Toward a Translanguaging Pedagogy

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Learning objectives

Participants will...

- Define dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging.
- Explain the importance of a teacher’s translanguaging stance.
- Profile students’ bilingualism.
- Explore a translanguaging unit of instruction that leverages students’ bilingualism for learning.
Getting started

Considering the nature of linguistic diversity at school
Contexts for translanguaging

• **Carla’s 4th grade dual language bilingual classroom**  
  *Albuquerque, NM*  
  • Carla was born in Mexico and uses Spanish and English for personal and professional purposes  
  • Her students bring a wide range of expertise in oral and written Spanish and English to school.

• **Stephanie’s 11th grade English-medium social studies class**  
  *New York, NY*  
  • Stephanie is of Polish descent and does not consider herself bilingual  
  • Most of her students are Latino with a wide range of expertise in oral and written Spanish and English.

• **Justin: ESL teacher in middle school math/science classes**  
  *Los Angeles, CA*  
  • Justin is bilingual in English and Mandarin.  
  • His students speak a wide range of languages including but not limited to Mandarin.
Linguistic diversity in Carla’s dual language bilingual class

Most of Carla’s students are Spanish-speaking bilinguals, although their individual profiles are very different.

- **Moisés** and **Ricardo** are both newcomers who recently emigrated from Mexico, are designated as ELL, and are developing Spanish and English at school.
  - Moisés prefers speaking Spanish.
  - Ricardo speaks Spanish and Mixteco at home, and speaks more Spanish than English at school.
- **Erica** and **Jennifer** were both born in the United States.
  - Erica’s parents are Puerto Rican who speak mostly English at home. Erica prefers speaking English.
  - Jennifer’s parents are from Columbia, and they speak mostly Spanish at home. Jennifer is comfortable using Spanish and English.
Linguistic diversity in Stephanie’s English-medium class

Mostly Latino students with different bilingual profiles. *Students officially designated as ELLs.*

- **Noemí** is a newcomer with a solid educational background in Spanish.
- **Luís** is a newcomer with limited prior schooling. He struggles with literacy and numeracy in any language.
- **Mariana** was born in the United States, was labeled as ELL when she entered school, and has yet to test out of this status.
  - Mariana is considered a long-term ELL, but she generally uses English at school.
  - In fact many of her teachers do not even realize she is still officially considered an ELL.

**Stephanie’s “English-speaking” students**

- **Eddy** and **Teresita** were born in the United States and have different degrees of comfort using Spanish.
- The few students who are not Latinos in her class are African Americans, some from the Anglophone Caribbean.
Linguistic diversity among Justin’s emergent bilinguals

Justin’s students speak many different languages, including Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Mandingo, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Pular (Fula), and French.

- Because there are multiple speakers of Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Tagalog, and Vietnamese in the class, Justin groups students’ so they can leverage their bilingualism for learning.

Additional considerations:

- **Yi-Sheng** is from Taiwan, hasn’t learned to use Latin script, and needs lots of practice writing.
- **Pablo** came not from Mexico, where most Spanish-speakers came from, but from Argentina where he attended private after school classes in English before he came to L.A.
- **Fatoumata** came from Guinea not long ago and had attended school irregularly. She struggles with literacy in French, the language of instruction in Guinea.
Turn and talk: Focusing on our schools

- Tell your partner about the kinds of linguistic variation you find in your class/school.
- Describe the language policy (i.e., bilingual, English-medium) at your school.
- Does your pedagogy build on the linguistic resources that students bring with them to school?
  - If so, how?
  - If not, why not?
1. What do we mean by a dynamic bilingual perspective?

- One bilingual repertoire vs. two monolinguals in one
- Dynamic bilingualism vs. additive bilingualism
- Translanguaging vs. codeswitching

**Task:** Organize into groups of two to four people. Each group takes responsibility for one pair of vocabulary words/phrases/clauses.

Within your group, discuss what you understand by your pair of terms. Use the vocabulary notebook on your handout and jot down the connections you make, and write a preliminary definition. Be prepared to share with the larger group.
| Word | Connections  
                      Where have I heard it?  
                      What does it remind me of? | Meaning(s)  
                       From class  
                       From texts (dictionary, articles) |
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Translanguaging

Translanguaging can be understood on two different levels.

