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Translanguaging, Pedagogy and Creativity

Abstract: This paper focuses on the relationship between creativity and the interactions of plurilingual learners, that is, their translanguaging. We provide a description of the conceptual difference between the concept of plurilingualism and that of translanguaging. Focusing on ways of educating that leverage bilingual students' translanguaging, we then provide evidence of actions taken by two U.S. teachers in translanguaging classrooms that promote the students' creativity.

Résumé: Cet article met l'accent sur la relation entre la créativité et les interactions des apprenants plurilingues, c'est-à-dire leur *translanguaging*. Nous décrivons la différence conceptuelle entre le concept de plurilinguisme et celui de *translangaging*. Puis, en mettant l'accent sur des approches éducatives qui tirent parti du *translanguaging* des élèves bilingues, nous présenterons des dispositifs mobilisés par deux enseignant-e-s américaine-e-s qui favroisent la créativité des élèves.

1 Introduction

The contribution in this volume by Hugo Baetens Beardsmore summarizes the existing research on the relationship between plurilingualism and creativity. Baetens Beardsmore (2008 and this volume) shows evidence that plurilingualism has an effect on cognition that results in increased creativity. Drawing on the work of a team of European scholars for the European Commission during the 2009 European Year of Creativity (Marsh, Wolff, de Bot, Langé, Maljers, Frigols Martin, and Baetens Beardsmore himself), and summarizing recent research (see, for example, Ricciardelli 1992, Stolarick/Florida 2006), Hugo Baetens Beardsmore describes in this volume cognitive characteristics of plurilinguals that result in greater creativity:

1. A flexible mind
2. A problem solving mind
3. A metalinguistic mind
4. A learning mind
5. An interpersonal mind

Baetens Beardsmore quotes Stollarick and Florida (2006, 1812) when they say:

> [B]eing multilingual means you understand the world from different perspectives and are more likely to devise creative and innovative solutions: it's 'good for the brain to have to learn how to work and think in [multiple languages]'.

We aim here to extend Baetens Beardsmore's lens by focusing on the *interactions of plurilinguals, that is, their translanguaging*, and the relationship to creativity. We first provide a description of the conceptual difference between plurilingualism and translanguaging. Focusing on ways of educating that leverage bilingual students' translanguaging, we then provide evidence of actions taken by two U.S. teachers in translanguaging classrooms that promote the students' creativity.

2 Plurilingualism and translanguaging

The Council of Europe has done much to dispel the idea that bilinguals (and multilinguals) are not two monolinguals in one, an idea that was first challenged by the early work of François Grosjean (1982). The Council of Europe (2000) defines plurilingualism as "the ability to use several languages to varying degrees and for distinct purposes." That is, the Council of Europe's idea of plurilingualism is that "partial competence" in other languages is good for European citizens. This in itself is an important contribution, an ability that results, as Lüdi (2015) says, "in a deepening and 'fine-tuning' of conceptual understanding" (p. 133). Christine Hélot (2012) recognizes the contributions made by the concept of plurilingualism and of those who have worked on making it a reality in education, for example, the work of Beacco and Byram (2003). However, Christine Hélot (2012) also warns that these efforts are about promoting a European identity, without questioning the use of the national language as the main medium of education. Thus, plurilingualism is still tied to national languages, usually European ones, without paying attention to the many language practices of individuals

Promoting plurilingualism in individuals indeed results in greater creativity in the ways described by Baetens Beardsmore in this volume. It also goes beyond monolingual and monoglossic constructions of what is accepted as knowledge of language and bilingualism. Plurilingualism legitimates a heteroglossic bilingualism (Bakhtin 1981) that results from what The Council of Europe calls "partial linguistic competences." The contribution of scholarship on plurilingualism has indeed promoted the view that bi/multilingualism is more than additive, that is, that it is dynamic (García 2009). It has also led to what Blommaert (2010) has called the perspective of sociolinguistic mobility, a product of increased globalization and what Vertovec (2007) has called superdiversity. These views on plurilingualism indeed liberate bilingual speakers from the monolingual/monoglossic constructions of the past, although they still

have been constructed with an epistemology that responds to western dominant constructions of named languages. The "partial competence" promoted by the Council of Europe, a more cognitive concept, finds echo in Blommaert's conception of "truncated repertoires" (2010), a more social one, liberating and legitimating the heteroglossic language practices of bilinguals. However, in the plurilingual conception, the construction of named languages stands, leaving intact the hierarchies of languages. The speaker's "first" or "native" language is dominant and full, whereas the other linguistic practices are viewed as being the result of partial competence in a second or third named language or of a truncated repertoire in that other named language.

