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Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ubrj20

Translanguaging and the Writing of Bilingual Learners

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Published online: 22 Apr 2014.

To cite this article: Patricia Velasco & Ofelia García (2014) Translanguaging and the Writing of Bilingual Learners, Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education, 37:1, 6-23, DOI: 10.1080/15235882.2014.893270

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2014.893270

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Bilingual Research Journal, 37: 6–23, 2014
Copyright © the National Association for Bilingual Education
ISSN: 1523-5882 print / 1523-5890 online
DOI: 10.1080/15235882.2014.893270

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RESEARCH ARTICLES

Translanguaging and the Writing of Bilingual Learners

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This article makes the case for using translanguaging in developing the academic writing of bilinguals. It reviews the emerging literature on learning and teaching theories of translanguaging and presents theoretical understandings of biliteracy development and specifically on the teaching of writing to bilingual learners. The article analyzes five written texts produced by young bilingual writers in which translanguaging is used in the planning, drafting, and production stages of writing. It analyzes how and why translanguaging is used, as well as the effect it has in the development of writing and of voice. Translanguaging in writing is here proposed more as a self-regulating mechanism in which bilingual students can engage, rather than a pedagogy to be used in the teaching of writing itself. That is, the objective of this writing is not translanguaging itself, but the writing in one or the other constructed academic language that is the object of learning in school. Yet, the article makes it clear that even to develop the monolingual voice in writing that schools—and even bilingual schools—expect, a translanguaging approach has the most potential.

INTRODUCTION

The key to successful teaching is knowing how students learn. Learning involves providing students with different avenues to process, construct, and acquire academic content. In the case of bilingual education, and despite its growth all over the world in the 21st century (García, 2009),

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there is little understanding of how two or more languages interact and affect learning. This is because most bilingual education programs separate languages strictly, viewing bilinguals as "two monolinguals in one" (Grosjean, 1989).

But in the recent past, scholars have challenged the strict separation of languages in classrooms, opening up space for what we are calling here the practice of *translanguaging*. This article contributes to the emerging literature on the theory of translanguaging. It focuses specifically on the potential of translanguaging for bilingual writers and presents evidence of how translanguaging during the writing process—in planning, drafting, and production—is particularly important for bilingual students as they learn to self-regulate their complex linguistic repertoire.

We start this article by reviewing the literature on translanguaging, to then focus on the literature on biliteracy, and specifically on the development and teaching of writing to bilinguals. We then present and analyze the language use in five short texts written by young bilingual children (kindergarten to fourth grade) enrolled in dual-language bilingual education programs in Spanish/English and Korean/English. As we will see, the five writing samples selected for discussion in this article make evident that the young bilingual writers use translanguaging to achieve higher standards of thought, creativity, and language use than when restricted to monolingual or double-bilingual processes. Rather than seeing translanguaging as a simple teaching scaffold, this article makes evident the potential of translanguaging to meet higher standards, specifically in academic writing, and to promote bilingual students' self-regulation of their entire linguistic repertoire.

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TRANSLANGUAGING

In the recent past, terms that underline the interrelationship between language practices of bilinguals have emerged. These include *flexible bilingualism* (Creese & Blackledge, 2010), *heteroglossia* (Bailey, 2007), *polylingualism* (Jørgensen, 2010), *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), and *code meshing* (Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007; Canagarajah, 2011). A term that has become widely accepted is *translanguaging* (TL), which was initially posited by the Welsh educator, Colin Williams (1996) and developed by García (2009) and many others, including Blackledge and Creese (2010), Canagarajah (2011), Creese and Blackledge (2010), Hornberger and Link (2012), Li (2011), and Lewis, Jones, and Baker, (2012a, 2012b). Translanguaging does not view the languages of bilinguals as separate linguistic systems. The term stresses the flexible and meaningful actions through which bilinguals select features in their linguistic repertoire in order to communicate appropriately. From this perspective, the language practices being learned by emergent bilinguals are in functional interrelationship with other language practices and form an integrated system. TL is more than code switching, which considers that the two languages are separate systems (or codes) and are "switched" for communicative purposes (for a full discussion on translanguaging, see García and Li, in press).

For García (2013), translanguaging is not a mere strategy. It comprises a bilingual theory of learning, especially for language-minoritized populations. In fact, translanguaging becomes the framework for conceptualizing the education of bilinguals as a democratic endeavor for social justice (García, 2013). Teaching practices that jeopardize this reality essentially undermine the right to learn of language-minority children.

Cummins's Interdependence Theory (1981, 2000) posits that when emergent bilinguals are taught in, and develop, their home language, that proficiency will be valuable for the development of an additional language. In this sense, the Interdependence Principle underlies translanguaging practices. We consider translanguaging as the enactment of the interdependence of language practices that characterizes and differentiates the learning of bilinguals from that of monolinguals. But a translanguaging theory goes beyond Cummins's conceptualization of interdependence in that an L1 and an L2 are not posited. Translanguaging acknowledges that languages are social constructs that reflect nation-state ideologies (Heller, 2007). Bilinguals possess only one complex linguistic repertoire from which bilingual learners select features that are socioculturally appropriate for the academic (or communicative) task at hand. Bilinguals do not have simply an L1 and an L2, but *one* linguistic repertoire with features that have been socially assigned to constructions that are considered "languages," including academic ones (for a fuller discussion of the invention of languages, see Makoni & Pennycook, 2007).

