many common grounds that are worth exploring. This article argues that translanguaging offers a practical tool for improving L2 task-based performance, especially functional adequacy. Adopting translanguaging in TBLT would be beneficial for learners with a common first language background such as Chinese but lower affect as well as limited lexical and morpho-syntactic knowledge. Implications for L2 or foreign language education policies in the Great Bay Area of China and the implementation of translanguaging in the pre-, during-, and post-task phrases in a TBLT classroom in the region are discussed.

Keywords: TBLT, Translanguaging, Functional adequacy, Task performance, Pragmatic competence, L2 assessment, Foreign language education policy, Cross-cultural communicative competence

Introduction

The last thirty years have seen significant developments in task-based language teaching (TBLT) in both theory and practice. TBLT has been listed as a preferred pedagogy by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong SAR and is being promoted among schools in the territory (Curriculum Development Council, 1997, 2017) under its "Biliteracy and Trilingualism" language policy (Li & Leung, 2020). In its neighboring cities in the Greater Bay Area of China with similar linguistic complexity, TBLT has also been gaining significance in English language teaching since the 2000s, when China promulgated its New Curriculum Standards (Wang, 2007), which advocated TBLT as part of its curriculum revamp. When the aim of TBLT to nurture second language (L2) learners' real-world communicative competence meets with the multilingual reality of the Greater Bay Area, the immersive task-based target language teaching approach inevitably encounters

challenges, partly because of the L2 proficiency of both teachers and students as well as their reluctance to behave like a monolingual L2 native speaker.

Another fast-growing language education approach, translanguaging, has also been receiving increasing attention over the past two decades (García & Li, 2014; Li, 2018). Ever since Baker (2001), the construct of translanguaging has been expanded and enriched as "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401). More recently construed as a "practical theory of language" by Li (2018), translanguaging transcends discrete named languages that are often attached to specific nations or states in historical and cultural senses. The notion of translanguaging is then useful in language teaching in multilingual communities such as the Greater Bay Area where Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, English, and even Portuguese all come into play; instead of arguing whether these four codes should be termed as three or four named "languages" for descriptive adequacy and whether the use of the first language(s) (L1) is detrimental to L2 learning, translanguaging focuses on the integrated communicative repertoire and provides a fresh and flexible approach to language teaching.

Given the complementary nature of TBLT as a cognitively oriented pedagogy and translanguaging as a socioculturally oriented approach, this article argues that TBLT examined through the lens of translanguaging can make more possible contributions to the field of L2 teaching and learning. In particular, adopting translanguaging in TBLT may help enhance functional adequacy in task-based performance and acquisition (Bui & Wong, 2021; Kuiken & Vedder, 2018), which was under-researched in prior literature. Based on the discussion, implications concerning L2 pedagogy and language education policies will be delineated.

TBLT: advancements and gaps

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a refined version of the communicative approach to language teaching. Unlike the traditional presentation-practice-production (PPP) method which focuses explicitly on forms or language structures, TBLT places an emphasis on meaning expression with forms acquired incidentally. Task completion assumes priority in TBLT in which learners mobilize their linguistic resources to achieve the intended objectives, such as finding a solution to a problem or conveying messages to others. These tasks should bear real-world relevance to help learners develop transferrable language skills beyond the classroom. As it transpires, the tasks require learners to be placed in the center of teaching as they are the active agents to perform the tasks through which the need to use language unfolds. All these distinctive features have won TBLT popularity in the past thirty years among ESL and EFL practitioners.

Many TBLT scholars (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1996) offered slightly different definitions of a language learning task. What most scholars may agree on would be the following four general criteria: A task

1. is meaning-oriented: we learn language for successful communication but not for the sake of language. Therefore, the primary focus of a task should be on meaning expression in a communicative context rather than on discrete and de-contextualized

linguistic structures/items. As such, there should be a clearly defined non-linguistic outcome of a task;

2. requires certain linguistic resources: a task should be designed in such ways that learners are encouraged to employ relevant language (forms) for the above-mentioned outcome which is essentially non-linguistic. It should also encourage the communicative use of such language appropriately (functions);

3. involves some communicative "gap" (Prabhu, 1987): a task should contain missing information (the gap) that encourages learners' analysis and exploration to achieve a communicative purpose;

4. exhibits some degree of real-world relevance: instead of purely "pedagogical" tasks, "genuine" real-world tasks are preferred as they foster transferrable language skills more naturally.

