Translanguaging in the Classroom

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Workshop overview

Part 1: Understanding the multilingual nature of NSW schools

Part 2: The role of the home language in children’s learning: what does the research say?

Part 3: What is translanguaging and how can we use it in the classroom?
PART 1:
THE MULTILINGUAL NATURE OF NSW SCHOOLS

Cultural and linguistic diversity
Differentiation
Culturally and linguistically diverse learners in NSW

- 64.1% English speaking only
- 35.9% Languages other than English

Source: CESE, 2019
Culturally and linguistically diverse learners in NSW

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Culturally and linguistically diverse learners in NSW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE)</td>
<td>1 in 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)</td>
<td>1 in 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
<td>1 in 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee background</td>
<td>1 in 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly arrived EAL/D</td>
<td>1 in 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: CESE, 2019
Mainstreaming of EAL/D students

Implications for differentiation?

• It is better to set the same high expectations for all students and to provide differentiated levels of support to ensure that all students have a fair chance to achieve those expectations (p. 8).

• All mainstream teachers should be able to accommodate EAL/D students.

• Teachers should actively invite EAL/D students to share their cultural and linguistic knowledge and experiences.

ACARA, 2014: English as an additional language overview and advice
PART 2: THE ROLE OF THE HOME LANGUAGE IN CHILDREN’S SCHOOL LEARNING
The development of the second language is strongly related to the development of the first language

• Some parents stop using their home language with their children, to help them learn the school language more quickly.
• However, there is a relationship between first/dominant language development and learning a new language at school (Genesee, 2012).
• Language practices only emerge in interrelationship with old language practices. i.e. from the “known” to the “unknown”.

Implication 1: Parents, teachers and schools should pay careful attention to the continued development of the home language to support L2 learning
Academic outcomes are greater when both languages are developed through school

• As well as aiding language development, the home language also promotes academic progress. Trying to learn a new language while trying to learn poses a double challenge. Children who are doing both are learning very hard!

• Allowing or requiring students to manage academic content in their dominant language ensures that learning happens even when their English is still in development.

Implication 2: Learning should not be put on hold while language acquisition is happening
Children adapt and learn better when their own languages are present in the classroom

- Children are not all “little sponges” who do not mind being dropped into an environment where they can’t use their own language. Children are expected to get used to a new environment, make friends and learn, all while learning a new language!

- If we want children to be ‘ready to learn’, we need to help them feel safe and connected in their new environment.

- For children who do not yet speak the school language, this means putting in place structures and systems that allow children to connect with their teachers and their peers while they acquire English.
The affective filter

- In SLA theory the “affective filter” is a mental barrier that learners build when they feel insecure in the classroom. The less they can communicate, the higher they build their protective wall, which can inhibits learning.

- Students who are able to use all of their linguistic resources for learning are more likely to be engaged in learning and motivated.

- This impacts on student well-being and agency, and can have positive consequences across all aspects of teaching and learning.

Implication: Use of children’s dominant languages can help them acclimate to the classroom and be ‘ready to learn’
What does this mean in an Australian schools context?

• It is widely accepted in the field of SLA that bilingual or content and language integrated learning (CLIL) programs, where the focus is equally placed on development of the home language and the new school language, provide better results for most children than English-only programs, in terms of language and academic development.

• However, bilingual/CLIL programs are not always an option, especially in schools with diverse populations. There are other ways in which schools and teachers can support the continued development of diverse home languages in the classroom.

• The most flexible way is through the considered use of pedagogical translinguaging.
PART 3: TRANSLANGUAGING

What is it and how can we use it in the classroom?
### Part 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding questions</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is translanguaging?</td>
<td>Understand translanguaging as theory that informs language teaching/learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does translanguaging theory differ from past theories of multilingualism, second language acquisition?</td>
<td>Distinguish between different perspectives on bilingualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does translanguaging look like in the classroom?</td>
<td>Explore some translanguaging strategies</td>
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Scenarios: which of the following are examples of translanguaging?

