

# Translanguaging in EAL/D classrooms: making use of our diverse learners' multilingual skills.

*I felt included and you made me so proud of myself that I speak three languages. My confidence is back because of you.*  
(Email from Rosie, a speaker of Mandarin, Cantonese and English)

Dr Jennifer Alford, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, QUT;  
Jacqi Bottger, Teacher, Yeronga State High School

# How do I make good use of my learners' multilingual skills?

In this presentation....

- Jennifer will present an overview of some of the key concepts underpinning translanguaging.
- Following this, Jacqi will give examples of practice in her highly diverse EAL/D high school classroom.
- Jacqi will also reflect on the benefits and challenges of incorporating translanguaging in everyday teaching practice.
- There will be an opportunity for discussion and reflection on possibilities for application in your own context.

# But first...

A quick survey

- How many languages do your students speak? What are they?
- How many languages do you speak? What are they?



# Key concepts underpinning Translanguaging.

There is growing acceptance of bi- and multilinguality as the norm in societal language; Seems to be replacing the monolingual perspective.

The multilingual turn (May, 2014) – acknowledges multilingual speakers' fluid language practices in their full complexity (Garcia, 2009).

Garcia refers to translanguaging as:

*when multilingual individuals use their full linguistic repertoire to understand and communicate and receive positive confirmation for their linguistic capacity.*

Bilingual/multilingual people adapt their language use and practices to the communicative situation they are in, using “whatever signs and forms they (have) at their disposal to connect with one another indexing disparate allegiances and knowledges and creating new ones” (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p. 112).

Translanguaging is also *a new method of teaching and an alternative to traditional pedagogies where the teachers keep knowledge about other languages, including the L1 out of the classroom.*

- Drawing on Grosjean (1982), Translanguaging posits that “a bilingual (person) is **not two monolinguals in one** but **a linguistically unique language user whose languages reflect the differential experience a bilingual (person) may have with each language**” (McSwan, 2017, p. 171).
- The assumption here is that translanguaging is **not a temporary state of affairs** on the way to becoming fluent in the TL. It is a permanent feature of language use among speakers of two or more languages.
- On this basis, translanguaging, as everyday bilingual language use, is seen as normal and not a deviation from a monolingual ideal and is an important factor in EAL students’ shifting multilingual and multicultural identities (Alford, 2019).

Translanguaging requires the teachers' willingness to engage in learning *with* their students and to equalise power relations (Flores & Garcia, 2013).

Shifts the focus from languages to *speakers* and opens up the possibility for a multilingual analysis, rather than a monolingual one' (Jonsson, 2017, p. 22).

Synonymous with:

- *Codemeshing* (Canagarajah, 2011)
- *Polylingual languaging* (Jorgensen, 2008).
- Different from *code-switching* which conceptualises bilinguals as having two monolithic languages that are separate rather than a 'bank' of languages in the brain; *Code-switching* is a speech style in which bilinguals alternate languages between or within sentences. E.g., Spanish-English bilinguals might say, *This morning mi hermano y yo fuimos a comprar some milk* ("This morning my brother and I went to buy some milk") (McSwan, 2017).

# Good working definitions

## Translanguaging:

- As everyday multilingual practice: The flexible use of linguistic resources, including English and any other languages spoken by an individual, to make meaning (Garcia, 2011),
- &
- As an approach to teaching/pedagogic practice: Seeing the multiple languages our learners speak as an **asset rather than a problem**. Teachers can draw on the entire linguistic repertoires of their learners to enable students to learn content as well as language.

# Challenges for teachers!

- More fluid understandings of language use in multilingualism represents a challenge for educators, because it destabilises codes, norms and conventions that teachers and especially language teachers have relied upon (Kramsch, 2014).
- Not surprising, then, that different research studies have identified a discrepancy between multilingual pedagogies celebrated in literature or pluralistic policies, and actual classroom practice. Why?
- Multilingual pedagogy is connected to new curricula, new appropriate learning material, adapted assessment practices,
- and enough time for the teachers to engage and adapt, as they are expected to perform a major paradigmatic shift.

Alford & Kettle (in press) :

- *Translanguaging transitional spaces* are needed to affirm and understand languages in the mainstream classroom that disrupts the exclusion of learners' first languages and awareness of the language learning process.
- Teachers need to engage with their learners' linguistic resources in productive ways and to become aware of the merging of languages especially when teaching *through* and *about* a dominant language.
- We acknowledge this is challenging work!
- Teachers' time is pressured by curriculum and reporting demands such that learning about students' languages and catering for them in classroom activities is not given high priority.
- Monolingual teachers are often unsure about relinquishing their power in order to be inclusive of their students' languages.
- This kind of work also requires willingness to challenge the dominance of English language in schools when multiple languages are used daily in learners' communities

# Translanguaging with (young) adult EAL learners:

Using their own languages contributes to their ongoing identity formation.

Learners are exploring, in relation to others, their senses of self. This is largely done in schools/education settings through literate practices such as reading, viewing, writing and shaping.