Different from the PPP approach, TBLT draws learners' attention to language forms implicitly. It allows incidental L2 learning through meaning-oriented tasks. While some researchers advocate "genuine" task-based language teaching (e.g., Long, 2015), others argue for task-supported language teaching (e.g., Carless, 2007, on TBLT in a Confucian context) in addition to TBLT (Ellis, 2003). A similar distinction bteween a "strong" and a "weak" version of TBL was made by Skehan (1996). In any case, a task as "the shared unit of analysis provides an improved potential for synergies among theory, research and contextualized practice in language learning and teaching" (Moore, 2018, p.1). This task-based approach to language teaching, as Bui and Skehan (2018) argued, has been associated with a cognitive/psycholinguistic orientation to instruction, a closer link to research that has impacted pedagogical decisions, and a standardized framework to assess task performance and acquisition in terms of a tripartite conceptualization of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF, Bui & Skehan, 2018; Housen & Kuiken, 2009; Michel, 2017).

The first area of the CAF framework is linguistic complexity. Distinct from task complexity as a characteristic of task design, linguistic complexity captures the size, richness, diversity, and elaborateness of an L2 system (Housen & Kuiken, 2009) in task performance. Syntactic complexity and lexical complexity are the two major sub-categories of linguistic complexity (Bulté & Housen, 2012). Syntactic complexity concerns learners' L2 structural development and is usually measured through the ratio of sophisticated structures (such as noun phrases or subordinate clauses) and the length of a unit (such as a clause or an AS-unit) (Bui & Skehan, 2018). Lexical complexity pertains to the width, depth, and fluency of vocabulary use (Daller et al., 2007) and can be mapped out through indices of lexical density, lexical diversity, and lexical sophistication (see Bulté & Housen, 2012 for a conceptualization of the framework and Bui, 2021 for a recent empirical study on these three dimensions and their operationalizations). The second area of the CAF framework is accuracy, which examines how a learner's language is in conformity with the target L2 in their task performance. One can obtain an accuracy score through a general (e.g., the percentage of error-free clauses to all clauses or the total error count per 100 words) or a specific measure (errors in article use). The last area, fluency, generally refers to the ease, smoothness, and eloquence of speech or writing (Michel, 2017). Utterance fluency has received the greatest concern in task performance research and can be explored in three dimensions, namely (1) speed, e.g., the number of words/syllables

per minute; (2) breakdown, e.g., number, length, and location of pauses; and (3) repair, e.g., false starts, reformulation, repetitions, and replacement (Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005). As Bui (2021) commented, linguistic complexity and accuracy are more relevant to the structural aspects of language, whereas fluency is more linked to meaning expression in completing a task.

Despite its substantial development, a number of areas in TBLT are worthy of attention and further exploration. Among them are (1) the CAF framework in understanding L2 performance and acquisition, which is comprehensive in linguistic terms but inadequate in task fulfillment, i.e., functional adequacy (Bui & Wong, 2021; Kuiken & Vedder, 2018; Pallotti, 2009); and (2) the broader historical, socio-cultural, and economical contexts where language learning occurs. TBLT, although advocating real-world relevance in tasks as mentioned, has remained largely inward-looking; the cognitive features and the psycholinguistic processes within learners were much more stressed than the wider communities where communication takes place. We will discuss these issues in the following sections and explore how translanguaging could help expand the scope of TBLT and contribute to linguistic performance and functional adequacy in TBLT.