In contrast, a translanguaging approach to multilingualism starts from the assumption that bilingual speakers along all points of the bilingual continua have a complete linguistic system, that is, full linguistic competence and a full linguistic repertoire that is their own (García/Li Wei 2014). All speakers indeed perform linguistically with their own full idiolect (Otheguy/García/Reid 2015). Named languages, as Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have said, are social constructions that although important, have no linguistic reality. These named languages have been "invented" by nation-states and colonial powers to exert power over racialized language-minoritized speakers. To confuse named languages with what people speak is to always position bi/multilingual racialized speakers as less than monolingual, well-to-do, usually white, speakers. The linguistic performances of these monolingual speakers rely on interactions where there may be more overlap of features with other monolingual interlocutors who are like them. In contrast, multilingual speakers have a much larger repertoire of linguistic features, and their idiolect has much less overlap with that of monolingual interlocutors who are different.

Plurilingual encounters usually take place among people who *want* to make themselves understood – learners who want to learn another language, speakers who want to sell products, workers who want to succeed. Plurilingualism is often exalted as a competence for profit making and personal gain (see Duchêne/Heller 2013). In universities, plurilingualism has to do with the internationalization of higher education and attracting students for greater profit. For many learners, as well as for sellers and buyers, plurilingualism is related to competitiveness in the job market and success as individuals. Flores (2013) and Kubota (2016) remind us that there is a relationship between our tolerance of plurilingualism and a neoliberal economy that needs flexible workers. Plurilingualism thus leaves intact the epistemologies from which we have constructed named languages. In contrast, translanguaging questions the idea that named languages

are independent entities existing in the world naturally. Translanguaging disrupts the social imaginary that nation-states have constructed around named languages and native-speakers, a narrativization produced with the very same categories with which we continue to study speakers, and especially racialized language minoritized speakers, thus rendering them as deficient.

In interactions where there are power imbalances and differences in social class, gender, race, cultural and religious practices, etc., participants have to be willing to make a greater effort to understand each other than in interactions between more similar interlocutors. The weight of the communicative interaction in these unbalanced instances has to be carried especially by the listeners who must open themselves up to the meaning negotiation (Flores/Rosa 2015).

Otheguy, García and Reid (2015) have defined translanguaging as "the deployment of a speaker's *full linguistic repertoire* without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (p. 283). In classrooms, this means that teachers leverage that full linguistic repertoire that is always present (even if some of its features remain hidden), at the same time that they help students *select* features of that repertoire that are appropriate for the audience with whom they interact (for more on translanguaging pedagogy, see García/Johnson/Seltzer 2017 or case studies in García/Kleyn 2016). It is precisely the sociolinguistic exercise that all bilinguals must perform, always having to select some features rather than others, that has led some psychologists to suggest that bilinguals have a cognitive advantage. For example, Bialystok (2004) suggests that this advantage is the result of the constant use of the bilinguals' brain Executive Control System, as they select different features and adjust to different communicative situations.

How then might a translanguaging pedagogy that mobilizes the translanguaging of plurilinguals result in greater creativity? The rest of this article attempts to answer this question.

3 Translanguaging pedagogy and creativity

Creativity, as proposed by Baetens Beardsmore in this volume, is linked to exercising a voice that is one's own, and not a simple repetition of someone else's. That is why creativity is also linked to criticality (Li Wei 2011). By disrupting the hierarchies of named languages that were installed by colonial expansion and nation-building (Mignolo 2000), translanguaging liberates sign systems that have been formerly constrained by socio-political domination. As a concept coined and developed in bilingual borderlands – for example, Welsh-speakers in the

UK, Basque-speakers in the Basque Autonomous Region of Spain, Latinx[1] in the United States – translanguaging attempts to give voice to all, redress power differentials, and release the creativity potential of plurilinguals.

To show how this is possible in classrooms, we introduce two teachers in the United States who have been the subject of longer analyses in García, Ibarra Johnson and Seltzer (2017). One is a bilingual teacher fourth-grade teacher in a primary school, Carla. The other is an ESL teacher in a U.S. high school, Justin.[2] Carla's bilingual classroom is in New Mexico. She teaches a group of Latinx students whose bilingualism falls along all points of the bilingual continuum. Justin's middle school ESL classroom (6th through 8th grade) is in New York City. He teaches students who have been classified as English language learners and are, for the most part, recently arrived immigrants. They speak a number of languages – Spanish, French, Fulani, Mandarin, Mandinka, and Haitian Creole. I describe first the elementary school bilingual teacher, Carla, and some classroom moments (Li Wei 2011) that clearly show the potential of translanguaging to develop bilingual students' creative performances.

