



ISSN: 2993-8759

Iris Journal of
Educational Research

DOI: 10.33552/IJER.2024.04.000584

Iris Publishers

Case Report

Copyright © All rights are reserved by Zeynep Kalkavan-Aydın

Multilingual Scaffolding in GFL Courses— An Interactional Analysis of a Teacher’s Translanguaging Practices

Zeynep Kalkavan-Aydın*

German as a Foreign and Second Language, Institute for German Language and Literature, University of Education Freiburg, Germany

*Corresponding author: Zeynep Kalkavan-Aydın, German as a Foreign and Second Language, Institute for German Language and Literature, University of Education Freiburg, Germany

Received Date: October 09, 2024

Published Date: October 28, 2024

Abstract

The case report describes the translanguaging practices used by a non-native foreign language teacher as a scaffolding strategy in a course teaching German as a foreign language, Level B1.1, in Jordan (in cooperation with the German Jordanian University). Both the teacher and the learners speak Arabic as their first language and English as a second language. Using Multimodal Interactional Analysis, this in-depth analysis of a case study shows that translanguaging is used in the classroom discourse for different purposes and as a scaffold. Various practices of translanguaging can be identified in the data, such as using cues and listener signals for continuity of discourse, translating isolated words or sequences and expanding utterances, questions, descriptions or explanations. While the teacher mainly communicates in the target language German during classroom interaction and uses translanguaging very carefully for individual learning support, the learner’s resort to translations and complex linguistic acts, such as explaining or describing. This makes it clear that multilingualism is used in this lesson for deeper learning and cognitive engagement.

Keywords: Multilingualism; Translanguaging; Scaffolding; German as a Foreign Language; Arabic; English; Non-Native Foreign Language Teacher

Introduction

Teachers and learners use their multilingual resources in classroom interactions in diverse ways and to varying degrees. The concept of pedagogical translanguaging [1-3] has recently gained prominence in foreign language acquisition research and didactics. The communicative goal from the socio-pragmatic view lies at the forefront of classroom discourse [4]. Furthermore, the pedagogical concept of translanguaging has attracted significant interest [5,6], as it does not foreground learners’ linguistic competence or

treat languages as separate systems, but rather views language as social action in the classroom. State-of-the-art approaches to translanguaging focus on a dynamic and supportive interaction in the classroom. Furthermore, translanguaging is seen as social, meta-conscious and meta-cognitive actions as well as a scaffold for cognitive activation [7]. This case report aims to address this issue by examining the translanguaging practices of a non-native foreign language teacher. It explores how the teacher interacts in the classroom and utilizes his multilingual abilities in Arabic and



English to help his learners acquire German [8,9]. Scaffolding in the sense of van de Pol et al. [10] means that verbal and interactive learning support takes place in order to help learners reach the next developmental stage in language acquisition (cf. Vygotsky 1978) [11]. On the one hand, this support measure can be built up; on the other hand, it should subsequently be gradually reduced, depending on the individual level of development – which van de Pol et al. [10] refer to as ‘fading’. The six most common scaffolding characteristics that they identify are feedback, cues, instructions, explaining, modelling, and questions.

Case Presentation

The case

The case is a non-native foreign language teacher (34 years old) who is teaching German for a university language course at Level B1.1. The teacher comes from Algeria and speaks Arabic (from the Algerian region) as his first language, along with French (at C1+ level) and English (B1/B2 level) as foreign languages. He learned German as a foreign language (GFL). After graduating with a degree in GFL, he also completed further training during his ten years of professional practice. He gained teaching experience as a scholarship holder and taught at a university in Jordan for four years (in addition to the language courses he is teaching).

Filling out a questionnaire, he explains that ‘multilingualism can be a lifeboat in everyday life’. He adds:

‘I suppose it’s always an advantage to be able to speak

other languages as a GFL teacher. I don’t just mean English, but other languages like French, Arabic or Spanish. This allows you to demonstrate a kind of linguistic and cultural flexibility towards your target group. In addition, multilingualism allows for appropriate interaction within GFL classes abroad or within culturally heterogeneous target groups in general. Personally, I find it advantageous to be able to speak Arabic, English and French in order to make my lessons as successful, flexible and student friendly as possible. I believe that students feel more comfortable when they know that the teacher understands their language/culture. The main thing is that it doesn’t lead to neglecting the main goal of the lesson, which is “speaking German”’

The teacher outlines the relevance of multilingualism in everyday life and also in teaching a foreign language because, he says, multilingualism can help people to understand each other. At the same time, he states that it is important to speak in German because that is the goal of the lesson. One can see his awareness and beliefs about the necessity of multilingual resources for better understanding a new language and culture.