1. Enrico and Claudine are sitting together, working intently on a handout. They have different first languages but some shared knowledge of the words and phrases of each other’s languages, so they are moving in and out of English, French and Spanish to get their message across.

2. Abdul and Mariam are sitting together nearby. Both of them are Arabic speakers, but they are also very strong English speakers and often use it as their main language. At other times, as now, they blend Arabic and English together.

3. Hui Lin and Hoa are working together on a poetry assignment related to “mood”. They are using different coloured cards to express what emotion they feel in response to the poem. They will then write down words in their L1s to express those emotions, before translating them into English using Google translate. They will teach each other the Mandarin/Vietnamese translations of these words.
Scenarios: which of the following are examples of translanguaging?

• All of these students are translanguaging: they are using resources from different languages together, with very little regard for what we might call the ‘boundaries’ of named languages such as ‘Spanish’ or ‘English’.

• They are using elements of each language together to communicate more effectively. They are using all of their language resources to communicate.
Translanguaging

Translanguaging is the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of ... languages, in order to maximize communicative potential.

Ofelia García (2009: 140)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External perspective</th>
<th>Internal perspective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Named languages</td>
<td>Languaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups of features identified by society as “French” or “Urdu” or “Punjabi” as a result of socio-historical processes</td>
<td>A complex, interrelated repertoire of features and practices that we use to express ourselves.</td>
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We must maintain both perspectives

**External perspective**

Students learn to perform in one and/or another named language in ways that are recognised by the school or society at large.

**Internal perspective**

Students learn that their bilingual, bicultural language practices and identities are welcome in the classroom and integral to their learning.
How does Translanguaging differ from past theories of SLA?
Changing ideas about multilingualism

20th century ideas

- Language groups are territorialised
- “One nation, one language” ideal

21st century realities

- Globalisation
- Transnationalism
- Internet and social media
- Corporations
Changing ideas about multilingualism

20th century thinking

Views bilingual people fractionally, as two monolinguals in one person

21st century understandings

Views bilingual people holistically: as integrated wholes ... they have unique linguistic configurations (Grosjean, 2009)
## Changing ideas about multilingualism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtractive model</th>
<th>Additive model</th>
<th>Dynamic model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages are fixed, bounded and separate</td>
<td>Languages are interrelated, but separate</td>
<td>Language as a social process; a unified repertoire of evolving, negotiated features.</td>
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Source: Garcia, 2009
Isn’t translanguaging just another name for code-switching?

• No! Code-switching sees the two languages of bilinguals as two separate monolingual codes used without reference to one another.
  • Language features

• TL sees bilinguals as having one linguistic repertoire from which they select features strategically to communicate effectively.
  • Internal process
What is the theoretical basis for translanguaging?

A language learner is like a 'dual-iceberg,' with L1 and L2 being the two tips of the iceberg that we can see above the surface, with a common basis that connects the two languages below the surface. The tips of the iceberg are related to BICS, and the basis is related to CALP. What do these terms mean?

Cummins, 1981: Interdependence Hypothesis
BICS vs CALP

• **Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills** is the basic ability to listen and to speak in order to communicate. *(Social, everyday language)*

• **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency** is *formal academic language* used in higher-level thinking. Technical, or scientific vocabulary and figurative language. *(Used in analysis, reasoning, critical thinking, and other cognitive academic processes)*
Common underlying proficiency

• If a language learner already has CALP in the native language she or he speaks, this prior knowledge would help the learner succeed with the same concept in the new language. For instance, the concept of 'adjective' does not change across languages, nor does the ability to tell the time.

• What a learner knows in their L1 can positively transfer to the L2. This interaction is referred to as CUP, which stands for 'Common Underlying Proficiency.'

Cummins, 1981
The Threshold Hypothesis

- Explains why some bilingual learners don’t seem to access the cognitive benefits of bilingualism. To get the advantages of bilingualism you have to develop both languages fully.

- EAL learners to achieve their potential it is important that they are encouraged to develop both, or all, of their languages, not just focusing on EMI.

