

John Benjamins Publishing Company



This is a contribution from Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education 5:2
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Ofelia García, Susana Ibarra & Kate Seltzer. (2016) *The Translanguaging Classroom: Leveraging Student Bilingualism for Learning*. Philadelphia, PA: Les Editions CEC. ISBN 978-1934000199, 224 pp., paperback with DVD-ROM CAD 39.95.

Reviewed by Kathryn I. Henderson (The University of Texas at San Antonio)

The last ten years has seen an increase in research questioning the strict separation of language in bilingual educational settings. One vein of inquiry has been inspired by the concept of *translanguaging* defined broadly in the scholarly work by Ofelia García (author 1) as the language and meaning-making practices of bilinguals. Translanguaging also refers to the way people think about and act upon these diverse language practices in positive ways, particularly non-standard language performances that have been traditionally marginalized. Subsequently, additional research has continued to challenge and extend the definition of translanguaging including its theoretical application in classroom practice. Lacking up to this point has been a book for educators detailing a pedagogical framework for its implementation. *The Translanguaging Classroom: Leveraging Student Bilingualism for Learning* fills this gap by providing an innovative resource for teachers. This review provides a summary of the book and its key points, followed by an analysis of its strengths with suggestions for how teachers and teacher educators should use it. The final part of the review considers issues and questions raised by the authors in relation to future directions in translanguaging pedagogical applications.

The purpose of the book is threefold: (a) to show translanguaging pedagogy in practice; (b) to empower teachers to adapt translanguaging pedagogy to any context; and (c) to provide a foundation for empirical research. Throughout the book, the authors repeatedly make the argument that teachers need to value and utilize students' full linguistic repertoires by identifying and embracing the *translanguaging corriente* defined as the "flow of students' dynamic bilingualism that runs through our classrooms and schools" (p. 21). The authors present classroom examples, teacher-friendly resources, and templates to accomplish their goals.

The book is organized into three parts. Part one, Dynamic Bilingualism at School (Chapters 1–3) provides teachers with the theoretical foundation for a translanguaging pedagogical framework, and explains how to track and document students' diverse language practices. This section also introduces the three teachers who are used as cases throughout the book. Each teacher implemented

translanguaging pedagogy in his or her classroom, yet worked in distinct contexts: a 4th grade dual-language bilingual education classroom, an 11th grade English-medium social studies classroom, and a 7th grade math/science ESL classroom), serving to accomplish the second purpose of the book – to empower teachers to use a translanguaging pedagogical approach in any context.

Part two, *Translanguaging Pedagogy* (Chapters 4–7) explores three strands of translanguaging pedagogy: the educator’s *stance* (beliefs or ideologies about students’ language practices), instructional *design* (lesson and unit plans that capitalize on students’ bilingualism and include translanguaging objectives), and implementation *shifts* (moment-to-moment instructional decisions that respond to students’ language performances). Part 3, *Reimagining Teaching and Learning Through Translanguaging* (Chapters 8–11) reviews how to implement a translanguaging framework alongside educational standards, develop student content-area literacy and biliteracy, and promote social justice.

The authors of the book, Ofelia García, Susana Ibarra Johnson, and Kate Seltzer, have extensive experience both teaching bilingual students and training teachers to work with linguistically diverse students. Collectively, they have experience instructing emerging bilinguals from elementary school through high school. This allowed for a collaborative effort to knowledgeably address the translanguaging pedagogical framework across a range of contexts. While the scope of the book encompassed the instruction of students from all ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds, there was more focus on Latino and Spanish-speaking bilinguals (including references to Spanish throughout the book), which likely reflects the personal and professional experiences of the authors. Readers working in contexts with Latino bilingual students will find the book particularly relatable and useful.

The book’s most significant contribution is its demonstration of how to put translanguaging theory into practice through a comprehensive pedagogical framework, and the authors do a particularly strong job of providing readers with how to *design* a translanguaging classroom. Model instructional units created by each teacher are introduced throughout the book. The units included language objectives broken down into general linguistic goals and language-specific goals. Each unit also included *translanguaging objectives* or planned ways to use students’ bilingualism for both content and language development. By extending the purpose and structure of traditional objectives, the authors push educators to think about language practices in more complex ways. Teachers can use these units as mentor texts to create instructional plans tailored to their own contexts.