4 Translanguaging and language allocation in a bilingual classroom: Carla

Since bilingual education of Latinx and other language minoritized groups in the U.S. came under attack in the early years of the 21st century, bilingual programs have increasingly become "two-way dual language programs", where supposedly half of the students are "native English-speakers" and the other half are speakers of the language other than English. These programs follow strict language allocation policies, with only one language used during specific days, times of day, or even weeks. That is, these programs follow a pedagogy of strict immersion, at least in theory.

As bilingual education programs for Latinx communities started to disappear under intense criticism, some programs managed to survive by changing their name to "dual language" programs, and evading the word "bilingual." But as fate would have it, these programs for language minoritized bilingual children falling along all points of the bilingual continuum started to follow the only pedagogical models that were sanctioned – those of strict immersion in one language or another, now called "double immersion." These one-way dual language programs, or double immersion one-way programs, employed bilingual teachers but asked

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1   Latinx is the gender-neutral form of Latino/a, meaning anyone in the U.S. with Latin American ancestry.
2   Both names are pseudonyms.

them to function as monolingual teachers. These bilingual programs adopted a monoglossic ideology (García 2009) of bilingualism.

For Carla, the teacher of the translanguaging classroom that we portray here, the language allocation policy of the school in which both languages are strictly separated makes no sense, for it does not help her teach very different Latinx bilingual students. On the one hand, there are students in Carla's class who have arrived recently and who do not understand or speak English. On the other hand, there are students who have been born in the United States of bilingual Latinx parents, or of mixed couples. Many of these students never speak Spanish at home. And there are also bilingual students with all types of linguistic performances and in all combinations, some who read more than they speak, others who speak more than they write, etc.

Carla modifies the language allocation policy of the bilingual program. She teaches Spanish in the morning and English in the afternoon, respecting the social spaces of "named languages". But she knows that what is important in teaching is *to access the linguistic repertoire of individual children so she can engage them*. To do so, she establishes a strategy and a space in which her students' translanguaging is centered. During instruction in English or in Spanish, Carla is always aware of what García/Sánchez Solorza (forthcoming) have called *translanguaging lifesaver rings*. This means that when teaching in one language or the other, and after having carefully assessed what it is that students know and can do with language, she leverages the student's translanguaging to *scaffold* instruction for students who are being immersed in one language space or another. That is, she disrupts the one language space by ensuring that all students understand the content of the lesson at all times and are able to appropriate new linguistic features into their own language repertoire. These translanguaging lifesaver rings then make the named language space flexible enough to ensure that the students make meaning of lessons and understand how language is being used.

In this paper I want to focus not on the translanguaging lifesaver rings, but on a translanguaging space that Carla has created which is transformative, what García/Sánchez/Solorza (forthcoming) have called the *translanguaging transformative space* and which enhances students' creativity. This translanguaging transformative space provides opportunities for students to use their "full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy/García/Reid 2015). At the same time, this translanguaging transformative space promotes understanding of how speakers can act on their language repertoire to *select features* that are appropriate for the messages they want to convey to different audiences, both monolingual

and bilingual. It is precisely this *agentive potential of translanguaging*, resting on speaker's agency, and not on that of named languages or nation-states, that propels the creative role of translanguaging. Next I describe this translanguaging transformative space which Carla calls "The Cuéntame Algo" space.

5 The Cuéntame Algo space in a bilingual classroom[3]

Once a day Carla has opened up a space in which she considers bilingual authors who translanguage in telling their stories. This space was inspired by the work of Christine Hélot (2014 with Sneddon/Daly 2016) related to Tomi Ungerer, the Alsatian children's author who wrote stories in German, French, Alsatian and English, and whose work has been translated into many more languages. Hélot shows in her work how the editions in different languages are conceived and how Ungerer's choice of signs in different languages relates to different cultural ways of being. In the Cuéntame Algo space, the same story is examined when rendered in different languages, but Carla also shows her students how they, as authors, can construct meaning with their many different linguistic resources which go beyond those of named languages.