Functional adequacy in TBLT

The CAF framework briefly reviewed above has long been employed to gauge learners' L2 ability in TBLT (Bui & Skehan, 2018; Housen & Kuiken, 2009). However, one could speak fluently and write accurately with complex language without achieving an intended communicative purpose (Bui & Wong, 2021; Pallotti, 2009). As Pallotti (2009) pointed out, in addition to cognitive factors such as processing demands or memory capacity, the task's semantic and pragmatic demands could also be the potential reason behind the variations in linguistic performance (CAF) observed. A high level of CAF certainly helps with but is not equivalent to successful communication. An obvious example is the "teacher talk" in an L2 classroom where the teacher would adjust his/her speech rate and/or language complexity according to learner proficiency. Insisting on the use of complex sentences in the teaching materials or class instruction would be detrimental rather than beneficial to learning, which defeats the purpose of teaching and fails these educational "tasks" in real life. It appears that a balance between linguistic advancement and pragmatic competence is imminent in both the theory and practice of TBLT. It is for this purpose that functional adequacy (FA), which stresses task fulfillment, is proposed to be added to the CAF framework, which then becomes CAFFA.

Despite its importance, functional adequacy has unfortunately been under-explored in TBLT (Kuiken & Vedder, 2018). One of the reasons is the lack of consensus on its definition and, consequently, its precise measurement. For example, Pallotti (2009) defines functional adequacy as 'the degree to which a learner's performance is more or less successful in achieving the task's goals efficiently' (p. 596). Révész et al. (2016, p.829) describe it as "knowledge and employment of both linguistic and interactional resources in social contexts". Herraiz-Martínez (2018, p.19) uses the "interpersonal construct which measures L2 writing in terms of successful task fulfillment" as a definition. Kuiken and Vedder (2017) see functional adequacy as "successful task completion of A in conveying a message to B and in relation to the conversational maxims of Grice", which more explicitly involves a pragmatic dimension in its conceptualization.

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A common focus that can be identified from the above definitions is a concern with how an L2 task can be enacted successfully to achieve its intended communicative goals. Through an examination of such a shared concern, Kuiken and Vedder (2018, pp. 282–283) proposed the following quadripartite framework to index functional adequacy in L2 writing tasks: (1) Content: whether there are sufficient and relevant information units provided in the text; (2) Task Requirements: whether the task requirements, such as speech acts, genre and register, have been satisfied; (3) Comprehensibility: the amount of reader effort to understand the purpose and ideas of the text; and 4) Coherence and cohesion: whether the text produced is coherent and cohesive (e.g., cohesive devices, strategies). Kuiken and Vedder have validated this functional adequacy index in several studies (e.g., Kuiken & Vedder, 2017, 2018) and demonstrated its reliability.

It appears that this functional adequacy framework has been conceptualized on the basis of an L2 standard language ideology. That is, learners should aim to complete a task successfully using the target L2. However, Bui and Wong (2021) argue that successful task completion, hence functional adequacy, does not happen in a vacuum; rather, it needs to be examined in specific contexts where socio-cultural norms vary, and certain linguistic behaviors may be perceived differently. In other words, they do not believe in a universal functional adequacy framework to fit in all contexts; they prefer a cross-cultural and cross-lingual dynamic model that could take into consideration the complexity of the wider socio-cultural environment and its accommodation or lack thereof of learner backgrounds in teaching and assessing functional adequacy. Such a multilingual and multicultural perspective of functional adequacy proposed by Bui and Wong (2021) is in line with translanguaging practices. It appears that translanguaging may bear good potential in facilitating the fulfillment of task requirements (therefore functional adequacy) in L2 classrooms and, more importantly, in real life, especially in multilingual communities. We will turn next to this issue.

Translanguaging: theory of language and theory of language education

The issue of the co-existence of multiple languages within an individual or a community is not new. Multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception around the world. Singaporeans, for example, comfortably mix, switch between, and blend languages (or "dialects") in their daily life, which shows considerable creativity and flexibility in communication. Singlish, which generally represents such multilingual communication as a variety of English, has evolved out of Singapore's unique multi-ethnic social milieu (Teng & Wang, 2020). Unfortunately, Singlish has largely negative connotations for many, including the local administration (c.f., the "Speak Good English Movement" initiated by the Singapore Government). The standard language ideology that involves an assumed native speaker model has been deeply rooted among the general public. Several questions have been raised about such a standard language ideology. First, which native speaker model is the ultimate goal for learners, or does a native speaker model exist (Jenkins, 2015)? Second, what is the rationale for languages to stand as separate and distinctive semiotic systems that do not allow any crossover? Language contact often results in the borrowing of loan words and changes in phonetic features, with extreme cases of pidginization, creolization, and the birth of new languages. Third, is the goal of language learning to become a monolingual native speaker of the target language?