- From a sociolinguistic perspective it describes the fluid language practices of bilingual communities.
- From a pedagogical perspective it describes a pedagogical approach whereby teachers build bridges from these language practices and the language practices desired in school settings.

- Flores and Schissel 2014, pp. 461-462.
Purposes for translanguaging

1. Support students as they engage with complex content and texts.
2. Provide opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts.
3. Make space for students’ bilingualism and bilingual ways of knowing.
4. Support students’ socioemotional development and bilingual identities.

These four purposes work together to advance social justice.
Purpose 1. Support students as they engage with complex content and texts → Stephanie’s class.

Luis, who recently came to the United States from El Salvador, shared in Spanish with the whole class that “las áreas oscuras están cerca de ciudades como Nueva York y Los Ángeles. Muchos Latinos viven en esas ciudades.”

Mariana, who was in Luis’ group, eagerly added: “Yes, Latinos live in the dark areas on the map. Like in New York and Los Angeles.”

Some students nodded and others wrote down the comment in Spanish or English next to their own in their notebooks.

Eddy added in English that “cities have more pollution than other places.”

Stephanie then summed up, “It sounds like what you’re saying is that if most Latinos live in cities, and cities have more air pollution than rural or suburban areas, that this might be a cause of increased asthma in Latinos.”

Students nodded and voiced their agreement.
Purpose 1. Support students as they engage with complex content and texts → Carla’s class.

Carla took [a] large sheet of chart paper and drew la corriente del Río Grande.

On one side she wrote a sentence the author had written in English. She then asked the groups to translate into Spanish what the author would have said if she were on the Texas side of the Río Grande.

While they worked, one group grew louder.

Carla asked what was the matter and one of them said: “Maestra, es que mi familia on the other side also speaks English. And on this side también hablamos español.”

A whole class discussion then ensued about bilingual language practices in the borderlands and when and how to use them.
Purpose 2: Provide opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts → Stephanie’s class.

After the student read the statistics, Stephanie checked the class’ comprehension of the English used. Luis said: “Maestra no entiendo” (and pointed to the phrase “more likely”). Stephanie asked students to translate it for Luis, and this turned into a heated discussion. Some translated it as “más me gusta” [I like it more]. Others as “más como” [more like]. Finally, Stephanie asked Luis to use the translating app on a class iPad, and he immediately came back with “más probable.” Stephanie annotated the text on the SMART Board with this Spanish phrase. Now all students in the class knew not only what it meant in English, but also how to say it in Spanish.
Purpose 3: Make space for students’ bilingualism and bilingual ways of knowing → Carla’s class.

Esta parte que leí me gusta porque los trabajadores que construyeron el ferrocarril le llamaban al tren que venía de Kansas a Chihuahua “si te cansas.” Yo creo que no sabían cómo decir Kansas, entonces para recordar cómo decirlo solamente mencionaban “si te cansas.”

[Everyone starts laughing.] Moisés explained how railroad workers adapted the word Kansas [/kænsəs/] to a Spanish word that was similar in pronunciation, cansas [/kansas/].

Other students joined in: “En mi casa nosotros usamos este tipo de palabra....”

And another, “Sí es cierto; he oído algo así también en mi casa.”

The students then shared that, for example, the Spanish word gel [pronounced “hel”] for hair gel was used to remember how to pronounce the English word help.

The Spanish word flor [flower] was used to help recall the pronunciation of the English word floor.
Purpose 4: Support students’ socioemotional development and bilingual identities → Stephanie’s class.

Eddy shared in English that his brother had really bad asthma and has had to go to the hospital several times. Luis jumped in saying, “Me too! My brother…él…in El Salvador…” Sensing that Luis was having trouble continuing in English, Stephanie asked him to finish his sentence in Spanish. Luis continued in Spanish, explaining that his brother, who still lives in El Salvador, worked construction and that the dust from the worksite gave him asthma attacks. Stephanie listened, and when Luis was finished, she asked another student in Luis’ group, Mariana, to translate what Luis said. Though Mariana understands Spanish, she has told Stephanie that she feels more comfortable speaking English. However, she is a very competent translator, a skill for which, as Stephanie knows, she is often praised by her family.
The translanguaging corriente

- Refers to different and fluid language and cultural practices that flow through classrooms, even when invisible.
- The characteristics of the translanguaging corriente in any particular classroom reflects the language repertoires of the bilingual students and teachers.

