

Emerging Issues of Translanguaging and Speaking English: Perspectives of multilingual Bangladeshi young adults

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Abstract

Translanguaging in speech is a common practice among bilingual and multilingual individuals. Although aspects of translanguaging such as code-switching have been studied often, such practices have not been commonly discussed from the perspective of the young adults who use them. Our present study is based on five Bangladeshi students who have spent a substantial number of years in a multilingual and multicultural setting outside their native country. We conducted a qualitative study predicated on a survey and two semi-structured interviews to identify the emerging issues of translanguaging practices among the Bangladeshi young adults. Our findings revealed their opinions and experiences regarding these practices which identified important issues such as the pedagogical impact of translanguaging, language change, culture gap, and identity issues.

Keywords: translanguaging, multilingualism, sociolinguistics, code-switching, bilingualism

Introduction

Verbal communication in multilingual communities often involves constant shifting of the languages in the form of translating or using a word in L2 taken from an equivalent word in L1, code-mixing/switching, and using two or more languages in spoken discourse (Kartika-Ningsih & Rose, 2018). These techniques also often termed as “translanguaging” are used by speakers across a wide range of linguistic domains such as syntax, morphology, vocabulary, pragmatics as well as other expressions with specialized meaning (See Ariza, 2019; Tsoumou, 2019; Wei, 2018). The impact of such practices has been reported in the literature with regard to its facilitative as well as adverse effects (e.g. Paulsrud, Rosen, Straszer, & Wedin, 2017; Zhu, 2008). While it has been discussed that such language-shifting practices can signal inclusiveness and diversity, studies have also suggested that they can prove detrimental to the quality of the language output. Moreover, students from multilingual and multicultural school settings practising such language shifts can be prone to social and psychological impacts due to the power dynamics created among the various language/cultural groups. The purpose of our study is to examine the effects of translanguaging on a group of young adults who spent a considerable number of years in a multilingual and multicultural context.

Literature review

The term translanguaging refers to going beyond one language or using more than one language to construct meaning. Translanguaging was not initially considered a theoretical concept but was used to describe a specific language practice (Wei, 2018). According to Baker's (2001) translation of the Welsh term *trawsieithu* by Williams (1994), translanguaging is the pedagogical practice he observed in Welsh revitalization programmes, where the teacher and his/her students used English and Welsh interchangeably, with the students using English for most parts (as cited in Wei, 2018). To carry out this practice, one needs to use smaller practices or strategies, which were noted as code-switching, translating, language brokering, interpreting between people belonging to different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Tse, 1996). There is an ongoing debate on using "translanguaging" as an umbrella term for "multilingual and multimodal practices like code-switching, code-mixing, code-meshing, crossing, polylinguaging, polylingual languaging, multilinguaging, heteroglossia, hybrid language practices, translanguing practice, flexible bilingualism, and metrolinguism" (Wei, 2018, p. 9).

Otheguy, Garcia and Reid (2015) claim that translanguaging is fully using one's linguistic repertoire, that is, using many languages at once without maintaining the socio-politically defined barriers/distinctions among languages. They reported it to be beneficial for facilitating effective communication among learners in both classroom settings and real-life situations. The research identified the advantages of translanguaging in classrooms such as better comprehension of the content taught, strengthening of home-school bonds, and motivating stronger and weaker learners to participate as a team in mixed ability classes (Paulsrud et al., 2017). In a similar vein, Neault (2020) stated that if students' L1 is used by the teachers, any other aide in school, or students themselves to translate a certain content, it can facilitate English language learning and help them understand grammar and task instructions. Teachers can also help families by allowing students to use their native languages in the classroom so that they can continue using them at home.

Emerging issues in speaking English due to translanguaging

Translanguaging is perceived to affect language performance. According to Brown (2006), code-switching is a sign of lack of competency. One of the reasons behind translanguaging practiced by students was that they believed that their language ability might not be equal to their peers or the teachers (Üstünel, 2016). Such a view is supported by Sert (2005) who believes students' inability to use the target language for explaining certain words in their first language. It was also suggested that shifting from one language to the other in practices such as code-switching and code-mixing for an extended period can cause learners to make errors and even internalize them as standard

forms (Zhu, 2008).