Learners who are from language backgrounds other than English are doing a second (or 3<sup>rd</sup> ?) layer of identity work as they learn to function in a new culture in an additional language to the one/ s they already know.

Language is central to identity work because:

- who we are is shaped considerably by the languages and Discourses we use and that surround us or are available to us;

# Using your own languages contributes to identity formation....

- Who we are is made up of multiple subjectivities derived from varied languages, registers (e.g., formal/ informal language use) and discourses in society;
- these subjectivities enjoy unequal status and power because of our different positionings in society, for example....
- to find coherence and empowerment, we have to negotiate competing identities and positions;
- we are always in the process of restructuring ourselves. (Canagarajah, 2004a)

The way we use languages is an important identity marker and a resource that teachers can draw on for exploring curriculum concepts with EAL learners.

\*Translanguaging can create a stronger home-school connection and allows for better participation between weaker and stronger learners in mixed-ability classes.

# Translanguaging as pedagogy – classroom strategies (handout)

Translanguaging handout. QATESOL PD Nov 2 Jen Alford & Jacqi Buttger

Some translanguaging teaching strategies include:

- Students who speak the same language can sit together and discuss topic/concepts in own language, at the appropriate time.
- Students can search for articles online about the topic in their own language = dual language research.
- Students are encouraged to annotate, write notes, do planning etc in either language.
- Knowing that they will have to be assessed in English, students are encouraged to seek help to translate notes in their language into English and formulate their thoughts in English as well. This will depend on their proficiency in English.
- Students are encouraged to help make their home languages normalised in the class. Voice their ideas in their language and then translate into English and vice versa, as needed.

The teacher is encouraged to:

- Do a class "language audit". Who speaks what language and to what degree? Put this on the classroom wall.
- Create multilingual bulletin boards and displays.
- Have a "Language of the week" display with information about the language and examples of language use. Students who speak this language can teach the class some phrases.
- Ask for translations from English to the languages represented in the classroom where students seem to need it, and where this will prove useful for monolinguals too. Translanguaging is not just for those who speak other languages. All learners benefit from it, if handled skilfully.
- Ask speakers of other languages to write translations of key terms discussed in class and build a "word wall" over time.
- Teach cognates and false cognates.
- Ask students to discuss certain concepts in their home languages in same language groups to clarify or elaborate - if appropriate.

- Provide some materials in the languages represented in the class e.g., sections on Ppt slides or as pre-reading. This depends on the language audit.
- Use greetings and simple phrases in the other languages in class as often as possible. encourage monolinguals to use them when speaking to members of the class who speak those languages. e.g., *hello, how are you?* and replies, *yes, no, maybe, I don't know, what do you think? great idea*, etc. Have reminders of how to say these phrases on charts on the wall, transliterated as well if in character-based languages or other script.
- Have materials in other languages in the classroom, such as dual language books (picture books or narratives told simultaneously in two languages), as a matter of course. (Adapted from Celice & Seltzer, 2011; and Coelho, 2012).

To be provided after Jacqi has presented.

# Why translanguaging?

- Own language learning experiences – Norwegian and Dutch
- 2018-2019 Conferences:
  - ACTA conference - theme - Kathleen Heugh and Mei French
  - TasTESol in Hobart - Kathleen Heugh
- Grad Cert at QUT - opportunity to research further
  - Dierdre Kirwan in Ireland and Ofelia Garcia with CUNY TSIEB
- Need to challenge normative monolingual culture & stigma of EAL/D
- Beginning to implement translanguaging in Year 9 & 10 classes



Translanguaging is  
“the process of making meaning,  
shaping experiences,  
gaining understanding and knowledge  
through the use of two languages”

(Baker, 2011)

“It is translanguaging itself  
that enables us to make sense of  
the multilingual worlds we live in”

Garcia (2009)



## Largest language groups:

- English 280
- Somali 74
- Arabic 56
- Vietnamese 50
- Dari 51
- Tigrinya 28
- Swahili 23

Language	Number of students
Acholi	1
African Languages, nec	7
African Languages, nfd	16
Amharic	8
Arabic	56
Bengali	2
Bosnian	3
Burmese and Related Languages, nfd	2
Cantonese	1
Chinese, nec	8
Chinese, nfd	1
Danish	1
Dari	51
Dinka	10
English	280
Filipino	6
French	5
German	1
Gujarati	1
Hazaraghi	10
Hindi	6
Hungarian	1
Icelandic	1
Indonesian	3
Iranic, nfd	2
Italian	1
Japanese	2
Kinyarwanda (Rwanda)	2
Kirundi (Rundi)	8
Krio	2
Kurdish	4
Liberian (Liberian English)	2