The theory of translanguaging is gradually producing pedagogies that use what Cummins (2009) calls "bilingual instructional strategies," for as he says, they have the potential of "opening up the pedagogical space in ways that legitimate the intelligence, imagination, and linguistic talents of ELL [English language learner] students" (p. xi). But although much work is being conducted in this regard (see Celic & Seltzer, 2011), translanguaging has met the most resistance in the area of writing. It is now to the topic of biliteracy and translanguaging that we turn.

BILITERACY AND TRANSLANGUAGING

Hornberger's *continua of biliteracy* addresses the complex relationship between two languages and their context, media, content, and development (2003). Hornberger (2005) adds:

> Bi/multilinguals' learning is maximized when they are allowed and enabled to draw from across all their existing language skills (in two+ languages), rather than being constrained and inhibited from doing so by monolingual instructional assumptions and practices. (p. 607)

García, Bartlett, and Kleifgen (2007) have contributed the term *pluriliteracies* to emphasize the interrelationship of semiotic systems that respond to different social and cultural contexts in which multilinguals engage, as they communicate around written texts.

The perspective offered by the continua of biliteracy (Escamilla et al., 2013) and the pluriliteracies lens, though, has been slow to filter into educational settings. And yet, even before the term *translanguaging* was introduced, there was mounting evidence that the influences that bilingual language practices exert on academic literacy development, as understood in schools, is a complex undertaking.

Research on writing development have pointed to the interconnections of language practices that are exhibited early on, even across "languages" that do not share the same writing systems. Edelsky (1986) conducted extensive research on Spanish-speaking children's writing in English. A team of researchers analyzed 500 written texts from first, second, and third graders attending a semirural, migrant school. Edelsky concluded that literacy in Spanish supported the acquisition of literacy in English. When the students in Edelsky's research wrote in English, they used what they knew about literacy in their first language (one emergent bilingual student wrote: *ai joup llu gou agien tu scu ll*—"I hope you go again to school"). And yet, children never used Spanish

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words or sentences when writing in English. This is a significant finding, since it shows that these emergent bilinguals were aware that writing, as an academic endeavor in an English-language school system, required them to use English exclusively. And yet, Edelsky's research is important because it presented a contrast to the notion of interference (or *negative transfer*), a common term used in the 1980s literature on second-language acquisition (Rutherford, 1984). Instead of reporting positive or negative transfer, Edelsky saw these learners' strategies as revealing an integrated reasoning.

Lanauze and Snow (1989) focused on Spanish-speaking fourth and fifth graders who were learning in bilingual classrooms in Spanish and English. Students who were considered good writers in Spanish were able to use what they knew, even though their English skills, particularly their capacity to construct sentences, were limited. The Edelsky (1986) and Lanauze and Snow (1989) studies are evidence of the capacity of translanguaging in the writing process, that is, the possibility of drawing from the children's entire linguistic repertoire in the writing process even if writing is produced in one "language." And yet, both studies demonstrate the reluctance that teachers have in allowing bilingual writers to draw from their entire linguistic repertoire—an ideology that is then passed on to students.

Studies of the strategic opportunities in writing that translanguaging offers for bilingual students have proliferated in the last decade, although scholars may describe the process differently from the way we're conceptualizing translanguaging as *one* linguistic repertoire. Danling Fu was one of the earliest and strongest proponents of using the child's home language to develop writing in the other language (2003, 2009). Fu (2003) writes about the ways in which she uses what she calls a *bilingual process approach* to develop Chinese students' writing abilities in English:

> I believe thinking (reasoning and imagination) and the ability to organize ideas are equally, or even more, important than language skills in learning to write. If we let our students express themselves and present their ideas in their primary language, we give them opportunities to continue the development of their thinking. With this development uninterrupted, they are able to write well in a second language once they develop proficiency in it. (p. 74)

Gort (2006, 2012) has described how interactional spaces where children can use their two languages support bilingual literacy skills. Furthermore, she shows how the two languages remain activated throughout the writing process in order to carry out writing-related tasks. Likewise, Kibler (2010) demonstrates how bilingual students utilize both languages to enact expertise in different elements of the writing task.

Kabuto (2011) describes the writing development in Japanese and English of her daughter Emma. From the beginning stages, Emma gathered information about the three Japanese writing systems—Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji—and English. At the age of four, Emma was able to differentiate directionally. Her attempts show vertical writing in Hiragana and horizontal writing in English. Emma's early writing also showed what Kabuto refers to as "script-switching." In one attempt, Emma wanted to write *Emma's origami*. She wrote "*Emma's"* using the English possessive form, perhaps because in Japanese it is not possible to isolate the "*s*." *Origami* was then written in Japanese. Kabuto considers that the script-switching that her daughter used emphasizes the larger connection between writing and identity that is particular to bilinguals.