Carla explains that bilingual authors sometimes use mostly what is said to be English, with words that are said to be from Spanish, whereas other times, the opposite is the case. Carla engages students in thinking about how translanguaging enhances creativity and critical metalinguistic awareness in the texts studied. She also encourages students to use their full linguistic repertoire in their discussion of the texts during this time, without adherence to the boundaries of one or another named language. I draw below on Carla's read-aloud and follow-up activities of a story by Sandra Cisneros titled *Three Wise Guys: Un Cuento de Navidad,* as I describe five different moments (Li Wei 2011) from the lesson in which translanguaging is leveraged to expand the students' creative potential.

Moment #1: Expanding linguistic and cultural choices

Carla gathers her fourth graders in the rug space in front of her classroom. She reads out loud the first paragraph of the story:

> The big box came marked DO NOT OPEN TILL XMAS, but the mama said not until the Day of the Three Kings. Not until Día de los Reyes, the sixth of January, do you hear? That is what the mama said exactly, only she said it all in Spanish.

She then engages her Latinx students in dialogue about how their families celebrate Xmas. The practices that the children describe are as varied as the linguistic features they use – el día de Christmas, Christmas, Navidad, Reyes, the Reyes, Los Three Kings, Santi Claus, Santa Claus – all pronounced phonetically differently. Carla encourages students to use all their linguistic resources, as they describe their different cultural practices. In this way, Carla builds a classroom context in which the students' knowledge and linguistic repertoire is expanded, rather than restricted, thus developing their creativity.

Moment #2: Disrupting correctness and the link between language and nation

Carla then sends students to work in groups that have been organized to ensure that there are students whose linguistic performances in English and Spanish fall along different points of the bilingual continuum. She asks students in each group to translate the first sentence into Spanish, and tells them that the first group finished should put up the translation on the blackboard. One group rushes to the whiteboard and writes:

La caja grande vino marcada NO LA ABRAS HASTA XMAS, pero la mamá dijo no hasta el Dia de los Tres Reyes.

Right away individual students in other groups react. Miguel who recently arrived from Puerto Rico says: "No es Día de los Tres Reyes. Es Día de Reyes." María argues, "XMAS is not Spanish!" Julián says: "Marcada? Qué quiere decir?" Carla then instructs the groups to consult Google Translate in their group's I-Pad. She instructs one student to write the Google-produced translation next to the one that the first group had produced:

La caja grande vino marcada NO ABRIR HASTA XMAS, pero la mamá dijo no hasta el Día de los Tres Reyes.

Carla then encourages the class to discuss the two translations and the objections raised by Miguel, María and Julián. They first discuss the difference between "No la abras hasta Xmas" (the first group's translation) and "No abrir hasta Xmas" (the Google translation). The students think about the meaning of "abras" and "abrir." One student raises his hand and wonders why there's an extra word in the first sentence, "la." After much discussion, the class concludes that these are two ways of saying the same thing, with one of them addressing a specific person more directly. Carla makes it clear – the choice is theirs depending on who it is they want to address. These greater choices are precisely what promotes the students' creativity.

Carla then considers Maria's objection to "XMAS" as not being Spanish. She asks them how many say Xmas at home when speaking what they think of as Spanish. Almost the entire class raises their hand. So they conclude that XMAS is just

another word for Christmas or Navidad used by many Latinx. They then consider Miguel's objection to "Día de Los Tres Reyes." They think about the difference between saying "tres reyes," and just "reyes." They conclude that it depends on what they want to highlight, whether they are interested in making sure that listeners know they are kings or that there are three of them. Finally, Carla asks Julián what he would have said instead of "marcada." Julián says: "Yo, como, 'la caja tenía un letrero.'" María objects, "But that would mean, 'The box had a sign! And it is not what it says!'" They get into a discussion of the meaning of "marked." They conclude that indeed "marked" must mean that the box had a sign.

What Carla is doing in this interaction is showing her Latinx students how using language is simply about selecting signs, and *how each selection is an act of agency and creativity by the speaker.* Speaking is not about restricting linguistic choices, but about expanding those choices. Speakers "do" language and construct their messages by selecting signs and features that are part of their repertoire. There are no right or wrong choices; however, each interaction is a creative agentive act that shapes the ways in which the message is constructed by listeners. By doing so, Carla is disrupting the construction of named languages and nation. Language is what people creatively "do," not what nations have.

