

Translanguaging

In its basic form, translanguaging is a theory of language practice. And, as in any theory applied to practice, it offers a principled choice between theoretical interpretation and actual implementation. In this sense, translanguaging is a pedagogical term used to describe the natural ways bilinguals use their languages in their everyday lives.

From this perspective, translanguaging represents a holistic and dynamic view of multilingualism. In recent years, translanguaging has been receiving recognition in education, especially by those who believe that individuals naturally use their known languages to amplify their learning of other languages and academic content. So, the question here is: What is translanguaging when it is used as part of daily discourse, and how does it fit in as part of pedagogical practice?

Translanguaging as Part of Daily Bilingual Discourse

Translanguaging refers to the language practices of bilingual/multilingual individuals. It includes simultaneous use of two or more languages; engaging everyone in conversation whether they are familiar with all of the languages represented or not. The practice emphasizes the participants' flexible use of their complex linguistic resources to make meaning of their lives and their complex communications.

For example, consider a family reunion at the Rodriguez home, where several members get together to prepare a meal. Tía Carmen and Tío Ramón are speaking in Spanish, trying to figure out the ingredients needed. They call to Juan, Tania, and Michelle in Spanish to take out some of the ingredients for food preparation. Juan asks Tía Carmen in Spanish what she needs from the refrigerator. Michelle calls out in English that she has found the beans but asks which variety. Tío Ramón calls out in Spanish that he wants the red beans. Tania uses a mixture of Spanish and English to ask Tía Carmen which condiments she wants, "Tía, what else do you need? I have the salt, *adobo*, y *ajo*. ¿Necesitas el *vinagre*, or just the oil?" Their neighbor Russo walks in with the rotisserie chicken he has prepared for that evening, calling out greetings in Italian. Although no one in the house speaks Italian, they all call out excited greetings in either Spanish or English, knowing instinctively what Russo is saying. In this aspect, translanguaging takes the position that language is action and practice, not a discrete system of structures or sets of skills.

Translanguaging as Part of Pedagogical Practice

Translanguaging represents an approach to language pedagogy that affirms and leverages students' diverse language practices in teaching and learning. According to García (2014), "Translanguaging refers to both the discourse practices of bilinguals, as well as to pedagogical practices that use the entire complex linguistic repertoire of bilingual students' flexibly in order to teach rigorous content and develop language practices for academic use."

In other words, translanguaging as pedagogy means that the teacher is aware that the linguistic capabilities of the students go much further than classroom language practices. The teacher knows that they can tap into the students' knowledge base and capabilities as a resource, and that

the students' home language practices can be used to further learning. For example, Mrs. Nieves, a second-grade teacher, knows that her newcomers can count, add, and subtract in Spanish. She uses the content knowledge in the first language to bridge the vocabulary across their home language to the language of the same content in English. Here, the students will be able to express their math knowledge in both the home language and English. Whether used as an active teaching methodology, or as a student support system, instructional translanguageing is always used deliberately and strategically.

Educators and researchers working collaboratively have begun to identify ways in which teachers can use bilingual instructional strategies to support this transfer process, both in order to increase students' overall metalinguistic awareness and to promote academic development. We need to remember that languages do transfer throughout the learning process, and literacy transfers across language systems. So, what are the instructional implications for the use of both languages in the classroom?

One implication is represented by a paradigm shift in how the interconnection of language and content are regarded. Rather than seeing language and instruction as two separate, independent systems, this methodology views language as playing a strategic role in content mastery. There are some key advantages to translanguageing:

1. It promotes a deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter.
2. It helps the development of the less dominant language.
3. It facilitates home-school connections and cooperation.
4. It allows the integration and collaboration of language learners from all proficiency levels.

Translanguageing facilitates cross-linguistic transfer and affords flexibility of first and second language use. It allows students and teachers to engage in complex conversational language practices that include all of the elements of language learning and use in order to develop new language practices. This allows students to maintain those practices already in place and communicate effectively in two or more languages, as well as gain knowledge and skills needed to succeed academically. Fundamentally, translanguageing promotes both L1 & L2 language development, while honoring the home languages and identities of the students.