Turn and talk: Can you hear the translanguaging corriente in your classroom? What does it sound like? Does its force vary depending on classroom activity?
The translanguaging classroom framework

*The importance of the teacher’s stance*

- Students’ translinguaging performances
  - General linguistic performance
  - Language-specific performance
  - Dynamic translanguaging progressions

- The translanguaging corriente

- Teacher’s translanguaging pedagogy
  - Stance
  - Design
  - Shifts

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2. What is the *translanguaging* stance?

A translanguaging teacher’s juntos/together stance is informed by three beliefs:

- Students’ language practices and cultural understanding encompass those they bring from home and communities, as well as those they take up in schools. These practices and understandings work juntos and enrich each other.

- Students’ families and communities are valuable sources of knowledge and must be involved in the education process juntos.

- The classroom is a democratic space where teachers and students juntos co-create knowledge, challenge traditional hierarchies, and work toward a more just society.
Turn and talk

Describe your stance toward students’ languages, communities, cultures, and practices.

- How is this stance reflected in your pedagogy?
- How does it relate to a translanguaging stance?
The translanguaging classroom framework
An asset-based approach

Students’ translanguaging performances
- General linguistic performance
- Language-specific performance
- Dynamic translanguaging progressions

The translanguaging corriente

Teacher’s translanguaging pedagogy
- Stance
- Design
- Shifts
3. What tools can we use to profile each student’s dynamic bilingualism?

- Using the Bilingual student identification and profile form
- Placing student performances along the dynamic translanguaging progressions
- Relating the dynamic translanguaging progressions to standardized ELD frameworks
Erica’s profile

- **Erica** is a 4th grade student in a dual language bilingual program.
- Her parents are Puerto Rican but she was born in New Mexico and grew up speaking mostly English at home, although Spanish was also spoken.
- Because Erica was not officially designated as an ELL she was simply seen as an English speaker, and the Spanish she brought with her to school went unnoticed.
- After attending an English-medium kindergarten, Erica’s parents requested that Erica be placed in the DLBE program so she would develop her bilingualism and biliteracy.
- Erica is now in Carla’s 4th grade class and her literacy performances are at grade level in English, and almost at grade level in Spanish.
- In terms of speaking, Erica prefers to communicate with her friends in class and during recess in English.
- In class, Carla notices that Erica is hesitant to speak Spanish.
- Carla has also noticed that since she allowed Erica to use both languages during Cuéntame algo, Erica has further developed her comfort with using Spanish.
Identifying spaces for translanguaging

*Erica draws from one linguistic repertoire and all her linguistic resources to make meaning and interact with different participants. This includes deciding which languages and varieties are appropriate for what audiences and purposes*.  

*With dual language bilingual teacher born in Puebla, Mexico during English time, Spanish time, and Cuéntame algo space.*

*With Puerto Rican parents who generally use English at home.*

*With grandmother and other family members during the summer in Puerto Rico.*

*With classmates (mostly New Mexican with a wide range of expertise in oral and written Spanish and English) in Spanish and English during small group activities.*

*With native American best friend who speaks English and is learning Dine at school.*

*Inspired by Cristian Solorza, Director of Bilingual / Dual Language Programs, Bank Street College of Education in New York and his team (Gladys Aponte and Timothy Becker.) CUNY-NYSIEB Webinars, on YouTube.*
Placing Erica along the dynamic translanguaging progressions:

![Diagram showing Erica's translanguaging progression as evaluated by her teacher in school.]

**Figure 3.5** Erica's translanguaging progression, as evaluated by her teacher in school.

- Language-specific performance in English
- Language-specific performance in Spanish
- General linguistic performance