The answers to these questions are largely negative. As Li (2018) argues, the notion of discrete named languages is a structuralist conceptualization, which may appear appealing theoretically but practically inadequate. Li (2018) proposed translanguaging as a practical theory of language as it captures the dynamic, fluid, flexible, and creative nature of language use in the real world and transcends the boundaries of named languages and the sociohistorical features attached to them. The major contribution of a 'trans-' perspective to language is its view that language is non-static and non-monolithic; that is, it rejects the notion of languages as named entities (García & Li, 2018). Such a proposal provides an innovative and realistic solution to conceptualize everyday communication in multilingual contexts. It also offers a new perspective on second/foreign language education.

As a relatively new pedagogy, translanguaging questions the monolithic and monolingual model of native-speakerism in second language teaching and re-examine the role of L1 in the learning of additional languages (including L2 and foreign languages). The notion of the target-language-only or one language-at-a-time is still the dominant ideology that guides many language teaching and learning practices. It must be pointed out that the purpose of learning an additional language is to become bilingual and multilingual but not monolingual in another language. Most bilingual and multilingual speakers choose to switch and mix between different languages for communicative purposes. However, in second or foreign language education, few currently take bilingual and multilingual speakers as a model of language learning. Instead, native monolingual speakers have been idealized, with code-mixing and code-switching being viewed as language deficits.

Translanguaging pedagogy differentiates between two senses of language: (1) the named language(s) which serves as the medium of instruction (the external sense) and (2) the whole language repertoire of the learner (the internal sense). Traditional pedagogy emphasizes almost solely the external named languages, but translanguaging pedagogy favors the internal language of learners (García & Li, 2018). García and Li (2018) further argued that, from a teacher's perspective, translanguaging can serve as a scaffold to assist learners in comprehending difficult text and speech. From a student perspective, translanguaging provides an opportunity for free self-expression and self-representation, one that is not constrained by the proficiency level of an L2 (the named language) or the L2 self (identity). As such, translinguaging practice can then serve as a practical process involving multiple languages and language variants rather than a semiotic structure (such as a named language) only for identification and analysis. It is a knowledge-building process that uses and transcends language and represents an effective form of communication that emphasizes function over form. With all these advantages, translanguaging is becoming a successful concept in bilingual and multilingual education "that has gained wide acceptance in the literature in a short period of time" (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017, p. 910).

Recent classroom research has demonstrated how translanguaging practices are being constructed in multilingual classrooms to facilitate students' learning processes and recognize students' diverse linguistic resources and prior knowledge. Tai and Li (2020) illuminate how an English-Medium-Instruction (EMI) secondary mathematics teacher creates a translanguaging space by bringing outside knowledge into the classroom to

scaffold students' content knowledge. By so doing, the teacher integrates the everyday life space into the EMI institutional learning space, which transforms the EMI classroom into a lived experience. Tai and Li (2021a) further explore how an EMI teacher constructs a translanguaging space for playful talk in an EMI mathematics secondary classroom to achieve different pedagogical goals, including building rapport, facilitating content explanation and promoting meaningful communication with students. By exploring the EMI mathematics classroom in a different secondary school setting that provides education to ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, Tai and Li (2021b) demonstrate how the affordances of the iPad facilitate the creation of a technology-mediated space for an EMI teacher to extend his semiotic and spatial repertoires to enable students' learning of content knowledge and create a humorous classroom environment. On the other hand, Tai and Li (2021c) reveal how EMI teachers and students co-learn new knowledge from each other. Specifically, this paper emphasizes that multilingual teachers create a translanguaging space for both themselves and students to engage in the learning process, which promotes equitable knowledge construction. Finally, Tai (2022) argues that the process of enacting inclusive practices in multilingual classrooms is a process of translanguaging. In other words, when teachers enact inclusive practices, they have to mobilize various available multilingual and semiotic resources and draw on what students know collectively to engage linguistically and culturally diverse students for content and language learning and promote social inclusion in the classroom.