Malayalam	6	
Mandarin	5	
Middle Eastern Semitic Languages, nec	2	
Motu (HiriMotu)	1	
Oromo	4	
Other Southeast Asian Languages	3	
Papua New Guinea Languages, nfd	2	
Pashto	1	
Persian (excluding Dari)	17	
Pidgin, nfd	2	
Portuguese	2	
Punjabi	5	
Rohingya	1	
Russian	1	
Samoan	3	
Serbian	3	
Sindhi	1	
Sinhalese	3	
Solomon Islands Pijin	1	
Somali	74	
Spanish	3	
Swahili	23	
Tagalog (Filipino)	12	
Tamil	4	
Thai	5	
Tibetan	2	
Tigre	2	
Tigrinya	28	
Tok Pisin	1	
Urdu	4	
Uzbek	2	
Vietnamese	50	
Xhosa	1	
Total	65	778

# Considerations for translanguaging

- Many different languages in classroom – 10-12 is common – no shared language other than English
- Student literacy in HL? English? Oral activities
- Knowledge of languages, support from T/As
- Monolingualism as the norm, accepted pedagogy – challenging
- EAL/D and bilingualism stigma
- Guidelines for language use in the classroom

# Convincing students of the benefits of translanguaging

- Explaining benefits of using multiple languages in the classroom
  - Cognition, deeper thinking
  - Valuing of HL, connection to culture & family, wellbeing & identity
  - Using each others' languages to support understanding
    - Sun / Sola (Norwegian) ⇒ solar energy
    - Square / Vierkant (Dutch) ⇒ “four sides”
    - Entertainment / Psychgogia (Greek) ⇒ “guidance of the soul/food for the soul”

# Introducing TL in my classroom

- Plurilingualism as the norm – using multiple languages often
- Bilingual music & videos e.g. Baker Boy
- Creating & trialling language groups



# LANGUAGE GROUPS

- Group 1 – Fulani, Malinke/Susu
  - S, L
- Group 2 - Arabic
  - A, O
- Group 3 – Dari, Urdu
  - T, A, Z
- Group 4 – Tigrinya, Amharic
  - R, M, R
- Group 5 - Vietnamese
  - E, T
- Group 6 – Swahili, Kirundi
  - M, R, O, R
- Group 7 – Somali
  - S, Y

# Introducing TL in my classroom

- Plurilingualism as the norm – using multiple languages often
- Creating & trialling language groups
- Simple speaking activities to gain trust & familiarity with process
- Signs and instructions in multiple languages

# Anchor activity

Do now: Quiet reading

Gjør dette nå: stille lesing

tan hadda samee: akhriskaaga xasiloon

افعل هذا الآن: قراءة هادئة

اکنون این کار را انجام دهید: خواندن آرام

ทำตอนนี้: อ่านเงียบ ๆ

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अब यह करें: शांत पढ़ना



# Speaking activities – Romeo and Juliet

- Re-tell the story in HL
- Describe one of the characters
- Choose your favourite line and translate it
- Explain the story to your family in HL – are there similar stories in your language/culture?

# Discuss with a partner

- With a partner, tell the story of Romeo and Juliet in your own language. It does not matter if your partner speaks the same language as you – it will help your understanding by explaining it in another language.
- With a partner, describe the characters from Romeo and Juliet in your own language. It does not matter if your partner speaks the same language as you – it will help your understanding by explaining it in another language.

# Translanguaging with podcast unit

## **Classroom activities**

- Compare media texts in English and another language – similarities & differences?
- Listen to a podcast in another language and take notes about the structure
- Examine differences in grammar between languages
- Devise a bi-lingual introduction to your podcast

# Translanguaging with podcast unit

## **Homework activities**

- Discuss the positives and negatives of podcasts with your family/friends in another language. Bring one new idea to class.
- Survey (ask) family and friends from your language group – what would they be interested to hear in a podcast?

# Moving forward with translanguaging

- Incorporate into more class activities
- Requiring some form of translanguaging in most areas of unit
- Possibility of translanguaging in assessment?
  - Create a bilingual podcast (with translation in script)
  - Compare a folk hero from another culture with Ned Kelly
  - Create a brochure in two languages for the \_\_\_\_\_ community
  - Write a drama script which illustrates benefits/challenges of bilingualism (see also *My Two Blankets*)

# Student responses

*Aren't we here  
to learn English?*

- Resistance to new pedagogies
- Student uncertainty about parents' reactions
- Resistance from one student who could not read in his HL
- Interest from Year 9 students
- Increased engagement from Year 10 class in spoken activities
- [<https://padlet.com/jbott27/x07j5390lyrj>]

*"That's my  
language, Miss!"*

# Potential benefits

- Déirdre Kirwan in Ireland – entire primary school transformed through translanguaging (Little & Kirwan, 2018)

“In the early days, some parents expressed concern that allowing their child to use her home language might interfere with her learning of English. But parents’ reservations were quickly overcome by their daughters’ growing enthusiasm for languages and by the educational progress this was helping to foster.”

# Potential benefits

- Andrew Brown's classroom in New York (Garcia & Kleyn, 2016)

“The amount of student participation and investment in their learning is beyond anything I have experienced in a monolingual class.”

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