Kano (García & Kano, in press) developed a translanguaging pedagogy to teach Japanese American middle- and high-school students how to write essays in English for the SAT. The

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students translanguaged frequently by referring to other language texts or through their inner speech in order to make meaning of their writing, regardless of where they were positioned in the bilingual continuum. The Japanese American students demonstrated much autonomy and control for the task in which they were involved.

What all these studies show is that bilingual writers use different problem-solving strategies and exhibit ways of expressing meaning that are not present in monolingual writing. Writing is by definition a recursive process (Emig, 1971) defined by stages in which the writer moves back and forth through planning, drafting, and producing a final version. Bilingual writers use problem-solving strategies in drafting that are particular to bilinguals (Cumming, 1990). For example, bilingual writers often use *back translations*, entailing translating words and phrases that they're using in one language into the "other" language. This strategy is often used to verify the intended meaning or use (Wolfersberger, 2003). Another strategy used is, when not able to think about a word in midsentence, to *rehearse* (in the sense of trying out) all the words in his or her linguistic repertoire that may provide the best fit. *Postponing* is yet another strategy often used by bilingual writers. Postponing entails putting down the word in the "other" language and continuing to write only to come back to that word at the end. Porte (1996, 1997) and Stevenson, Schoonen, and De Glooper (2006) found that language revisions in final drafts were made in the language in which the text was being produced, and bilinguals made more vocabulary revisions than monolinguals.

What we take from this body of research is that the writing process is a complex one and that translanguaging may be a helpful and legitimate part of the writing process of bilinguals. TL entails deliberate action to solve writing problems at the word, sentence, and whole-text level. Reverting to the entire language repertoire serves as a yardstick to measure the quality and precision of how ideas are conveyed in writing. In translanguaging, students are using a strategy that all learners employ—using what they know to solve what they do not.

TRANSLANGUAGING PEDAGOGY IN WRITING

Using a pedagogy that values the students' cultures and background to write in an additional language has been consistently found to be helpful. Lay (1982) found that the use of the home language was particularly useful when writing about culture-bound topics. It appears that searching for information stored in memory is aided when the search is carried out in the language of the topic. Lay's subjects incorporated more details and more ideas when writing about their own culture. More recently, Cummins's (2006) "identity texts" show how emergent bilinguals, when allowed to share their past and present challenges and experiences (including cultural and linguistic resources), produce much improved written texts. Cummins's identity texts allow children to use all multimodalities—spoken, written, musical, visual, and dramatic—that can amplify the message. Identity texts go beyond cognitive and linguistic considerations. Such texts recognize the impact that the student's emotional, cultural, and personality characteristics play in learning.

All these practices favor the use of the child's entire linguistic repertoire. Michael-Luna and Canagarajah (2007) followed two first-grade students in a bilingual classroom, as they developed literacy. Their teacher implemented six translanguaging practices that the authors refer to as *code-meshing*:

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1. *Multilingual text selection*, using bilingual books.
2. *Activation of knowledge from inside and outside the text:* The teacher asked questions in English, but accepted answers in Spanish. Subsequently, the teacher provided the English equivalent.
3. *Valuing multilingual code meshing*: The teacher accepted answers that reflected understanding, e.g., "our earth gives us *agua*."
4. *Modeling oral code-meshing*: The teacher used translation with contextual support when encountering an unknown word in English: e.g., "to warm up"/*calentar*).
5. *Modeling written code-meshing:* As when one of the students answered: "The bug *está muerto,*" and the teacher wrote it down.
6. *Strategic scaffolding of text negotiation*, which used translanguaging to comprehend the story, rather than producing a monolingual text.

In another study, Canagarajah (2011) explores why a Saudi Arabian college student, Buthainah, uses code-meshing in writing: for (a) recontextualization (actively changing the level of comfort that the reader would have with different amounts or types of code-meshing), (b) voice (for identity), (c) interaction (addressing and involving the reader directly), and (d) textualization (using code-meshing as a rhetorical device for aesthetic and persuasive purposes). Through the process of reflecting on her code-meshing, Buthainah gained a deeper understanding of herself as a writer, and her metalinguistic awareness deepened as she differentiated mistakes from rhetorical devices used to engage the reader.

Celic and Seltzer's (2011) translanguaging teacher guide was written for the CUNY-NYSIEB project (www.cuny-nysieb.org), which features translanguaging as a strategy to teach emergent bilinguals. For content-area and writing instruction, Celic and Seltzer describe how translanguaging strategies interact with interactive writing, language experience approach, independent writing, and multigenre writing.

All these translanguaging pedagogies facilitate learning for bilingual students. Still, learning is not exclusively subjected to the work that a teacher or any other appropriately competent resource person can provide. Learning also takes place as an individual endeavor, when students set their own goals and find ways to pursue them. It is to the self-regulation of learning in writing that we now turn.