The theoretical and empirical evidence reviewed above points to a goal of translanguaging to create space and time for higher freedom and flexibility in language learning and eventually communication. Such a goal is in agreement with the principles of TBLT as a communicative teaching approach that focuses on real-world relevance. When adopting a translanguaging perspective, teachers and learners will have more potential to realize the meaning-making goals of TBLT instead of being constrained to making meaning in the target language only (Seals et al., 2020). A shared concern for meaning expression and practical value of language teaching forms a natural affinity between translanguaging and TBLT. We will further discuss this issue in the next section.

Translanguaging: potential for functional adequacy in TBLT

Seals et al., (2020, pp. 281–282) discussed six common grounds between TBLT and translanguaging:

1. Both translanguaging and TBLT align in their shared emphasis on student collaboration. Meaning negotiation through working together among learners is key to both approaches.
2. Both approaches stress the importance of content-language integration. The communicative language teaching background for both has led both to recognize the need for language learning's usefulness to understand meaningful materials.
3. Both advocate for experiential learning. Passive perception of language instruction is far from sufficient; active engagement in the acquisition of sociolinguistic knowledge is required.

4. Both recognize the criticalness of learner-centered (instead of teacher-centered) classrooms. It is more important for learners to take charge of their own learning if successful learning is to take place.
5. Pedagogy must be more fluid and needs-responsive. Learner diversity must be recognized and both inter-learner and intra-learner differences across time should be emphasized. Language teaching should adapt to learners' needs to nurture their sociolinguistic repertoire.
6. Both have a common focus on functional, communicative language use. Similar to the second and third commonalities, language use must have a communicative purpose, and the materials being taught in language classrooms must be functional for the learners (i.e., teaching to learners' communicative needs).

All six commonalities summarized in Seals et al. (2020) demonstrate the potential of translanguaging in enhancing task-based performance, especially in achieving proper functional adequacy with learners' full linguistic repertoire. What remains less auspicious, however, is that studies that directly explore TBLT through a translanguaging lens are rare, probably due to the standard language ideology that has long dominated the TBLT field, and partly because of the divide between cognitive and sociocultural theoretical underpinnings that characterize the two teaching approaches. For the former possibility, L1 use is discouraged in TBLT because it reduces opportunities for L2 input processing and output practice (Cook, 2001); L1 and L2 use in language learning has long been treated as a zero-sum game. For the latter, there has been a long but unhealthy tradition of understanding language and language learning as a function of internal psycholinguistic mechanisms or external socio-cultural contexts alone, but not both. However, both pedagogies have sufficient room to embrace cross-paradigm and even cross-discipline conceptualization of language teaching. Research on L1 use in TBLT reviewed below may represent some of this potential.

In a study most relevant to the GBA contexts, Carless (2008) interviewed English teachers in Hong Kong and called for a more flexible view of L1 use in the task-based classroom. He pointed out that an English monolingual model of TBLT might not be the most ideal in the Chinese or EFL context. An earlier study, Swain and Lapkin (2000) investigated the L1 turns and functions among 44 higher proficiency level students (in 22 paired interactions) completing a dictogloss and a jigsaw task in French immersion contexts. It was found that learners employed their mother tongue to attempt the task completion and maintain active interaction within the pairs. In contrast, participants were pre-school young learners with limited L2 proficiency in Shintani's (2012) research. They were able to complete input-based tasks with the help of L1 use. L1 serves the functions of meta-talk among themselves and communication with the teacher. Shintani also found that these young learners gradually relied more on L2 to complete their tasks as they progressed in class. Another study that hints at functional adequacy in task performance was Tognini and Oliver (2012). They discovered that the frequency of L1 use positively correlated with task complexity and task difficulty. Students needed their mother tongue when task demand was high and when they were incapable of maintaining intra-group interaction and collaboration in L2. L1 use is once again crucial in task completion, hence functional adequacy in their task performance.