The lesson that was video recorded and analysed for this case study concerns ‘translation errors’ (Figure 1). The teacher begins the lesson in question ‘as always’ (as he says himself) by showing his learners a picture to be described. He is working on Lesson 13 of the textbook “Menschen” and talks to the learners about the translation error in the example and the reasons why this error may have occurred. He also uses the topic to work with translations himself and to discuss language comparisons.



Figure 1: Classroom discourse in a GFL course.

All course participants speak Arabic as their first language, in different varieties (Jordanian, Palestinian, Egyptian, etc.). Al-Fusha is the 'standard language', but the teacher and learners primarily use regional varieties in daily and classroom communication. The classroom's target language is German. English also plays a significant role as a lingua franca in classroom communication. Teacher and learners do also possess knowledge of other foreign languages like French, Spanish or Russian.

Methodological approach

The transcribed video data and interactions are analysed in terms of linguistic acts and multilingual practices using Multimodal Interactional Analysis, which offers a broader insight into classroom

events where social interaction is not exclusively verbal but also non-verbal [12]. GAT 2 (a conversation analysis transcription system) and EXMARaLDA software are used for classroom discourse and transcription of the multilingual recordings [13] (Figure 2). The DMG transcription system (Deutsch Morgenländische Gesellschaft, used by the German Oriental Society) was employed to transliterate the Arabic data, taking into account spoken language features [14].

This case study will analyse the video-recorded lesson to determine whether the teacher and the learners use translanguaging during classroom interaction and for what purpose. Sequences in which the teacher used translanguaging practices as scaffolds will be identified.