TRANSLANGUAGING IN WRITING AS SELF-REGULATED LEARNING

Undoubtedly, learners make deliberate efforts to set strategies in motion, having goals in mind as to what they want to achieve and how. Translanguaging can be considered a strategy to achieve a goal, and it is in itself a process that draws from all the semiotic tools at hand. Such activities, known as *self-regulation*, encompass self-efficacy mechanisms that enable personal agency. For Bandura (1991), self-regulation "has a strong impact on thought, affect, motivation and action" (p. 248). It requires purpose, forethought, and self-direction (Zimmerman, 2002). Surprisingly, self-regulation has not been analyzed in great depth in the acquisition and development of bilingual students' language and learning and especially in their writing.

A telling case of self-regulation is the one reported by Sasaki (2001), a Japanese researcher who reflects on her own translanguaging experiences in her writing activities:

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> I have written several papers in English, some of which have been published in professional journals. . . . Although in the end those papers are written in English, all the other matters related to the writing process are conducted in my first language . . ., Japanese. . . . Through the entire research process I think in Japanese, take notes in Japanese, and write the first rough drafts in Japanese because I can't think thoroughly about any complicated matters in English. It is not until the last stage of the research process, when I put everything together into the form of a paper, that I start to use English. This may not be the most efficient way of writing an English paper . . ., but this is the only way I can write in English. (Sasaki, 2001, p. 111)

Sasaki's TL strategies denote a proactive process that relies on forethought, personal competence, and a clear idea of what she wants to achieve. Writers set a goal, in terms of the direction and quality they want to achieve in creating a written text. TL allows them to pursue and reach these self-imposed standards.

Self-regulation entails purpose and an intrinsic interest in the task at hand (Zimmerman, 2002). TL as a self-regulated mechanism serves as a self-support thought pattern (like a set of cognitive routines), such as the one that Sasaki (2001) described and the one that Canagarajah (2011) described for Buthainah.

In emergent bilinguals, TL can function as a self-regulatory mechanism that expedites the process of language learning. This process is evident in the written texts by young bilingual children that make up our sample.

CASE STUDY: THE SAMPLE AND ITS SELECTION

The samples presented serve as a case study that allow us to examine translanguaging as a process of self-direction in the writing of bilingual, elementary school students. The samples were collected during the 2011 spring semester when the first author was teaching a course on theoretical aspects of biliteracy for bilingual, elementary school teachers. The focus of the course was on biliteracy development and specifically in writing. Translanguaging theory was discussed in the course. However, it is impossible to say if those discussions had any impact on the ways in which these teachers conducted their classrooms and thus affected the production of student texts.

The five samples that we analyze come from the K–4th-grade classrooms of teachers in Spanish-English and Korean-English dual-language bilingual education (DLBE) in New York City. Dual-language bilingual education tends to separate the languages strictly, arguing that language separation gives students more opportunities to fully develop two "languages"; both the majority as well as the minority language. And yet, as we will see, students in such classrooms often self-regulate during the writing process by translanguaging, even when the teacher is working to separate "languages."

For this study, teachers in Velasco's course were asked to provide a sample of the writing of *one* bilingual student in their class during the planning, drafting, and production stages. The writing was produced when instruction was conducted in English, Korean, or Spanish, and written products were expected in those languages. Eight teachers were teaching K–4th grades, and so there were a total of 24 samples collected during the semester.

Out of these 24 writing samples, there was evidence of the translanguaging process in eight of the 24 writing samples; that is, in some way those eight texts revealed students' use of their entire linguistic repertoire to prepare their written texts, even when they were being instructed in one

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or another language. Out of those eight writing samples, five samples were selected for analysis here because they represent the two types of programs (Spanish/English and Korean/English), the three stages of the writing process (planning, drafting, and production), as well as the use of translanguaging in different ways. Three of the writing samples are from students in English/Korean programs, whereas the other two are from two students in an English/Spanish program.

Writing is a highly complex and demanding task. The writer must negotiate the rules and mechanics of writing while maintaining a focus on factors such as organization, form and features, purposes and goals, as well as audience needs and perspectives. Self-regulation of the writing process is critical. The writer must be goal oriented, resourceful, and reflective. Skilled writers are able to use powerful strategies to support them in accomplishing specific writing goals. In emergent bilinguals, translanguaging is one such strategy. The samples in this article show how translanguaging played a role in all aspects of the writing process for different students, in different grades and with different languages interplaying (Spanish/English and Koren/English).

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THE ANALYSIS

Our focus here are the texts, and not the children that write them, nor the instruction that produced them.

Fairclough (2011) has made clear that "the relationship between what is structurally possible and what actually happens, between structures and events, is a complex one" (p. 120). Thus, although dual-language bilingual education programs seek to control the exclusion of fluid language practices, what actually happens in classrooms goes beyond that control. Texts are said to be effects not only of linguistic structures and orders of discourse (genres, styles, ways of representing), but also effects of social structures and social practices, and thus products, in our case, of dual-language bilingual ideologies that dichotomize the languaging of bilinguals.