A common theme running across most of the studies reviewed above is that, regardless of the learner background, their L1 or L2 status, and the learning contexts, L1 use appears to help with the productive functions in task performance. Seals et al. (2020) recognized three such roles as metacognitive talk, task management, and appeals for help. Similarly, the use of L1 increases oral interaction and task completion via metatalk and orientational talk (Brooks & Donato, 1994). Mendoza (2021) further commented that L1 use could facilitate learners in completing more challenging tasks than working in the target language alone even if they are above the beginner level. In addition, L1 use in communicative tasks has positive affective functions; it may lower the anxiety level and boost confidence (Auerbach, 1993; Neokleous, 2017). It is important to note, though, that the above discussion has no intention of equating translanguaging with simply the acknowledgment or use of multilingual students' 'first language'. As Li and Garcia (2022, p.1) clarified, "this is a misunderstanding, for the trans- in translanguaging connotes the transcendence of named languages, the going beyond named languages as have been socially constructed". To leverage translanguaging in education, teachers are encouraged to create a translanguaging space for students to use their linguistic, semiotic and sociocultural repertoire freely and flexibly to build new knowledge and understandings (Tai & Li, 2020, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Tai, 2022). With little research explicitly conducted through the perspective of translanguaging, studies using L1 in tasks may shed light on the potential of translanguaging in TBLT. In summary, adopting translanguaging in TBLT has positive implications for facilitating task-preparedness (Bui, 2014; Bui & Teng, 2019) and achieving task completion or functional adequacy (Kuiken & Vedder, 2018; Pollotti, 2009) in addition to linguistic performance.

Challenges for translanguaging in TBLT in the GBA

As discussed above, translanguaging has great potential for TBLT, especially in promoting functional adequacy through mobilizing all resources in the linguistic repertoire. However, as a relatively recent educational practice, translanguaging inevitably faces some imminent challenges in the GBA that warrant attention from both education policymakers and teaching practitioners alike in the region.

The greatest challenge is the prevailing English education policy in the region and the corresponding specific policies in local schools in the GBA. Not quite different from other regions, it is difficult for multilingualism to be recognized and incorporated into the GBA school curricula. This situation is further exacerbated by an examination system that emphasizes monolingual use where multilingual testing is almost impossible. The current assessment system in the GBA only concerns learners' conformity to the norms in the target language, rather than their creative and flexible use of their multilingual repertoire for communicative use in the real world. The washback effects of such a testing system and the assessment mechanism further aggravate the preference for native-speakerism in the education industry of the GBA.

The second issue is the choice of L1 in translanguaging practice for improving functional adequacy in TBLT, and the consequence of such a choice in terms of the prestige of language and dialect perceived by the public. For GBA residents, the language prestige complex is no less than the complexity of multilingualism per se. In cities such as Hong Kong and Guangzhou, using Cantonese as L1 may seem natural, but Mandarin (by

non-Cantonese speaking immigrant students) in the class may be frowned upon by local students. The opposite may be true in other GBA cities, such as Shenzhen where the use of Mandarin as L1, but not Cantonese, is for the majority. In a trilingual area such as the GBA where learners of different L1s study in the same class, the consistent use of L2 may appear fairer to those with an L1 of less importance in the region. Little research has explored such affective dimensions of translanguaging using different languages or dialects in the same classroom and what consequence the use of a less prestigious L1 may bring to the students.

A third problem concerns teachers' and students' confusion about goal formation in learning L2 through translanguaging (similar to that in Ticheloven et al., 2021). Such a concern has much to do with teachers' and parents' expectations of "standard English", which is based on the dubious assumption of the native speaker model as discussed earlier. They would question the translanguaging practice, and the school may come under great pressure and be accused of teaching "Chinglish". What is interesting about the debate is the attitude of major ELT/SLA scholars in the GBA. Wang and Wang (2015), for example, advocated for alignment between learners' L2 written production and "authentic" materials by native-speaking authors. Wang developed his influential "Writing Continuation Approach" (see also Bui & Luo, 2021 for a review and an empirical study) in which students read the first half of a story (or report, news, etc.) and complete the rest of it. Wang argues that L1 reading materials result in a negative transfer that hampers writing quality; in contrast, modeling after a native-speaking writer would improve one's L2 idiomaticity. If influential GBA scholars were to hold similar views, it would be a huge challenge to alter the "pure" or "standard" English mentality among the general public and even the L2/foreign language teachers and scholars themselves.