- Parents are encouraged to their children in their first language about work they are doing at schools, so that academic language continues to be developed in that language as well as in English.

Cummins, 1976
What does translanguaging look like in the classroom?
Three strands of the translanguaging classroom

- **Stance**
- **Design**
- **Shifts**
Examples from Sydney and Delhi

Translanguaging project: Beverley Hills IEC
Multilingual Pedagogies project: British Council, India.
Developing a Multilingual Ecology

• Creating a welcoming space for translanguaging in the classroom: digital as well as print resources.
• Listen: what are your students’ different linguistic personalities?
My multilingual class

When students’ languages are an active part of the classroom, they can be valuable resources for connecting with prior knowledge and learning new concepts and additional languages (Moll et al. 1992). Teachers can help students build strong identities by acknowledging and respecting their language.
Translanguaging by design

- “Intentionally connects bilingual students’ home and community language practices and identities to the language practices and identities deemed appropriate for school settings”. (p. 61)
- Involves: classroom instruction, assessment
Translanguaging by design: some strategies

**Reading**
- Students read in English and discuss/analyse what they have read in their L1.
- Assign **reading partners** that share an L1 to assist each other.
- Students do **independent reading** in multiple languages.
- Encourage students to read and research for **research projects** in both languages.
- Supplement English readings with **L1 readings** on the same topic/theme

**Writing**
- Encourage students to **audio record** ideas first using both languages, then transfer to writing.
- Students **pre-write** in both languages, then publish in English.
- Assign **writing partners** that share an L1 to assist each other.
- Students write first in the L1 and then **translate** that text into English.
Multilingual storybooks

- “Up and Down” by Mr. S. Garamond. Shows a split screen with images from 'a day in the life' of two children, one in a western setting and the other in an eastern, desert environment.
- Spanish, English, French & Arabic,
- Lets you select the language for the narration and text separately, meaning you can listen in English with text in Arabic, for instance.
Bilingual dictionaries and online translation tools – iPads, laptops, iPhones
Multilingual word walls

- With key unit vocabulary
- Key classroom language
Using multilingual resources to think mathematically

Graphing our languages: what languages do we know?
Identity texts

Teachers create an environment in which

1. Students’ prior knowledge of their L1 is acknowledge and validated

2. Students create texts (writings, illustrations etc) using L1 and English that reflect a positive image of why they are linguistically, cognitively, and personally, who they might aspire to be.

Chow & Cummins, 2003
Community study

We did a community study. We took an excursion to different areas of the City. Took photos of all the language we could see (linguistic landscapes). Classified into familiar/unfamiliar things.

(Rose, IEC teacher, 2018)
Community study

Students created a Powerpoint presentation on familiar, unfamiliar things, which acted as identity texts. Built an awareness of how many linguistic, cultural communities there are in Sydney. Helped students to understand multicultural/multilingual nature of Sydney.
Translating proverbs

- Helps students to think deeply about similarities and differences between languages and cultures
- Creating multilingual displays of proverbs can make students feel welcome in the classroom, and remind them of useful life lessons.

Afghani proverb: *Naan wa Piaaz, ba Qaashi Waaz*
- Translation: Bread and onions, open eyebrows
- Meaning: Even if you offer simple hospitality (bread and onions, do it with a smile on your face (eyebrows open, not knitted in frustration)
Translanguaging shifts

• In moments of difficulty, misunderstanding, encouraging students to talk to one another about a new concept, vocabulary word etc, using their own language practices.

• Looking up words and phrases using online translation tools and/or having students do so on their own.

• Using culturally meaningful metaphors and/or stories that students relate to in order to make sense of new content.
Cultural metaphors

https://www.8ways.online/about
What does a translanguaging classroom look like?

Watch Isobel’s poetry lesson. How does she make space for the students’ L1s in the classroom. With what effect?
### Why a Translanguaging Classroom?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Supports students as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes space for students’ bilingualism and bilingual ways of knowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports bilingual students’ socio-emotional development and bilingual identities.</td>
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Garcia, Seltzer & Johnson, 2017
Further reading
References