Researchers have also studied the psychosocial impact of translanguaging.

Students often want to show solidarity in a classroom or with others sharing the same cultural background through code-switching. Students were reported to try to learn and use the native language of those who they wanted to befriend to show that they belonged (Gu & Benson, 2014). Palmer, Martinez, Mateus, and Henderson (2014) reasoned that the choice of using a particular language is not only motivated by the need for effective communication but also by the prestige and value attached to it in the respective environment. Wright's (2004) study of Cambodian refugees and their schooling showed how bilingualism can affect one's view of his/her identity as a student and as a participant in society. One of the participants struggling with her self-identity reported that she was fed up with being who she was and felt like "a nobody". Further to this, some sociolinguistic evidence suggests that translanguaging could significantly affect one's well-being as students may not find it liberating. Charalambous, Charalambous, and Zembylas (2016) described a classroom situation in Cyprus, Greece where the teacher introduced Turkish, the home variety of her Bulgarian students, with an intention to "promote mutual understanding, linguistic hybridity" and to help them rediscover their "hidden linguistic identities" (p. 327). Unfortunately, the students resisted and stayed silent as they feared that speaking in Turkish would make them Turkish, which was still a problematic identity in Greece.

Several studies reported that the process of translanguaging in the classroom can be beneficial if it is practiced by maintaining some techniques. Jacobson (1983) suggested a few guidelines for a structured approach to code-switching in classrooms: (a) maintaining an equal distribution between the languages, (b) having unconscious (as opposed to deliberate) shifts between languages, and (c) shifting languages by keeping the purpose of learning in mind. Furthermore, certain translation exercises were recommended to develop students' spoken language fluency. Newson (1998) stated that two such classroom activities were: 1) The teacher read out sentences from the source language, which learners translated, and this was expected to help learners identify particular target language patterns; and 2) The students translated a text containing a few expressions in the form of sentences, which were expected to help them learn certain language features. Another suggestion regarding translanguaging was that the teachers and the students must work together to analyze texts by authors who used translanguaging for stylistic purposes. This was designed to help the students explore how bilingual writers could use translanguaging to create identities that reflected on the language shifting practices of bilingual communities (Flores & Schissel, 2014). Also, highlighting the roles of a range of contextual factors such as learners' motivation and their proficiency, a recent study conducted in Japan (Chichon, 2018) emphasized using a clear framework for using L1 in language classrooms to ensure that it is not simply used as a compensatory tool.

Translanguaging in Bangladesh

Because the majority of students in Bangladesh go through Bangla medium instruction, only a small number of those educated in the English or Urdu/Arabic medium can gain a good command of these languages to code-switch and code-mix (Faquire, 2020). Sultana (2014) reported that the major reason for using English in oral communication was to show how smart, confident and communicative one could be. The Bangladeshi youths were found to use translanguaging proficiently, and it was believed to lead to the creation of a new linguistic practice (Sultana, 2014). Young adults in Asian countries have engaged in transglossic practices by using their linguistic and cultural repertoire along with that of the popular culture (Sultana, Dovchin & Pennycook, 2013). Nevertheless, Erling, Seargeant, Solly, Chowhury, and Rahman (2012) noted that there were people who were emotionally attached to Bangla and regretted that it was not used in all domains of life in Bangladesh. They believed in preserving the authenticity of language and strictly opposed the mingling of English and Bangla, which they termed as a kind of “pollution”.

The present study

Most studies have discussed the effects of translanguaging on the participation of students and teachers in EFL classrooms, leaving out the social context which can certainly influence their use of English in the academic context. Only a handful of studies have examined the effects of translanguaging on speaking English and on the students’ identity. Although most Bangladeshi students, teachers and professionals engage in the practices of translanguaging in everyday communication, little research has been done on its impacts on English language learning. The present study is woven out of the lived experiences of multilingual speakers who have a varied set of cultural identities. Except one, all the participants are Bangladeshi by birth. Bangla and English are their first and second languages, respectively. They had stayed in a boarding school in India for a considerable amount of time to receive their primary and/or secondary education. Students were prohibited from speaking in any language other than English in the school premises including the dormitory making it the most dominant language. Kachru (1997) also referred to such a situation where he highlighted the status English enjoyed in the South Asian language policies and planning that offered it a prestigious position in the significant domains of the society. The participants of the present study learned their “native” language as the second language. In addition, following the “Three Language Formula” (see Aggarwal, 1988) they were taught Hindi as the third language for four years. Despite conversing solely in English, the students also made occasional use of Hindi, Bangla and Nepali, depending upon the linguistic background of the person and the group they interacted with. Most of the participants admitted to code-mix and code-switch in their high schools and universities.