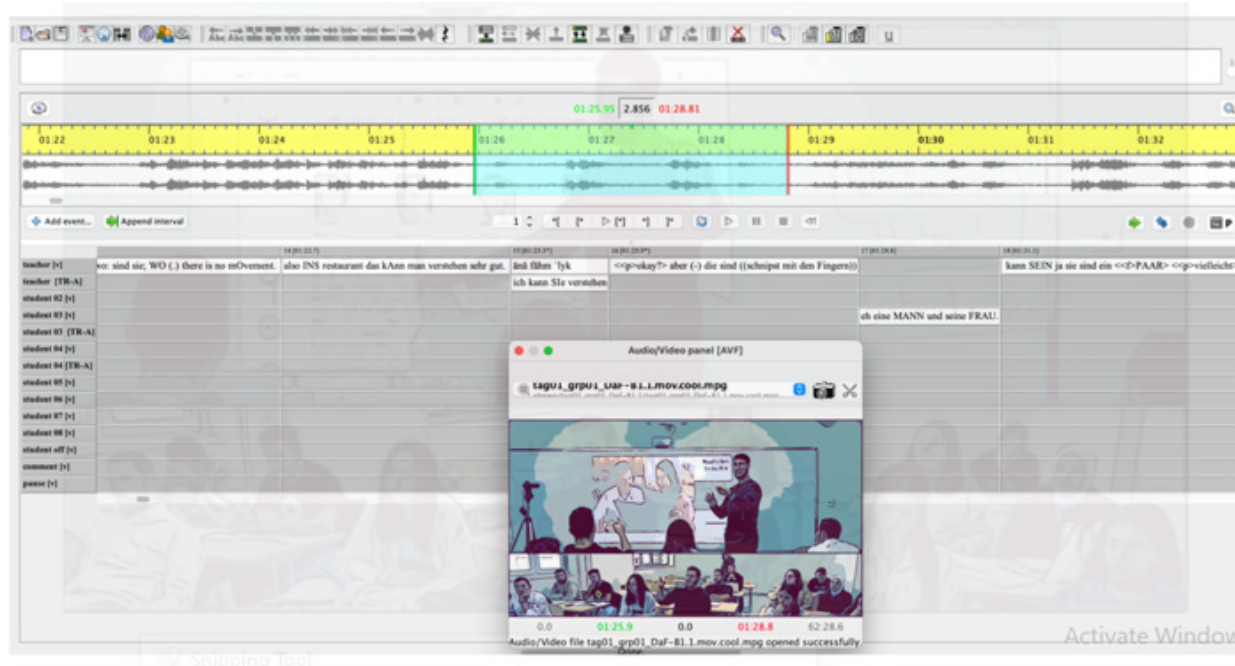


Figure 2: Linking the video and audio file with the transcription (EXMARaLDA).

Findings and Discussion

The following functions of translanguaging as scaffolding strategies in German, Arabic and English, used by the teacher, can be identified (see Table 1):

- (1) motivating students by using feedback-strategies.
- (2) explaining grammar (metalinguistic explanations and translations).
- (3) making meaning by managing comprehension and understanding (e.g. by translating or asking questions, repeating, summarizing).

- (4) using cues and signals for discourse continuity.

Overall, translanguaging practices can be seen as scaffolds for feedback, ensuring understanding and promoting communication. It also becomes apparent that inter- and extrasentential translations (here also in the narrow sense of code-switching) are embedded differently into the utterances, both linguistically and morphologically. The ensuing negotiation of meaning is sometimes carried out in Arabic and sometimes in English. The following examples in Table 1 shows how the teacher uses multilingual practices in translations, clarifications, and explanations, for motivation and continuity in classroom discourse [15,16].

Table 1: A teacher's translanguaging practices as scaffolding strategies (The English translations are directly after the statements and are italicized. For reasons of space, the simple transcripts are listed as examples and not the detailed transcripts.).

