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Translanguaging Pedagogy and Research: Disruption and Affirmation

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Abstract:

Increasing physical and social mobility, technological advances, and regional conflicts have contributed to the advent of the *post-multilingualism era* (Li Wei, 2018), where the historically constructed boundaries between languages have become blurred. Within this blurring, translanguaging has emerged in the field of applied linguistics as a powerful lens for conceptualizing how students and teachers negotiate language classrooms as multilingual spaces. Translanguaging refers to the language practices that multilinguals use for meaning-making by drawing upon their full linguistic repertoire (Garcia, 2009; Sayer, 2013). In this talk, I will discuss why translanguaging has captured the attention and imagination of scholars and educators in multilingual language education. In particular, I will highlight two main aspects of translanguaging as an approach to language education that, while they often go unacknowledged, are key elements: *disruption* and *affirmation*.

Disruption refers to the potential of translanguaging to challenge conventional approaches to English language education based on monolingual norms, standard language ideology, and native speakerism. I refer to these as *productive disruptions*, because in de-centering notions that have been foundational to the field, we have been forced to recognize and reckon with how language education can become more inclusive and more representative, what Alim (2010) refers to as critical language awareness. *Affirmation* refers to the broader project of translanguaging scholars to have language pedagogy not just teach language as a linguistic object, but to affirm students' identities and personhood. In this sense, translanguaging pedagogy aligns with culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017), and taps into students' linguistic funds of knowledge (Velasco, 2014). It recognizes that language teaching is always a political act, and that we must always consider the issues of equity, access, and social justice in our teaching and research. I will give examples of both disruptions and affirmations from language classrooms that I have encountered during my 10+ years of research in this area and suggest directions for looking forward as educators look to understand and leverage the potential of translanguaging in their own work.

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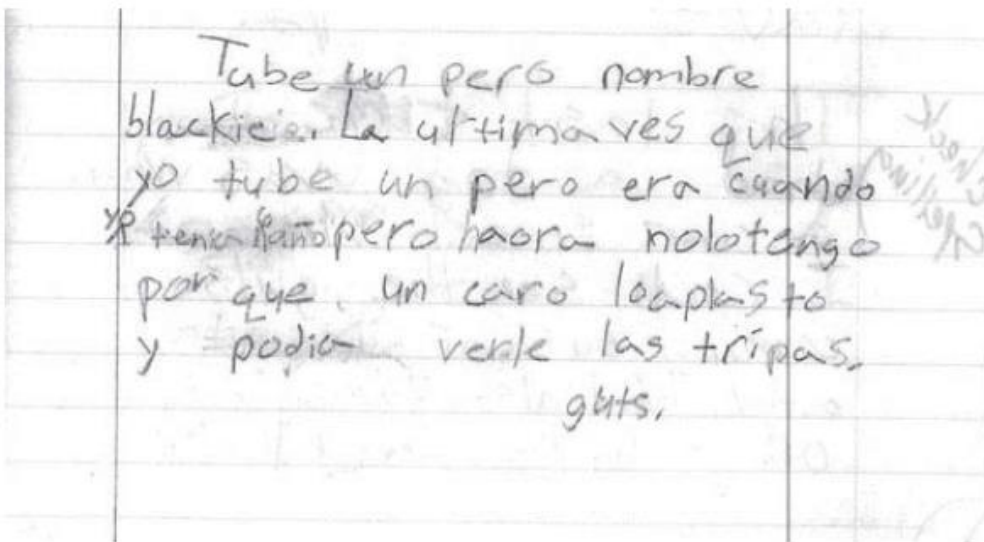
Transcript 1: Translanguaging mediates understanding of academic content

2nd grade science lesson. Students are labelling a diagram of a spider. Jacky is talking about spider's egg sac:

1. Lo que yo no entiendo es porque sale en un puffy little thing así que cargan arriba this little puffy thing.

(What I don't understand is why it comes it in a puffy little thing like that carrying above it this little puffy thing.)

Transcript 2: Translanguaging in L2 Writing (Velasco & Garcia, 2014)



Transcription: *Tubo un perro nombre blackie. La ultima ves que yo tube un perro era cuando yo tenia 6 ano pero haora no lo tengo porque un carro lo aplasto y podia verle las tripas.*

guts

["I had a dog named Blackie. The last time I had a dog was when I was 6, but now I don't have him because a car squashed him and I could see his guts."]

FIGURE 2a First diary entry in "Spanish." Anticipating the use of the word *guts*.