The texts that we analyze here are from diary entries in writers' notebooks/journals, as well as final drafts. Diary entries reflect thoughts and ideas for future or imminent writing projects. They have the advantage of not being graded; furthermore, they are not the contrived outcomes of performance rubrics.

THE DATA AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE FIVE WRITTEN TEXTS

The five texts that we have selected for analysis are produced by bilingual children expected to write in the language in which instruction is given. Except for the second text analyzed in which the student writes two texts in two different "languages," the other written texts are supposedly in Korean or in Spanish. Yet, these texts reveal the ways in which translanguaging is used by the children to construct an inclusive bilingual fluid world—one in which they wouldn't feel threatened in any of their multiple identities because they could use a "toy gun," an arm that is not threatening but that opens up possibilities (Text #1); one in which they wouldn't be afraid of being squelched, "squished" (Text #2) out of their bilingual practices; one, in which their fluid language use wouldn't be considered "soiled" (Text #3). The final text is an example of a child using his bilingual voice. He addresses the reader directly, having his audience in mind, addressing a

warning; stating that he "will use English for a second" to introduce vocabulary associated with the metamorphosis of butterflies he was witnessing in his classroom. In this sample, Korean and English are transformed into mere translanguaging practices.

All the samples hold evidence of the self-regulatory mechanisms associated with the recursive nature of writing. All skilled writers draft and make word and rhetorical word choices. In emergent bilinguals, these processes are accompanied by translanguaging practices.

Written Text 1: Translanguaging in Planning. Multilingual Repertoire and Multimodalities

A common practice in New York City schools immersed in the Balanced Literacy Workshop model (Calkins, 1994) is for children in kindergarten and first grade to use a template (in the form of a large square) to organize their thoughts in a drawing. This step focuses the children on what they want to write about. They are encouraged to label the drawing to achieve more focus. Subsequently, the children write one or two sentences under the drawing. That process represents the transfer of ideas into a coherent sentence (or sentences).

In Figure 1 we present the first sample by a kindergartener being asked to produce a written text in "Korean." We notice that the drawing of a child playing a game with a toy gun has words written in English: *start, bonus, hit here,* and *finish*. This child achieved focus by drawing himself playing with a toy gun and extending through the English written words *how* the game is played. Although the drawing is static, the words call forth a dynamic video game with which the child might be familiar, in which you start, finish, and hit. The written text in Korean then says *when* the game was played—during the summer—and the fact that this was a "new" toy gun.

The child understands that he's being asked to produce a written text in Korean. But to get to that text, he uses all the semiotic repertoire he has at his disposal—both in drawing (see Kress for the importance of multimodalities, 2003), as well as his "English" words. The writing sample illustrates that this bilingual child understands the purpose of planning. He knows that even

FIGURE 1 Translanguaging in planning in kindergarten.

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though he has to produce the text in Korean, he can decide on the topic and organize his ideas by drawing on all his semiotic repertoire. The child is not only enacting his pluriliteracies, but also doing for himself what Hornberger's continua of biliteracy demands of effective teachers of bilingual students—drawing from all points of the bilingual continua. His planning cycle takes on a linguistically holistic approach, similar to the translanguaging described by Sasaki for her own writing process.

When planning writing, bilingual students should always be encouraged to engage with their multilingual repertoire. Only then will planning serve the purpose for which it is meant.

Only in kindergarten and first grade does writing actively include drawing and multimodalities. Despite the multimodal affordances provided today by technology, few writing programs in schools make use of it, especially after the early grades. When planning writing, bilingual students should also be encouraged to use all kinds of multimodalities—drawings, videos, etc.—and to draw from their more flexible bilingual worlds than the static and dichotomized one, projected by the rigidity of how "languages" are used in many bilingual education programs.

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Writing Sample 2: Translanguaging in Planning. Vocabulary Acquisition and Glosses

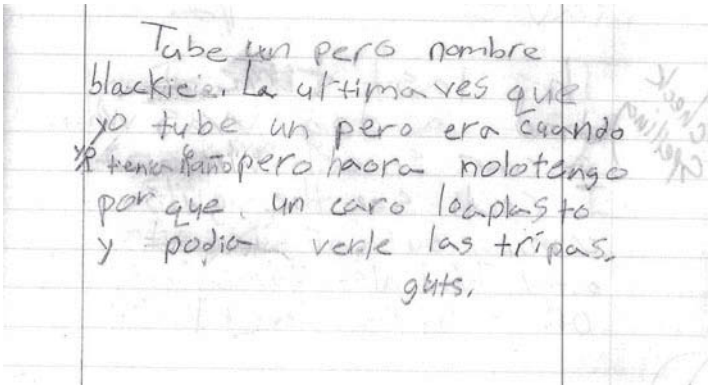
The writing sample in Figure 2 (Figures 2a and 2b) consists of two diary entries by a third-grade Spanish-English bilingual boy, Xavier. In the first sample Xavier is writing in Spanish about a dog and how it was run over by a car. Under the word *tripas*, he has written the word *guts.* Perhaps he turned to a peer and asked the meaning of the word in anticipation that the next day he would have to write a diary entry in English.