By Marybelle Marrero-Colón

Watch the recording of Marybelle Marrero-Colón's webinar, [Translanguageing: Defining and Describing Its Use with Second Language Learners](#).

Selected References:

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Translanguaging Strategies

ALL GRADE LEVELS

Description of resource and intended audience :

All of these strategies view the child from an asset-based perspective; the child is seen as having a wealth of knowledge that is welcomed into the classroom and built upon. With these strategies, students' funds of knowledge are embraced for disciplinary learning.

Translanguaging Strategies	
Instructional Practice	What it looks like
Preview learning in home language	Teacher gives a short 2-4 minute summary explaining what the lesson will be about, which includes the content language objective for the lesson Or ask students to restate summary back to the teacher or class, in home language.
Review learning at the end of the lesson in Spanish	The teacher and/or students summarize what the lesson was about, in the home language.

Accessing and building background knowledge in L1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students share what they know in their L1 - Teacher shows videos or provide texts in L1 - Teacher and students create bilingual anchor charts - Students research information about the topic in L1 - Teacher encourages families to talk about the content in their L1 by sending a letter home in advance of the unit/module
Student talk in native language	Students are strategically paired so they have opportunities to speak in their native language with peers during the lesson
Note-taking in L1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students annotate and take notes in L1 - Students brainstorm, plan or draft in their L1 or a combination of L1 and English.
Technology and online translation tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students choose to present a certain strategy using technology that allows to display vocabulary and visuals (PowerPoint/Prezi presentation) - Students use translation devices to translate vocabulary, phrases, and directions in L1
Student dictionaries	Students keep track of translated vocabulary words in their personal student-made bilingual dictionaries
Multilingual resources	Students have access to bilingual dictionaries, picture dictionaries, and translation apps or websites on ipads or computers
Multilingual word walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic and frequently used terms posted in English, Spanish, and other languages (when possible) with sketches, visuals or examples - Teacher can point out cognates on the word wall or have a separate cognate wall
Directions in L1	Teacher provides or prints directions in L1 (e.g. Directions for Workplaces in Math can be printed in Spanish or graphic organizers for literacy can be translated and printed into L1)
Worksheets/workbooks in L1	Students can do their work in L1 (e.g. provide math workbook pages in home language)
Connections to community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connect to social justice topics and extend projects into the community - Allow students to present to school community
Student work in L1	Students can do their work in L1 (even if the worksheet or graphic organizer is in English) and provide an explanation of their response in English, if possible.
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When possible/applicable, assessments can be printed and given in Spanish - Teacher provides/translates directions in L1 - Teacher gives students the option to answer some/all assessment questions in Spanish
Small group instruction	Meet with students in advance to provide preview or review a skill in L1 before the whole group lesson

Translanguaging Strategies Specific to Literacy	
Instructional Practice	What it looks like
Pre-write and complete graphic organizers using all language resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow students to complete graphic organizers and pre-writing in L1 and/or with bilingual dictionary and translation tools before doing their final writing in English - Students can have a bilingual writing partner that can help with words they don't know in English for their final draft
Research using multilingual reading material	Students can conduct research for a topic using books or internet resources in L1
Audio recording ideas in L1	Provide a recording device to allow students to record their ideas in L1 before writing
Bilingual characters	Encourage students to include bilingual characters in their stories and to use dialogue in L1
Text in L1	When available, provide texts in students' native language.
Listening stations in L1	Allow students to listen to stories or texts in L1

Works Cited

Ideas adapted from Garcia, O., Ibarra Johnson, Susana & Seltzer, K. (2017). *The Translanguaging Classroom*. For more information, see CUNY-NYSIEB's resources on translanguaging at: <https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/translanguaging-resources/translanguaging-guides/>