This study examined the emerging issues of translanguaging through the participants' experiences in their school, high school and university, the psychosocial problems faced and their opinions on translanguaging. We employed a narrative design where typically the researchers collect and describe the lives, stories and experiences of individuals (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Hence, we procured detailed information about the participants' linguistic background and personal experiences which served as testaments to the conclusions drawn. Then we compiled the collected stories, opinions and experiences of the participants using the case study method. This approach allowed us to collect and analyse the experiences of the individual participants concerning their language use, and linguistic and cultural identity in depth.

In the present study, we recruited four Bangladeshi and one Chinese-Bangladeshi undergraduate students who earlier studied in Indian schools. All participants had the exposure to two or three languages in school and they knew more than two languages. Currently, three of them are studying in Bangladeshi universities and two of them are in Canadian universities.

Table 1
List of participants

Initials	Age	Sex	Nationality	L1	L2	L3	Years in India
BK	21	Female	Bangladeshi	Bangla	English	Hindi	12
MH	22	Female	Bangladeshi	Bangla	English	Hindi	9
FW	25	Female	Chinese-Bangladeshi	English	Bangla	Cantonese	5
MS	23	Female	Bangladeshi	Bangla	English	Hindi	10
TR	22	Male	Bangladeshi	Bangla	English	Hindi	9

After the participants consented to be a part of the present study, we explained the relevant jargon to them. We collected data from the participants in two phases. In phase 1, the participants first received a Google form through e-mail which contained a survey questionnaire, and it took them approximately five to ten minutes to fill out the form. It included basic questions about their nationality, educational qualification, languages they spoke and some questions regarding translanguaging. We, later, conducted a semi-structured interview with each participant on Zoom. We asked the participants about their experiences in school in relation to the linguistic situation, regular and formal speech in English, opinions on translanguaging and its impact on their abilities of speaking English, and the social and affective factors that may/may not have influenced their speech. Each interview spanned for thirty to sixty minutes. In phase 2, we conducted a follow-up, semi-structured interview to procure more information about their experiences of learning English, and their opinions on the use of translanguaging in classrooms, psychosocial issues faced and their

linguistic and cultural identity. Each interview lasted for about thirty minutes.

In order to analyse the data, we used a top-down or deductive research approach where a theory is generated by interpreting data through the finding of patterns and relations (Attia, 2020). We identified the themes from the existing literature and constructed the questions on their basis. Later, we collected the data, codified them under themes, and interpreted them.

Findings

We combined the findings from both phases and reported them under three themes for each participant: 1) participant's linguistic and cultural experience, 2) opinions on translanguaging, and 3) relationship between translanguaging and their identity.

Participant 1: BK

Linguistic and cultural experience in school and university

BK studied in a boarding school in Siliguri, West Bengal. Although Bangla and Hindi were most dominantly spoken there, using English was mandatory in school. BK mentioned that students with poor English-speaking skills were not considered “classy enough”, were asked by the teachers to learn to speak in English from those who had a good command over the language. Errors in speech or incorrect use of the language were frowned upon. Students who were caught speaking in vernaculars among each other were also punished. They could only use them while communicating with the caretakers and the domestic workers. As a Hindi-speaking majority surrounded BK, she occasionally used Hindi jargons in conversations with her friends such as “*ah chalo!*” (come on), “*areh yaar!*” (expressing annoyance). She even code-mixed the two languages, of which she gave an example: “I am the *ulta* (opposite) person”. In her high school (Class XI and XII), she was surrounded by a Nepali-speaking majority, who hailed from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong, Bhutan and Nepal. Consequently, she was exposed to the Nepali language. In an effort to fit in accompanied by a genuine interest to learn the language, BK made attempts to understand Nepali and used many Nepali exclamations and phrases such as “*ambo!*” (expressing shock, surprise, sadness or happiness) and “*alikai!*” (little) while speaking in English. Besides Nepali, Hindi was also widely spoken by teachers and students during class hours, which made her employ Hindi in her conversations too.