Xavier is using the same strategies that were used since medieval times, that is, glosses—marginal or interlinear annotations of texts—to enlighten the comprehension of texts written in classical languages. Glosses provide the learner with a sense of certainty about the meaning of a word. Word knowledge requires multiple encounters with a word, and teachers cannot create all the encounters needed for the learner to confidently grasp the core and essential meaning of a word. Vocabulary learning requires deliberate effort from students, and inserting glosses in texts is important in vocabulary acquisition.

The second sample in Figure 2b shows how Xavier incorporated the word *guts* into his second diary entry written the following day when English was being used. Notice that the child is still focusing on the same topic, but he is not producing a word-by-word translation.

The gloss in Xavier's written texts function as an efficient, goal-directed strategy. His self-awareness of what he wanted to achieve, as well as his self-confidence, propel him to take actions that will not only solve his immediate need; they are also providing him with multiple encounters with the word, with strong contextual support.

Xavier timidly glosses the Spanish language text with the word *guts*, hoping that the teacher doesn't comment on it, in the way she then comments in the English language text in which she tells him to check his spelling. Whereas the kindergarten teacher in the first written sample promotes the child's experimentation in writing with multiliteracies and multimodalities, this third-grade teacher now controls explicitly the student's language use. Thus, the translanguaging is external to the body of the text, a *tripa* that hangs out of the text, but that is not fully incorporated.

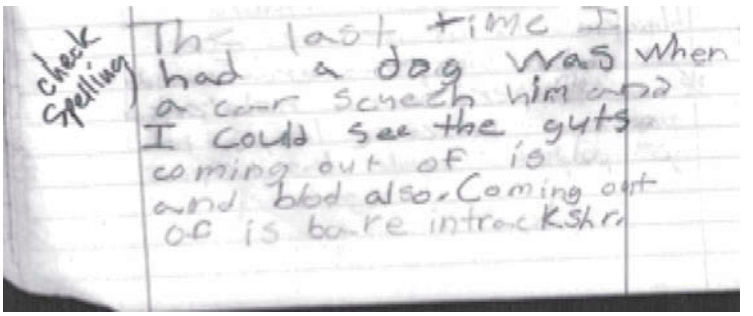


Transcription: *Tube un pero nombre blackie. La ultima ves que yo tube un pero era cuando yo tenia 6 ano pero haora nolotengo porque un caro loaplasto y podia verle las tripas.*

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*.



Transcription**:** "The last time I had a dog was when a car scuech him and I could see the guts coming out of is and blood aso. Coming out of is bare intrackshr."

FIGURE 2b Second diary entry in "English." Using the word *guts*.

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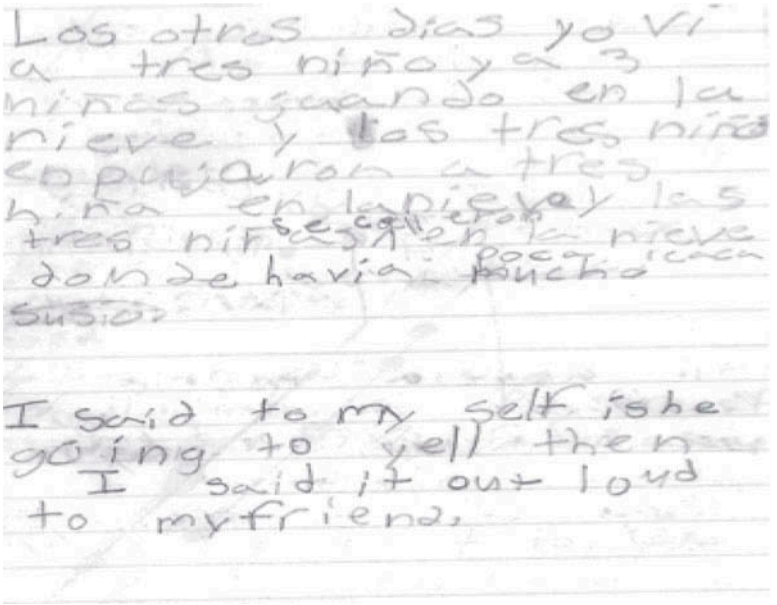
Writing Sample 3: Translanguaging in Drafting. The Multilingual Repertoire

This sample of one diary entry by a fifth grader shows how translanguaging functions in the drafting process. In Figure 3, the teacher has asked him to draft a written text in his journal during the day in which instruction is supposed to be in Spanish. The boy starts by describing an action in which three boys pushed three girls in the snow. This is all done in Spanish, the language of instruction. The girls fell on ground that was soiled with animal feces. But then, the writer turns from description to internal dialogue—what he says to himself. And he follows



Transcription*: Los otros dias yo vi a tres niño y a 3 niñas juando en la nieve y los tres niños empujaron a tres niña en la nieve y las tres niñas se calleron en la nieve donde havia poca caca mucho susio.*

I said to my self is she going to yell then I said it out loud to my friend.