Translanguaging and functional adequacy in TBLT: some suggestions

The GBA is a multilingual region with the longest history of opening to the world in China and thus becomes a proper place for introducing the translanguaging practice in its task-based classrooms. At the macro level, policymakers in education authorities and schools should first re-examine language education policies, adjust the monolingual principles in language teaching, and restructure the curriculum according to students' language abilities to meet the diverse needs of second language teaching. Second, teachers must receive systematic training in cross-language pedagogy and choose to use translanguaging strategies in L2 classrooms to help students better learn language and subject knowledge. Teacher training in this area should be supported by both the policy level and the school level. Through such training, teachers should develop a better understanding of the philosophy of translanguaging that respecting and valuing diverse linguistic and semiotic practices are crucial to ensuring students' success in language education (Tai, 2022). All these resources should be mobilized strategically and appropriately to provide alternative points of reference or perspectives for knowledge construction.

At the micro-level specific to TBLT, translanguaging can be implemented in task-based language teaching in all the pre-task, during-task, and post-task stages (Willis, 1996) to boost learning efficiency and motivation and enhance task performance. The pre-task stage is often characterized by various types of task-preparedness (Bui, 2014)

which involves strategic planning, rehearsal, etc. Contrary to structural curricula where the explicit teaching of forms precedes practice, TBLT usually does not encourage grammar instructions in the pre-task stage. Empirical research shows that the pre-teaching of linguistic items results in a focus on forms during task performance, which hampers meaning expression, hence fluency and overall task performance (Ellis, 2020; Ellis et al., 2019). However, translanguaging has an important role to play at this stage, especially when learners are constrained by generating ideas (brainstorming) collaboratively and discussing strategies for task completion (functional adequacy) in L2. Translanguaging allows freedom in meaning-making and offers language scaffolding among peers of different proficiency levels prior to task performance. In short, translanguaging provides opportunities for broader and more efficient pre-task readiness with higher quality. As Bui and Wong (2021) argue, pre-task readiness, especially proper content and idea generation, has a significant impact on functional adequacy during actual task completion.

At the during-task stage, the limitation of L2 proficiency may become more prominent in real-time task performance. Communicative breakdowns may result from a need to search for vocabulary, a pause for grammatical formulation, and disengagement due to task anxiety. The allowance of translanguaging would help to mitigate these tensions during task performance. For example, translanguaging can be employed to maintain fluency and avoid communicative breakdowns due to unknown L2 words. Translanguaging also helps to signal problems and invite assistance from more able group members for better task completion in pair- and groupwork. The use of translanguaging does not equate with an avoidance strategy in task performance; instead, it maintains the flow of task fulfilment and sustains a focus on meaning rather than on forms. All this embodies the central tenets of TBLT that a task is always meaning-driven and task completion, hence functional adequacy, assumes priority. It is important to note, though, that the lack of L2 knowledge is not the only reason for translanguaging; translanguaging could also be used for fostering creativity through mixing and integading linguistic structures and constructing new expressions with elements of different linguistic features and other semiotic resources. It also maximizes L2 learners' multilingual potential by encouraging criticality through exposing learners to diverse ways of thinking and doing (Li, 2018). In any case, the insufficiency in L2 identified at this during-task stage, either in lexis or grammar, could be well addressed during the past-task stage.

Finally, at the post-task stage where learners review and reflect on their task performance and consolidate L2 or content knowledge, translanguaging again helps to break the L2 barriers and offers space for more effective and efficient self-monitoring, meta-cognitive introspection, and suggestions for improvements in future tasks. At this final step of the task cycle, translanguaging not only facilitates communication in meta-talk for self-evaluation of L2 performance but also, more importantly, knowledge construction and co-construction that would benefit future tasks. Discussion of the three steps in a complete task cycle would show that task-preparedness, task performance, and task (self)-evaluation could all be conducted through a translanguaging lens and may have great potential for improving both linguistic performance and pragmatic functional adequacy in task-based learning.

Conclusion

This article briefly reviews the theories of two current pedagogies, namely, TBLT and translanguaging, and discusses how the latter could be incorporated into the former in promoting second and foreign language teaching and learning in the GBA. Challenges in implementing translanguaging in English language teaching, especially TBLT, are outlined with their relevance to the GBA. Suggestions for adopting translanguaging at the macro (policy) level and micro (TBLT and functional adequacy) level are delineated.

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Declarations

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