After BK came back to Bangladesh for her higher studies, she got admitted to a private university (currently in her second year). Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, she could barely attend a semester on the campus and was unable to properly interact with her friends and teachers. However, she socializes with them through virtual conversations where she mostly uses English with some Bangla and Hindi expressions such as “*je*” (that), “*shetai*

toh” (that’s what) and “*akash theke pora*” (an idiom used to express extreme astonishment).

Opinions on translanguaging

BK expressed that it is not a good practice to code-switch and code-mix for people who want to master speaking English as it hampers their fluency. It also does not help in making a good impression. She suggested that learners, especially the beginners, could use translations from English to their native language for remembering the meaning of difficult words, or generally grasping the mechanics of the language. According to her, in her university students who mix Bangla while speaking in English are those who are scared to speak in English. They also tend to stutter, take long pauses and use fillers such as *hmm*, *umm* during formal presentations and reading exercises. She emphasized that “vernaculars” could be used at home, but if someone genuinely wanted to learn to speak in English, s/he must practice using it exclusively.

BK found it confusing to use words from two or more languages in her speech. BK also reasoned that though translanguaging might help the other person understand better, she felt dissatisfied for not having spoken more articulately. She also did not find the need to translanguage most of the time as she was not as proficient in the other languages (Hindi and Bangla) as she was in English. BK was not in favour of practicing translanguaging even for pedagogical purposes. She expressed that if the students required help in understanding complex concepts, the teacher could use simple English words, diagrams or take the help of visual aids to break down meaning, instead of using other languages.

Linguistic and cultural identity

BK identified herself as a Bangladeshi by birth but her beliefs and attitudes were more oriented towards the Indian Hindu culture. She also reported herself to be more at home with Hindi than Bangla. She identified English to be the unifying element among a multilingual and multicultural group of students and teachers. However, she admitted to feeling left out during her high school years. Hailing from a unique linguistic-cultural background, BK was a minority among the majority Nepali-speaking students and teachers. BK narrated an incident where she and a friend of hers asked their teacher to clarify a particular concept in class. The teacher then used Nepali to simplify the concept for them, assuming that it would be the correct language to speak in as it was the mother tongue of the majority. By her senior year, she was able to understand Nepali to an extent but could not speak in it. Besides, BK could also read Nepali as its alphabet system is almost similar to Hindi. She appreciated her multilingual experience, and thought that it not only helped her learn and understand various languages and cultures, but also expanded her mindset, and made her adaptable to any culture.

Participant 2: MH*Linguistic and cultural experience in school and university*

MH studied in a school in Kurseong, West Bengal, where Nepali and English were the dominant languages. Inside the school premises, English was spoken while Nepali was mostly spoken everywhere else. At the age of 10, she had to adapt to a surrounding where people hardly spoke her mother tongue, Bangla. With time and more exposure to Nepali, MH began to understand the language. For Class XI and XII, MK went to a day boarding school in Siliguri, and stayed with a Hindi-speaking family. Her friends at school preferred to talk in both Hindi and English. In her school, she had a multilingual atmosphere where she used Hindi, English and also some Bangla expressions. MH is currently studying at a private university in Bangladesh. With continuous exposure to Bangla and “Banglish” used by students in her university, she began to mix and switch the two codes. MH is fluent in English, but often uses Bangla expressions such as “*mane*” (meaning), “*pera nai*” (no worries), “*dhet*” (ugh), “*aayhaay*” (oh no).

Opinions on translanguaging

According to MH, when people are surrounded by speakers of different languages, they are naturally motivated to learn the languages of one another, which may result in translanguaging. However, she thought that translanguaging made the language lose its originality, caused grammatical errors and even made one fall short of words. She reported that the practice of mixing up two languages in her speech impacted her writing skills as she often muddled up the sentence structure and grammar of the two languages (English and Bangla). Therefore, she advocated using only English during English language classes for mastering the language. Nevertheless, she thought that code-mixing could be useful in developing a bilingual vocabulary since when someone code-mixes, s/he incorporates two languages in the same sentence which may help to learn more words in general.