["The other days I saw three boys and 3 girls playing in the snow and the three boys pushed three girls in the snow and the three girls fell on the snow where there was poo very dirty."]

FIGURE 3 Translanguaging in drafting. Different discourse functions and different "languages."

this with social language, what he says to his friend. This boy self-regulates his use of written language for himself. Although he writes about the event in Spanish, the language of instruction, English is his language of choice to speak to himself, as well as to speak to others. It is also the way in which he solves the humiliating situation in which the girls find themselves, falling on feces. After he describes in Spanish, he turns to his inner voice in English to scream and warn the girls ("I said to myself"). Then he summons his social voice, also in English ("I said it out loud"). It is as if his ability to draw on English features magnify his Spanish voice, giving him the agency to yell, to act in ways that prevent becoming dirty.

The text that appears in Figure 3 is an example of how this bilingual writer uses different translanguaging problem-solving strategies to access and convey his personal meaning beyond that of the external world. It also shows how the artificial language use situation created in this dual-language bilingual education classroom does not allow him full expression. He can describe in what teachers consider Spanish, but to truly express himself, he has to use his full linguistic repertoire, which also consists of features assigned to English. In this case, two different discourse features (description and internal/social dialogue) become expressed in two different sets of linguistic features (constructed as English and Spanish languages). In this way, the text itself conveys wholeness and symbolically prevents the girls in the story from becoming soiled. It is the ability of this child to translanguage that pushes him—that enables him to say it "out loud." With some help from the teacher, this child will be able to use this draft to write a more complete text in either Spanish or English, as required in academic writing.

In this text, the writer's self-regulatory actions take him to translanguage. When this writer is describing the event, he can use the language that the school has selected for that purpose, and it suffices. But the minute the writer acts, either by talking to himself or saying it out loud to his friend, he needs to translanguage, using his entire linguistic repertoire to act. Unlike Sample 2, translanguaging has become integrated in this text and in the child's world. Translanguaging here, however, is still limited to a traditional conceptions of how the languages of bilinguals are used, with one language used for description and the other language used for inner and outer speech that leads to action.

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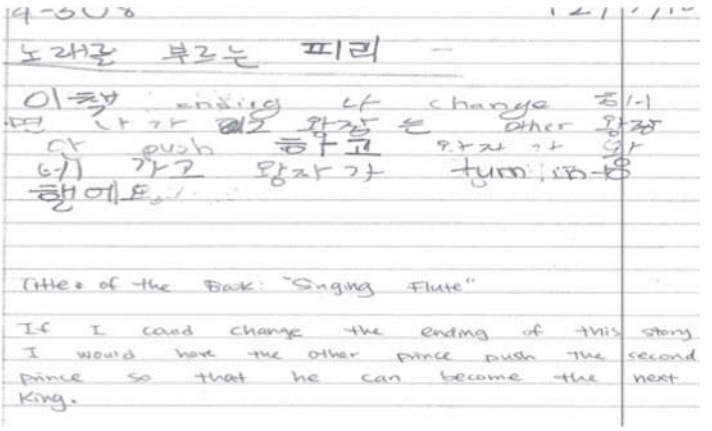
Writing Sample 4: Translanguaging in Drafting for Word Retrieval (and Transformation)

It is common practice for teachers to ask students to write down how they could change the ending of a particular book. Kress (2003) refers to this process as *transformation*, as when there is "meaning change through re-ordering of the elements in a text" (p. 129), which is exactly what happens when you change an ending.

The second-grade Korean-English bilingual writer of the text in Figure 4 is holding on to the complex idea he is trying to convey. But his written Korean cannot capture the complexity of his thought. As he is writing, he introduces English words—*ending of, change, other, push, turn into.*

The presence of English words in the Korean text is an example of how this bilingual child uses features of his linguistic repertoire that are not associated with Korean, but English, when writing a "Korean" text. He may not be able to access the word in Korean at the time, until he asks the teacher, a parent, or peer, or consults an iPad or dictionary. He uses a postponing strategy, writing down English words in order to revisit the text in the future and render it into "Korean."



Translation: Title of the Book: "Singing Flute"

If I could change the ending of this story, I would have the other prince push the second prince so that he can turn into the next king.

FIGURE 4 Formulation of word retrieval within the drafting process.

This is a common translanguaging feature in bilingual writing when drafting, making it possible for writing to communicate complex thought, rather than just words.

But this written text also reveals what the child wants to convey. It is interesting to note the words that the student renders in "English." Through this translanguaging there is "*change*," and language practices "*turn into*" "*others*," are "*push(ed)*" so that there is the "*ending of*" a world in which "Korean" and "English" function as separate systems. This self-regulatory translanguaging practice harbors a transformation that we see take root in Writing Sample 5.