Example 1) Translation	<p>Lehrer: Wir sind Araber, ich denke die meisten sind Araber oder? Aber sie kommen aus der Region. Ich komme aus Algerien, Nord Afrika. Wir sprechen Arabisch, aber wenn ich auf Algerisch spreche, hier in Jordanien, das wird zu Missverständnissen führen. Das ist mir mehrmals passiert. Einmal habe ich im Unterricht ein algerisches Wort gesagt, das war eine Katastrophe. Hier bedeutet das also was negatives wirklich. Ist es Ihnen schon was passiert? Haben Sie schon Missverständnisse erlebt? šārū ma'akum hēk misunderstandings. <i>(Teacher: We are Arabs, I think most of you are Arabs, aren't you? But you come from the region. I come from Algeria, North Africa. We speak Arabic, but if I speak in Algerian, here in Jordan, it will lead to misunderstandings. This has happened to me several times. Once I said an Algerian word in class and it was a disaster. So it really means something negative here. Has anything happened to you? Have experienced misunderstandings? Misunderstandings.)</i></p>
	<p>The teacher uses the translation of 'misunderstandings' in Arabic at the beginning of the lesson, when he starts to explain the context of the following task, which is about a misunderstanding in a restaurant. He starts explaining in German und also translates the word 'misunderstandings', the lesson's topic, in Arabic.</p>
Example 2) Clarification/Explanation	<p>Lehrer: Nein, darum. Auf Englisch' That's why, because of' absolut. Oder auch, auch' diesem Grund'. Can I switch the sentence? Natürlich. But I can not use 'deshalb', darum. I have to use 'weil' oder, 'da', oder, 'denn'. Okay? nukammil al- sentence. <i>(Teacher: No, therefore. In English? That's why, because of, absolutely. Or also, for this reason. Can I switch the sentence? Of course. But I cannot use 'therefore'. I have to use 'because', or 'there' or 'then'. Okay? We finish the sentence.)</i></p>
	<p>The teacher picks up a solution to an exercise and explains the corresponding solution statement by referring to a comparison with English, even switching to English himself (weil – because; deshalb/darum – therefore). Finally, he clarifies that he intends to complete the sentence, thereby providing further explanation (also in the target language German).</p>
Example 3) Clarification/ Explanation	<p>Lehrer: Natürlich kann man, but I have to use 'weil', 'da' oder ja. B. Sie hat seit einem Jahr einen deutschen Freund. Deshalb, Deutsch lernen. hūn bidkum tđifū kmān šaġlāt. Ja? Hier fehlt zum Beispiel das Subjekt. Ihr Freund Sebastian ist Anwalt. Er hat deutsches Recht studiert. This is the reason, okay? ēš tu'tabar al-ma'lūma hāy daher nicht in Frankreich arbeiten können. ruddū bālkum hūn, wir haben Modalverb. Okay? <i>(Teacher: Of course, you can, but I have to use 'because', 'since' or 'yes'. For example, she has had a German boyfriend for a year. Therefore, learning German. You also need to add things, right? Here, for example, the subject is missing. Her boyfriend Sebastian is a lawyer. He studied German law. This is the reason, okay? What do you consider this information? So, he cannot work in France. Pay attention here, we have a modal verb. Okay?)</i></p>
	<p>Similar to Example 2, in this sequence, the teacher also provides an explanation of the grammatical rule for subordinate clause construction with 'weil' (because). He refers to gaps in the sentence that still need to be filled and directs the students' attention to the meaning and the modal verb. At the same time, he uses questions as clarification checks and gives instructions such as 'be careful' in Arabic and English. He also uses 'okay' as a recipient signal.</p>
Example 4) Questions	<p>Lehrer: Genau. Resultat, Wortwörtlich ēš allī bitarattab 'alā š-šāgala hāy, was ist dann passiert? Gut. Jennifer hat kurz vor dem Essen vom Tod ihres Onkels erfahren, warum? <i>(Teacher: Exactly. As a result, literally, what comes from this thing, what happened then? Good. Jennifer learned about her uncle's death just before dinner, why?)</i></p>
	<p>The teacher confirms the learners' answers and continues the communication by asking further questions about the content of the story, first in Arabic and then in English, with the aim of having a more in-depth discussion about the grammar topic of the lesson, namely causalities/reasons.</p>
Example 5) Motivation	<p>Lehrer: Okay. ḥallēnā nballiṣ b-ṭarīqa taqlīdiya šwāy. <i>(Teacher: Okay. Let's start in a slightly traditional way.)</i></p>
	<p>The teacher motivates the students in Arabic by telling them that they will use didactic approaches they know well.</p>
Example 6) Continuity of discourse (cues and recipient signals)	<p>Lehrer: Okay, if you say 'Dativ' it makes sense because ja, das ist Femininum hier, das ist ähnlich wie... stimmt. ya'nī lau kān fī 'indnā Maskulinum kān raḥ yubaiyin annū Genitiv okay? Aber hier in diesem Kontext wegen plus Dativ, Entschuldigung, Genitiv. <i>(Teacher: Okay, if you say 'dative', it makes sense because yes, this is feminine here, it's similar to ... right. I mean, if we had the masculine, it would show that it's genitive, okay? But here in this context, because of 'wegen' plus dative – sorry, genitive.)</i></p>
	<p>The teacher uses the utterance 'ya'nī', which is often used in conversation to mean 'I mean', 'that is to say' or 'in other words' in English. It's used to clarify or elaborate on something that was just said, much like 'you know' or 'like' in casual English speech. He combines it with other, continuers and listener signals like 'okay' or 'right' in English.</p>

<p>Example 7) Repetition and summary</p>	<p>Lehrer: Also wir haben Restaurant, Rechtsanwalt an Essigsoße, nachfragen, erklären, verstehen, Avocado, das kennen wir alle, Übersetzungsfehler, Advokat, lachen, und bestellen. Avocado kennen wir alle. Advokat kann man erraten, und Rechtsanwalt. Hat jemand vielleicht eine Idee, was Rechtsanwalt ist? Was ist ein Rechtsanwalt? Keine Ahnung?</p> <p><i>(Teacher: So, we have restaurant, lawyer with vinegar sauce, ask, explain, understand, laugh, and order. We all know avocado. Advocate can be guessed, and lawyer. Does anyone have an idea what a lawyer is? What is a lawyer? No idea?)</i> Student: The right Lehrer: Nochmal? (Teacher: Again?) Student: Lawyer Lehrer: Stimmt. Lawyer: bi-l 'arabi? ins Arabische? al-mahāmi. Was hat jetzt Rechtsanwalt, mahāmi, Avocado, Advokat, ja? Das wird ein bisschen lustig sein. Lass einfach hören und dann werden wir mehr versuchen, mehr verstehen. <i>(Teacher: Right. Lawyer. In Arabic? Lawyer: What do we have now, lawyer, avocado, advocate, yes? This will be a bit funny. Let's just listen and then we will try to understand.)</i></p>
	<p>The teacher points out a mistake in a translation task. Although a student has already correctly translated the term 'Rechtsanwalt' (lawyer) into English, the teacher asks the student to also translate it into Arabic. By referring to the first language, he aims to ensure that all students in the class understand the correct translation. The teacher repeats the answer and summarises.</p>