Linguistic and cultural identity

MH reported that in her schools, language contributed significantly to forming an identity. There were groups of students who were connected to each other due to a common language and culture, such as the Biharis, the Marwadis, the Nepalis, the Bengalis and Bangladeshis. She expressed that in spite of living among a linguistically and ethnically diverse group of people, she did not feel alienated due to the linguistic differences. However, when she returned to Bangladesh, she faced a linguistic and cultural gap. She was more accustomed to the Indian Hindu culture and knew extensively about its festivals. She reported to have faced some conflicts due to her linguistic and cultural background. She mentioned that she used to be called a “Bangladeshi” at her high school in India and an “Indian” at her university in Bangladesh. However, in retrospect, she did not view this as a problem. Instead, she claimed to have a fused identity of both as a Bangladeshi and an Indian.

Participant 3: FW*Linguistic and cultural experience in school and university*

FW is a Chinese-Bangladeshi who was brought up in Hong Kong by a Chinese father and a Bengali mother. During her childhood, FW was taught English, Bangla, Cantonese and Mandarin consecutively. Not only was this confusing for her but being conditioned according to the lifestyles of two very different cultures added more to the disarray. Although FW fluently spoke Cantonese, she was still considered an outsider due to her facial features and skin color. Until grade 5, she regularly faced discrimination which reportedly made her suffer from an identity crisis. The troubles eased as she moved into an international school in Hong Kong, consisting of students from India, Pakistan, and the Philippines. Later she joined another school in India where she spent five years. Since the students and the teachers spoke in English almost always, it was easy for her to communicate and accommodate herself. Moreover, she got along well with the Bangladeshi and Indian Bengali students. Communicating with them in Bangla also made her feel at home. Nonetheless, she faced some major obstacles. Within the first few months of joining, FW was asked to change her Asian-British accent to make it sound more Indian. She also struggled due to the compulsion of studying Bangla as her second language, in which she could neither speak fluently nor read and write. However, she was able to write in Bangla soon, and by the third or the fourth year, she was able to understand conversational Hindi.

Her adaptation in Canada was easier. When she moved there for higher studies, she picked up the Canadian accent by watching T.V, videos and listening to music. She became part of a large multicultural group of students there. She reported to have never faced identity issues or discrimination there. In fact, her multilingual background, according to her, was valued a lot. The acceptance made it easy for her to quickly adapt to the new lifestyle.

Opinions on translanguaging

FW believed that translanguaging could be a good practice for the new speakers of English. By citing an example of the immigrants in Canada who, according to her, tended to incorporate phrases from their L1 while speaking in English, she reasoned that it was not necessarily wrong as it helped them communicate easily. She also believed that translanguaging made the brain more active than using just one language. However, FW did not recommend code-mixing and -switching in professional and educational settings. In an academic setting, the teacher could use the L1 to clarify the conceptual doubts of the students, but the teacher must gradually give it up as the students made progress. She also did not support the practice of translanguaging among proficient speakers because, according to her, mixing languages affected the authenticity of the languages. However, she strongly supported the continual practice of using all the languages that a speaker knew. Citing her own example of losing touch with her Cantonese, she also expressed that if the users do not practice communicating in the individual languages exclusively, the skills in that language will gradually decrease.

Linguistic and cultural identity

FW experienced some issues with the language situation at her school in India. Since a larger number of students spoke in Hindi, they used to treat Bangla as a language almost alien to them, and even make fun of the language. Such treatment, however, did not extend to the Nepali-speaking students despite them being a minority. According to FW, the wide use of English helped in toning down these linguistic and cultural differences among students. Had English not been strictly practiced, it would have created deeper segregations among the linguistic groups.

Despite facing some major social identity crises in Hong Kong and India, where she was neither accepted as a Chinese nor as a Bangladeshi, FW was able to adapt to the culture of every country she went to. She believed that different cultures have different ways of expressing emotions through language, and once one is able to grasp it, s/he will become adaptable. S/he can also become more acceptable to their community if s/he shows interest in their culture, for instance, by picking up a few words and phrases of their language, listening to their music, and trying out their cuisine.