Chapters 3 and 7 are particularly strong stand-alone chapters for teacher-educators to use for professional development and teacher preparation. Chapter 3 presents how to document students’ diverse language practices and provides

teacher-friendly templates and specific classroom implementation examples. The strategies reinforce the theoretical perspective that it is important to acknowledge, validate, and document students' bilingual performances, and to evaluate these performances differently than their monolingual performances.

Chapter 7 is particularly powerful for its clear presentation of translanguaging pedagogy in the classroom. This chapter uses a vignette from an 11th grade social studies classroom to demonstrate all of the concepts in a translanguaging pedagogical framework. The chapter adeptly illustrates the phases in the translanguaging design cycle: *Explorar*, *Evaluar*, *Imaginar*, *Presentar*, and *Implementar* and discusses the translanguaging strategies used at each phase. After reading the chapter, teachers can use the provided template to reflect on their own translanguaging pedagogy. The teacher highlighted in this chapter is monolingual; thus, this chapter would be particularly useful for working with mainstream and/or ESL teachers who do not speak all of their students' languages, but who would like to capitalize on their students' full linguistic repertoire.

An additional strength of the book is its integration and discussion of assessment and standards from a translanguaging pedagogical approach. One of the current challenges teachers face in implementing strong linguistic and culturally relevant instruction is pressure from standardized testing; teachers of bilingual students tend to reduce curriculum, utilize decontextualized (often mandated) test preparation materials, and focus on monolingual instruction. In order for teachers to embrace the theoretical underpinnings of translanguaging pedagogy, the authors emphasize that these teachers in particular must approach assessment in a multi-faceted and holistic way in order to fairly evaluate what bilingual students know and can do.

The authors highlight that the state standards are a useful tool and an important way for teachers to develop strong lesson units and assessments. Indeed, the purpose of educational standards aligns with one of the main purposes of a translanguaging pedagogical approach: to allow students to access complex academic content. All of the instructional units presented in the book are aligned with state standards. However, the book also empowers teachers to reclaim standards for their specific needs: "we use standards; standards do not use us" (p. 120). The authors encourage and show teachers how to expand and localize standards to align with home and community language and cultural practices.

In comparison with the translanguaging pedagogical *stance* and *design*, less attention and space is given to explaining translanguaging *shifts*, and their relationship to the translanguaging *design*. There is a tension between the careful and purposeful design of language practices with the simultaneous need to "shift" in any moment with the flow of students' bilingual performances. This tension needs to be further explored in research and classroom implementation. Some readers

and teachers might be left with questions about the extent to which they allow for shifts, but still meet language-specific performance objectives.

This book does not read like the definitive answer or approach to teaching emerging bilinguals, but rather as an important and well-informed starting point. The book illuminates how much more work needs to be done, and to that end the authors accomplished the goal to provide the foundation for additional empirical research. While translanguaging theory has been developing for over a decade, the implementation of structured translanguaging pedagogy is nascent. It is important that teachers reading this book also publish and share their translanguaging units, assessments, and experiences to help develop and support research-based approaches to translanguaging pedagogy. Hopefully reading this book serves as an inspiration.

While this book explicitly targets teachers, it is equally powerful and important for teacher educators to read and reflect on how a translanguaging approach aligns or conflicts with their current teacher development program and adopted textbooks. Given the high numbers of emerging bilingual students in classrooms across the United States, at a minimum, bilingual, ESL, and mainstream teachers should be informed about this alternative approach to student instruction that encourages language integration and values student, home, and community language practices including traditionally marginalized and stigmatized non-standard practices. Ultimately, this book provides both teachers and teacher educators with a timely and tangible starting point to transform classrooms into empowering spaces for emerging bilinguals and to foster pockets of hope for societal transformation.

Reviewer's address

Kathryn I. Henderson
Department of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies
The University of Texas at San Antonio
One UTSA Circle
San Antonio, TX 78249
USA

Kathryn.Henderson2@utsa.edu