Transcript 3: Translanguaging in Content-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) science classroom (Poza, 2014)

12→		<i>New Window:(.)</i>	[Reading from monitor]
13		<i>Luego(.)</i>	(Then)
14	E:	<i>Voy a ir(.)</i>	(I'm going to go)
15		<i>Google(.)</i>	[Reading from bookmarks bar on monitor]
16		<i>Voy a poner(.)</i>	(I'm going to put)
17		<i>E:l::m::e::n::to::</i>	[narrating typing into search bar] (Element)
18		<i>Ne:on:</i>	
19		<i>'kay↑?</i>	
20		<i>Elemento neon(.)</i>	[repeating search bar entry] (Element neon)
21	M:	<i>And then you're gonna(.)</i>	
22		<i>Vas a poner:=</i>	(You're going to put)
23→	E:	<i>=Images?</i>	[reading from website]
24	M:	<i>No(.)</i>	
25		<i>Um:(.)</i>	
26	E:	<i>(xxx)</i>	
27	M:	<i>Um:(.)</i>	
28		<i>Facts</i>	
29		<i>F:a:c:t:s</i>	[Melissa spells the word as Elsa types into the search bar]
30	E:	<i>So(..)</i>	
31		<i>Voy a poner</i>	(I'm going to put)
32→		<i>neon facts for kids(1)</i>	[Narrating while typing into the search bar]
33		<i>Ha(.)</i>	
34→		<i>I love neon (.)</i>	[Reading from Internet search results]
35		<i>That's hilarious</i>	
36	M:	<i>Ok:ay(.)</i>	
37		<i>periodic table</i>	
38→		<i>Learn facts about neon</i>	[Reading from search results]

Transcript 4: Translanguaging as Disruption

Teacher is working on an eBook project with two Grade 2 Spanish-speaking EL students. She wants to encourage their use of Spanish as a resource (Rowe, 2020)

01 Tchr [Talking about sharing eBooks with the class later in the week]

02 Jose What can I share?

03 Tchr You can share *The Adventure* or the Mexico book [in Spanish]

04 Jason No, because they're not gonna understand. Jose is the only one who's gonna understand, he's the only Mexican who knows that.

05 Tchr But, friend, it would be a really cool opportunity to teach them about Mexico—

06 Jason Ahh! No no—

07 Jose [Shaking head] if they want to learn they have to learn

08 Jason If they want to learn—

09 Jose—we took our time

10 Jason —they go

11 Jose—to learn our language

12 Jason Yeah we took our time, we took our time to learn Spanish

13 Tchr But they might want to learn some about it and you could help explain

14 Jason No no no they're gonna copy our Spanish, they're gonna be like [mocking accent] *hola como estas?* and they only know a little bit of numbers in Spanish

Transcript 5: Translanguaging as Affirmation

An Indonesian pre-service EFL teacher is doing a microteaching lesson. The T speaks Indonesian (national language) and Javanese (local language). Most Ss speak Javanese, but others are from various ethnolinguistic backgrounds. (Iswandari, 2022-unpublished)

T: Okay, good. Then who's your inspiring teacher? And why? Here you'll look back at your experiences, when you were in elementary school, junior high school, senior high school. **Masih ingat kan ya sama guru-gurunya?** [*You still remember your teachers, right?*].

S: Yes, sir, especially the very good ones or the scariest ones.

T: Okay, good. So think about the reasons why she or he was inspiring. **Mungkin dulu pernah punya pengalaman pribadi** [*maybe you had a personal experience*]. Let say, you were helped by your teacher when you could not do the task, that's why he was very inspiring for you or something like that. And then the last question is, what does a good or great teacher look like? It can be from your experience, or it can be from books or information that you have read so far. For example, a good teacher must be kind, ora galak [not scary], kayak saya to [like me, yes?].

S: **Cieh, Pak Ardi. Mosok to, hahaha** [*Really, Mr. Ardi? Hahaha*]

T: **Lho iya** [*That's true *smiling*] Teacher must smile all the time, **tapi kalau ketawa terus nanti dikira edan** [*but if you laugh all the time, you'll be like a crazy person *laughing*]. Something like that. Another example?

S: **Digugu lan ditiru, Pak** [*who is listened and who can be a role model*]

T: Good, **digugu lan ditiru**. What is **digugu lan ditiru**? [*who is listened and who can be a role model*]. Can you explain so that those who are not Javanese understand. That's a Javanese saying, by the way.

S: It's like the teacher can be a good role model for the students, **jadi teladan untuk murid** [*as a role model for students*]

T: Okay, good.