Participant 4: MS*Linguistic and cultural experience in school and university*

MS went to a missionary school in Kurseong in grade 1. Although students were expected to speak in English, MS was not very fluent in it. She picked up Hindi before English as her class teachers spoke in Hindi with her. By grade 3, she began to speak English fluently. MS was also exposed to Nepali as the domestic workers, attendants, some students and teachers spoke in it. With time, she started to use some Nepali sentences, phrases and expressions in her conversations, and gradually, she became fluent in it. However, in the process of learning so many languages and with little to no exposure to Bangla, she almost forgot how to speak it. Later she joined another school in Siliguri where English was dominant. In contrast to her previous school, Bangla was more dominant than Nepali after English and Hindi. There were many Bangladeshis and Bangla-speaking students, nurses and teachers who occasionally spoke in the language. MS came back to Bangladesh after her school, and after two years of being home-schooled, she joined a private university in Dhaka. This allowed her to adequately immerse herself in Bangla and the Bengali culture. Additionally, she picked up Dhakaiya (a dialect of Bangla language spoken among people living in Dhaka) but lacked the knowledge of formal Bangla.

Opinions on translanguaging

MS believed that maintaining one language while speaking could be challenging for bilinguals unless they were in a formal setting because, according to her, the translanguaging practices were mostly subconscious. She also expressed that knowing multiple languages helped one appreciate different cultures, feel one with them and thereby understand diversity. MS added that language is subject to change, however, the bilingual/multilingual teachers of the English language and literature, and the Communications departments also need to make careful attempts to preserve the authenticity of languages since, according to her, they codeswitch a lot in their professions. MS strongly discouraged translanguaging in academic settings because students, she thought, would identify it to be the norm and practice it. Code-switching was acceptable only when teachers needed to explain something.

Linguistic and cultural identity

MS reported that she experienced constant negative treatment after coming back to Bangladesh. Her social practices were different from her peers growing up in Bangladesh which she attributed to her “more liberal” conditioning at home and in school. She was teased by her peers in the university, ridiculed by her Bangla teacher at the University for not being able to pronounce certain Bangla words, and faced an impediment in her job as a freelance reporter for not being able to

read Bangla. She thought that she would not have such experiences if she were in India.

Participant 5: TR

Linguistic and cultural experience in school and university

When TR joined the boarding school in Siliguri, he understood Hindi but did not know how to speak in English. Within three months of rigorous practice through interaction with other students and translating words from Bangla to English, he was able to master speaking in English. The language almost felt natural to him as the students primarily spoke in it and only code-switched with non-English-speaking people. Later, he joined a day-boarding school in Siliguri where students mostly used their native languages. By then, TR was already well-versed in English, Bangla and Hindi, which made it easier for him to mix with speakers of those languages. However, he reported to have experienced some alienation for not knowing Nepali. For his higher studies, TR went to Canada where he was exposed to a diverse culture. TR expressed that communication in multicultural contexts often depended on how one presented himself and carried out conversations rather than on the ethnicity. He further felt that those human beings were more susceptible to psychological cues than cultural ones, and he tried to interpret the former cues to interact effectively. Besides, his fluency in the common, unifying language of the context (English), he claimed, helped him blend with the others.

Opinions on translanguaging

Going by the linguistic ideology of his school, TR discouraged the practice of translanguaging in the classroom. He thought using the individual languages exclusively in the classroom helped students master the language better. Minimal translations might be allowed but students must be encouraged to speak in English even if the utterances were fragmented and inaccurate. TR highlighted the importance of using accurate language because, according to him, it ensured more attention especially by the native speakers. He appeared to be strongly focused on accuracy to the extent that grammatical errors in his speech made him anxious and stutter. However, TR recognized translanguaging to have benefitted him socially and professionally. He expressed that his multilingual and multicultural background and experiences also helped him identify social cues and analyze people's thought processes.