Conclusions

It can be stated that the teacher uses translanguaging as a scaffolding strategy and mobilizes his multilingualism in a very appropriate way. The recording reveals that the teacher and learners in the language context of Arabic – German – English utilize various translanguaging practices (e.g. translations of words or sentences, explanations, questions, and listener responses). The teacher adopts these strategies in varying ways and with different intensities not only in classroom interaction but also as a supportive engagement in individual interactions with learners. He also motivates students by allowing them to use their multilingual resources to explain and understand language rules, as well as to compare languages. He makes use of multilingualism potentials in specific situations once he recognizes that learners need additional support, and he feels able to use his first language, Arabic, as well as English as lingua franca to boost interactions and fluency.

Conflicting of Interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

Acknowledgements

None.

References

- Li W (2011) Moment Analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43: 1222-1235.
- Lewis G, Jones B, Baker C (2012) Translanguaging: origins and development from school to street and beyond. *Educational Research and Evaluation* 18(7): 641-654.
- Wei L, García O (2022) Not a First Language but One Repertoire: Translanguaging as a Decolonizing Project. *RELC Journal* 53(2): 313-324.
- Källkvist M, Sandlund E, Sundqvist P, Gyllstad H (2022) Interaction in the multilingual classroom. Kecskes I (Ed.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge pp. 836-868.
- García O (2009) *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford.
- Cenoz J (2017) Translanguaging in School Contexts: International Perspectives. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* 16(4): 193-198.
- Swanwick R (2016) Scaffolding learning through classroom talk: The role of translanguaging. In: Marschark, M & Spencer, P E (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Deaf Studies in Language*. Oxford Library of Psychology, Oxford pp. 420-430.
- Kalkavan-Aydın Z (2024a) From Zero to Hero - Multilingualism in 12 classrooms: Do teachers need more professionalization? In: Schaar T, Altal M, Wen, C S (Eds.): *Fokus DaF/DaZ: Gegenwärtige Tendenzen in Forschung und Lehre*. Band 3. LIT, Münster, pp. 43-69.
- Kalkavan-Aydın Z (2024b) Take on my role - A case study on multilingualism and language alternation by a non-native foreign language teacher in a multilingual classroom. *ZIAF* 4(1): 55-74.
- van de Pol J, Volman M, Beishuizen J (2010) Scaffolding in teacher-student interaction: a decade of research. *Educational Psychology Review* 22(3): 271-297.
- Hammond J, Gibbons P (2001) What is scaffolding? In: Hammond J (Ed): *Scaffolding Teaching and Learning in Language and Literacy Education*. ERIC, Australia pp. 6-26.
- Couper-Kuhlen E, Selting M (2017) *Interactional Linguistics: Studying Language in Social Interaction*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Selting M et al. (2009) Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem 2 (GAT 2). *Gesprächsforschung - Online-Zeitschrift zur verbalen Interaktion* (10): 353-402.
- Farag R (2019) Conversation-analytic transcription of Arabic-German talk-in-interaction. *Working Papers in Corpus Linguistics and Digital Technologies: Analyses and Methodology*. Hamburg 2.
- García O, Li W (2014) *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Kalkavan-Aydın Z (2023) Mehrsprachigkeit im DaF-Unterricht. Videobasierte Unterrichtsanalysen zur kognitiven Aktivierung von Lernprozessen im Kontext Deutsch, Arabisch und Englisch. *ZIAF* 3(1): 49-67.