**Student:** Erica

**Text:** *Lluvia de plata* by Sara Poot Herrera

**Standard:** Reading Literature, grade 4. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**Performance tasks**
- Reading in Spanish
- Discussing reading with peers using a guide to compile textual evidence (details, examples) to support text summary and inferences.
- Independent writing task in Spanish that summarizes the reading text and makes inferences from that text using examples and details from the text.
TABLE 3.2 Performances along the Dynamic Translanguaging Progressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Erica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Literature: Grade 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Core Anchor Standard</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Core Grade Standard</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main Academic Demand</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Draw inferences using evidence from the text.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grade-Level Academic Demand</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Refer to text detail to explain and draw inferences.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oracy</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commanding</strong></td>
<td>Refers to ample details and examples in a text that explain what the text says and can draw substantial inferences from the details and examples. <strong>General linguistic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expanding</strong></td>
<td>Refers to many details and examples in a text that explain what the text says and can draw appropriate inferences from the details and examples. <strong>English oracy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing</strong></td>
<td>Refers to multiple details and examples in a text that explain what the text says and can draw relevant inferences from the details and examples. <strong>Spanish oracy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging</strong></td>
<td>Refers to several details and examples in a text that explain what the text says and can draw vague inferences from the details and examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entering</strong></td>
<td>Refers to very minimum details and examples in a text that explain what the text says. Details and examples cited may not be appropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Translanguaging:** Bilinguals from all levels can refer to details and examples in a text and draw inferences from details and examples by previewing, viewing, and reviewing the texts in multiple languages, discussing orally signing and/or exploring in writing and responding orally using their entire language repertoires, with freedom to select linguistic features or with language-specific features.

Carla's assessment of Erica’s performances. Carla’s assessments are indicated in bold.
Turn and talk

How can teachers leverage students’ bilingualism for learning?

• Consider the **purposes for translanguaging**, as well as students’ **general linguistic performances** and **language-specific performances** in English and other languages.
4. How can teachers design translanguaging units of instruction and assessment that leverage student bilingualism for learning?

- **Students’ translanguaging performances**
  - General linguistic performance
  - Language-specific performance
  - Dynamic translanguaging progressions

- **The translanguaging corriente**

- **Teacher’s translanguaging pedagogy**
  - Stance
  - Design
  - Shifts
Translanguaging Unit Plan

- Big questions
- Content standards
- Content and language objectives
  - General linguistic objectives
  - Language-specific objectives
- Translanguaging objectives
- Translanguaging assessments
  - Culminating project
  - Teacher’s assessment
  - Student self-assessment
  - Peer assessment
  - Family assessment: La conexión
- Texts
Turn and talk

- How does Carla’s unit plan reflect her stance toward translanguaging?
- How does this plan address the four purposes for translanguaging?
Carla’s translinguaging design cycle

**Explorar**
- Gather knowledge through note taking to better understand how physical, cultural, and social practices influence where people live
- Interview local community leaders about local farming practices
- Survey the local/global farming practices from multiple resources (e.g., technology, community, and written texts)

**Implementar**
- Put into practice local farming practices by developing a class plan about what the jardín needs for the fall harvest
- Thinking forward, the class cultivates the soil in preparation for the spring harvest

**Presentar**
- Read essay to peers; peers provide oral feedback
- Written peer review is done in pairs or triads using writing rubric to provide concrete feedback
- Revise essay and prepare an oral presentation for the class (later to the school community) for feedback

**Evaluar**
- State and categorize the need to revitalize the local jardín
- Make a decision individually whether the local jardín needs to be revitalized or not
- Select community leaders to support with the revitalization project

**Imaginar**
- Develop a class plan about what the jardín needs for fall harvest
- Access local community knowledge and leaders about the local farming practices
- Develop a draft of an argumentative essay supporting the importance of sustaining the local jardín
1. How does Carla’s translanguaging design cycle allow her to address the
   • general linguistic objectives?
   • language-specific objectives in Spanish and English?
   • translanguaging objectives?

2. How can Carla assess her students’ performance relative to the objectives throughout the unit design cycle?

3. How does Carla leverage student bilingualism for learning?
The translanguaging classroom framework

*The shifts*

- **Students’ translanguaging performances**
  - General linguistic performance
  - Language-specific performance
  - Dynamic translanguaging progressions

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**The translanguaging corriente**

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**Teacher’s translanguaging pedagogy**

- Stance
- Design
- Shifts
Shifts: Changing course to valorar

Translanguaging teachers can use different kinds of unplanned moves to respond to the translanguaging corriente and affirm students’ socioemotional well-being:

- Listen to students and their cuentos, using all their language practices.
- Respond to students’ performances in ways that are intimately tied to what students are doing, with whatever language practices
- Value what students and families have to say (and how they say it) sufficiently to depart from your planned lesson (and your planned language use) as necessary.
- Be willing to change course when students’ and families’ cuentos bring other perspectives and language choices from the one of your lesson design.
Closing reflections

1. What stood out?
2. What did you learn?
3. What can you use?
4. What questions do you have?