Linguistic and cultural identity

During his school years in India, TR lived among students from a variety of linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds, who bonded despite their differences. He was highly motivated to learn the dominant languages, because

he wanted to be assimilated with the majority. Although he could easily blend in with different cultures, he admitted to having not fully adopted their habits, attitudes and customs. Despite identifying himself as a Bangladeshi in Canada, he was often thought to be an Indian due to his accent and the prominence of the Indian diaspora in the country. Currently, his motivation to learn new languages has become stagnant despite being surrounded by people of different tongues. He identified the reason to be the fact that English was the dominant language in Canada. However, he thought that if his environment or situation required him to learn a new language again, it would surge in him a new drive to master it. Finally, TR claimed that he did not hold a special tie with any culture, including the Bengali and the Bangladeshi culture. As much as he upheld Bangla, and the Bangladeshi culture and its history, he refrained from showing extreme pride and adherence to them.

Discussion

The participants' experiences of growing up in multicultural and multilingual settings appear to be similar. All the participants, due to the school requirements, learnt English as their first language along with learning and using other languages that were deemed relevant in the context. All of them reportedly "picked up" multiple languages such as Hindi and Nepali, from the people around them for the purpose of being integrated in the milieu. The participants shared mixed responses towards translanguaging practices. Their responses to some of the issues earlier examined in studies have been discussed below.

Inability of maintaining one language in conversation

Some of the participants explicitly identified the problems of using translanguaging while speaking. BK reported to have felt dissatisfied when she could not carry out her speech fluently due to code-mixing and code-switching. TR reported similar issues with fluency and accuracy that resulted from his trying to translate ideas from his mother tongue to English. Both of them suggested that the shift between the languages caused disruption in their speeches and reduced their spontaneity. Such dependencies on translations from native tongue coupled with lack of practice in speaking English can often result in the delivery of a dissatisfactory performance. This concurs with the view of Vyshnevskaya, Bratanykh, Skydan, Hushko, and Karimova (2021), which states that many educators discouraged the practice of L1 by students as it was a threat to an "English only" instruction medium. A majority of teachers (more than 76%) in his study, strongly believed that translanguaging limited the opportunities for proficient English speakers to practise speaking in the language and thus obstructed the creation of an "effective foreign language environment". Many participants of the present study also claimed that it was unprofessional for students and especially teachers to translanguage in

classrooms because in a multilingual class setting it might favour some students who spoke that language. It could also cause some confusion among students who did not understand the language. Besides, teachers' extensive translanguaging could reduce the opportunities for L2 exposure for the learners with limited language.

However, most of the participants supported the practice of translanguaging outside the pedagogical scenario. MH and MS admitted to using Bangla phrases and expressions involuntarily. In response to a question about continuous dependence on translanguaging having an effect on grammar, MH said, "You know when I was in boarding school, we used to use English almost all the time so at that time, (command over the language) my command over the language was really good.... After I came to Bangladesh, even now when I'm speaking, I don't know, unknowingly, I might have used Bangla words." This implied that the habitual practice of using phrases from other languages when speaking in English can become ingrained which gradually begins to reflect in students' English speech.

Inaccurate use of the language

Code-switching is often reported as a compensatory strategy when the user lacks proficiency and tries to resort to the mother tongue to maintain communication. It was also found in bilingual young children who were found to use more complex syntactic structures from their stronger language and content morphemes and phrases from their weaker language in order to facilitate their communicative capacity in the weaker language (Bernardini & Schlyter, 2004). However, the participants in the present study were divided with regard to the benefits of translanguaging in speaking. Three of the participants in the present study reported that they faced confusion while translanguaging. In addition, switching between languages can lead to grammatical discrepancies that result from a shift in the thinking processes due to the differences in the structural features of the languages. Contrary to the views expressed above, Canagarajah (2011) did not identify such discrepancies within code-switched constructions to be "errors". Instead, he labelled them as creative constructions that facilitate communication. Furthermore, constantly relying on the mother tongue while using the L2 may lead to difficulty in retrieving words in L2. MH reported often resorting to paraphrasing words in L2 to continue communication.

Although the participants did not have a complete agreement with regard to their views of translanguaging, they all seemed to agree that extensive translanguaging practices were not beneficial in pedagogical contexts. MS suggested that it was only natural for multilinguals to shift among the languages while speaking. However, with language learning goals to achieve, teachers and students in the classroom must keep the use of non-target languages minimal. Some of them suggested that instead of using native languages for explanation, the teachers could employ visual aids and gestures to create meaning in the

classroom.