Writing Sample 5: Translanguaging in Final Product for Rhetorical Engagement

In the fifth writing sample, which appears in Figure 5, a fourth grader writing in Korean is explaining the metamorphosis process in what is a final product. What is remarkable about this student is that he understands a key aspect of the writing process—the engagement that a writer has to produce in the reader. The writer starts by stating: "There are 4 butterflies in our class. How? Why butterflies?" By asking these questions, the writer is engaging the reader. He continues: "Let me speak in English for a second." He is asking permission from the assumed reader to introduce technical words in "English" that describe the metamorphosis into his Korean writing. These "English" words are written in Roman script but show clearly how they're the child's interpretation of what English is, rather than an external system of English, as taught in school. For example, "eg" stands for *egg*; "lvvav" for *larva*;"cargil" for *carterpillar*. Only "butterfly" seems to be a recognizable English word. This writer is translanguaging not solely as a vocabulary

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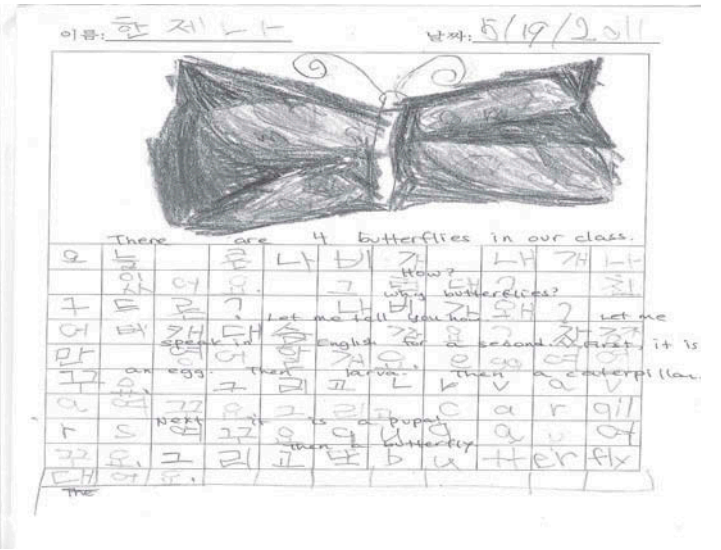

Translation**:** There are 4 butterflies in our class. How? Why butterflies? Let me tell you how. Let me speak in English for a second. First, it is an egg. Then larva. Then a caterpillar. Next it is a pupa. Then a butterfly.

FIGURE 5 Rhetorical devices for engaging the reader.

strategy, as in the sample before; rather, the child is not only using his resources as a bilingual writer to engage the reader, but also to demonstrate his complex linguistic repertoire.

TRANSLANGUAGING IN THE WRITING SAMPLES: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND CONCLUSIONS

The five writing samples here included give us five manifestations of how translanguaging is used in the writing process by bilingual students:

1. Translanguaging in planning, using multimodalities and the multilingual repertoire.
2. Translanguaging in planning, vocabulary acquisition and glosses.
3. Translanguaging in drafting, using the multilingual repertoire.
4. Translanguaging in drafting, for word retrieval and transformation.
5. Translanguaging in the final product, for rhetorical engagement and transduction.

It is evident that translanguaging is used by bilingual writers in all stages of the writing process—planning, editing, and production. But it is also clear that translanguaging is used at times for scaffold (as in the use of glosses or the use of the other language for word retrieval), and at other times for rhetorical engagement and effectiveness (as in the last writing sample).

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If writing is about developing voice, then the self-regulatory mechanisms that these writers have set in motion have that goal in mind. The samples show how the students have selected different ways of solving the problems that all writers face when constructing a text. Their decisions lead to projecting a product that recognizes the entire linguistic repertoire of both writers and of the increasingly multilingual readers that read today's texts.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Language accelerates the process of developing abilities for understanding and thinking. It is reasonable to believe that bilingual individuals, even emergent bilinguals, will use all their linguistic and experiential resources to achieve understanding and develop metacognitive skills and critical thinking. Adding and integrating new linguistic resources cannot be done without reference to those linguistic resources the child already has.

Translanguaging is not solely a bilingual discourse or a pedagogical strategy for scaffolding instruction. It is also the way that emergent bilinguals can, and do, self-regulate and advance their learning. The translanguaging strategies that these elementary school children enact in writing reveal for them the dynamics of their own language practices as bilinguals. Effective language learning, including the effective use of translanguaging strategies, requires enactment within a meaningful context, which facilitates the processing of linguistic and writing demands. Teachers can incorporate translanguaging strategies by opening up the spaces that will allow the recursive process of writing to interplay between the languages a student has.

One last caveat deserves attention. This study started with 24 writing samples. Out of these, eight reflected translanguaging practices, and five were selected because they reflected different stages and decisions that the authors made. Translanguaging in writing deserves further analysis and research to understand why not all students make use of their full linguistic repertoires. Is it because of the strict adherence to the language separation that dual-language programs enforce and the students have integrated? Or is it that these students are using other strategies to interact with writing?

For those students who use translanguaging, it becomes a key element in meaning making (García, 2009). In the writing samples that were analyzed, self-regulation is enacted using translanguaging. This practice allowed the emergent bilinguals in this study to solve challenges in language comprehension and production when creating their own text and conveying their unique voices.

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