The psychosocial issues of translanguaging

All the participants studied in schools that imposed the practice of speaking in a single language, that is, English. This imposition of language might encourage students to judge and jeer at those who were weaker at it, which in turn could demotivate students from learning the language. Bailey (1983), based on the analysis of the diaries of 11 learners, concluded that the learners tended to feel anxious when they compared themselves with other students in class and found themselves less proficient. In response to a question on feeling left out due to the dominance of a particular culture, FW reported that "... when I first joined, during my first few months there, I think there was something about my accent that they didn't find acceptable, like I had to switch up my accent and make it sound like theirs in order for them to really accept me." Both BK and TR felt that they were subjected to similar discriminatory practices because of not knowing another dominant language, Nepali. Although they reported initial stories of struggles of using English, especially in the case of FW, most of them acknowledged that the dominance of English across all the institutions created a uniform identity of the students, and helped them look beyond their linguistic and cultural differences.

While referring to the relationship among the native languages of the students, FW claimed that Bangla was ridiculed by some students who spoke the other dominant languages. Such treatment, however, did not extend to the Nepali-speaking students. The possible explanations for this could be that (1) the Bengalis were larger in number than the Nepalese. Therefore, there might have been some sort of tension between the two majority language groups, and (2) the Nepali and Hindi languages share a similar alphabet system which may have reduced discriminatory attitudes. This indicated that there is likely to be a wider political context that determines the attitude of language users towards different languages, and their translanguaging norms.

Almost all the participants expressed that they could identify more with the Indian culture than the Bangladeshi culture. TR reported that he did not feel like a part of any culture, including that of his own country. Their immersion into Indian culture for a substantial period of time created a sense of complex identity due to which they often could not be integrated into either. MH is reported to have the identity of an outsider in both India and Bangladesh (an "Indian" in Bangladesh, and a "Bangladeshi" in India). There was also discrimination based on religion (MS) where the student was given a certain label ("didimoni") due to her religious orientation. Growing up in a biracial family of a mixed culture of the Bangladeshi and the Chinese, the confusion of identities was stronger in FW. She reported that "... being a mixed-race child, no matter what race you are mixed in, there's always this feeling of ... you're not considered as either one by both sides of the family". FW appeared to suffer from a biracial identity crisis where people reportedly felt that they did not

completely belong to one race, or were unable to identify themselves as either one because they could not meet the expectations of the society (Norwood, 2019). Nevertheless, FW categorically identified herself to be resilient who found a way to adapt. Evidence of such strength was also reported in studies that found that multiracial individuals had various psychological benefits, such as standing one's ground, and not giving in to the social pressure of identifying oneself to a certain ethnicity. They were reported to have a broader sense of conformity which was proven more socially and psychologically beneficial (Norwood, 2019).

With regard to finding one's identity in a multilingual and multicultural context, two of the participants explicitly mentioned expanding the communication beyond specific languages to connect to the wider communities. Interestingly, they were the two people who continued to live in a multicultural setting beyond their school years. The body of research conducted across cultures shows that L2 learners' readiness to carry multiple identities are linked to a better repertoire of language strategies and expressive abilities (e.g. Chevasco, 2019). The two participants in the present study also discussed the need for attending to the emotional core in communication which was language-free. Both of them indicated that it was important to understand and learn the psychological cues to feel assimilated in a multicultural context.

Conclusion

The present study revealed the perspectives of a group of young adults who spent a considerable amount of time in a multilingual setting that allowed translanguaging practices. The general findings indicated that most of them were open to shifting languages in informal conversations but they did not approve of using them in academic or formal settings. While referring to their personal experiences they also revealed how translanguaging can shape people's identities. The study is likely to offer many insights to the policymakers, who determine the language policies of a country, and to the academic practitioners in determining the classroom activities and techniques keeping the issues of language shifts in mind. Secondly, the stories of the psychological discrimination of all five participants are likely to help the administrations in creating a more inclusive and sensitive as well as sensitizing space for students from diverse backgrounds. Such practices are likely to help the students maintain a dignified position in a multilingual setting and also recognize their bilingual or multilingual identity (Reyes & Vallone, 2007). However, further research is needed to examine a wider community of multilingual and biracial students to determine the motivation, the nature and the overarching impact of translanguaging.

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