Moment #3: Authoring a bilingual voice and developing critical multilingual awareness

Carla then proceeds to make a list of some of the words that the author, Sandra Cisneros, inserts in what is considered "Spanish." She asks the students to discuss the reasons for these choices in groups. Following is some of the dialogue among three students in one of the groups:

S1: "Comadre, because I don't even know qué quiere decir comadre in English."
S2: "Means godmother"
S1: "But what about urraca and chicharras?"
S3: "Because of the beautiful rolling double r."

Carla then asks the students to go back to the story and to make a list of words that they would have rendered in Spanish if they had been the author. The purpose of this is twofold – Carla wants the students to feel the power that they have as authors in selecting signs to represent what they would like to express. That is, she is developing the students' capacity to possess their own translanguaging, to author their bilingual voice. At the same time, she is engaging the students in their own metalinguistic reflection, developing their capacity to see language as a semiotic system of signs that can be manipulated and selected appropriately as a creative act.

Moment #4: Normalizing translanguaging

Carla then asks students to reflect on the language practices of the characters in the story – the Spanish-speaking mother, the bilingual children, and the father who spoke English but could not read it. After this discussion, she asks them to go back to their groups and discuss the language use in their own families.

One of the students, Esteban, describes his language use:

> In my family we speak mostly Spanish, pero not really. My brother usually speaks English; mi mamá usually Spanish. Las telenovelas en español para mi mamá, but my brother and I, we watch shows in English, although everyone watches …And then it always depends en quién está. When my friends come, we speak English, pero depende. Con mis tíos español a veces, y a veces inglés, y a veces los dos. It all depends.

María adds:

> Everyone thinks we speak Spanish at home. But not always, because I always speak English, even to my mother. But when my tías come, then I speak Spanish to them.

And Miguel, who recently arrived from Puerto Rico, says:

> "Bueno, siempre hablamos español." [Well, we always speak Spanish]

María questions Miguel immediately:

> "Pero qué ves en TV?" {What do you see on TV?] To which Miguel replies, "Sponge Bob!" María doesn't let him finish: "Ves, ves, ¡no siempre es español!" [You see, you see, it's not always Spanish!].

Through this discussion, students are problematizing the notion that there is a home language, Spanish, and a school language, English. Instead, they are beginning to see that practices that are considered English and Spanish exist at home, as well as in school. Carla is leading her students to understand translanguaging as an authentic linguistic practice that they carry with them at home and in school. Carla is also showing students the potential of translanguaging in supporting bilingual family practices. The students start to see that their linguistic practices are complex and go beyond named languages. In addition, they start to understand translanguaging as their positive strength and potential, as their creative force, that enables them to include everyone in the family. In so doing, the students' translanguaging is normalized, at the same time that it is appreciated as their own creative and agentive force.

Moment #5: Normalizing translanguaging in writing

Carla knows that the students' literacy development is a product of schooling. That is why she uses bilingual texts written by bilingual authors to anchor the translanguaging transformative space. But she also knows that students need to

engage with translanguaging interactions not only receptively (through reading) but also productively. That is why she always encourages students to use their full repertoire when speaking during this time. But Carla also understands that it is in writing, a way of using language that is mostly developed in schools, where students have the most trouble exhibiting their translanguaging capacity. Carla has been successful in making her students conscious that even when they write in one named language, they are translanguaging. But she perceives that students' writing products are most often in one named language or another, a practice that they have learned in schools, so she knows she has to push further.

Carla sets out to release writing from the formality of one named language or another. To do so, she asks students to recall the language practices of the characters in the story – a Spanish-speaking mother, two bilingual children, and a father who speaks English, but can't read it. She then asks the students to work in groups to rewrite the story in the bilingual voice of the family. In so doing, the students are transforming the text by disrupting the linguistic hierarchies that are always obvious in written language.

Following is an example of one groups' work, after Carla edited it:

La mama said: "No abran la caja hasta Xmas." But when la mamá se fue a trabajar (because she had to go to work) Rubén and Rosalinda eyed/miraron con atención the caja. Rubén said: "Let's open it!" Y Rosalinda dijo: "Nos van a matar, we're going to get killed, but let's go!" They opened it. Adentro había another caja wrapped in beautiful sparkly paper con un letrero: "Rubén y Rosalinda, no abran la caja hasta Xmas." La abuela knew them well. Sabía that they were going to open the caja before XMAS!" "Mi abuela es un genio," exclaimed Rosalinda. Y they started to laugh – Ja/ha, ja/ha ja/ha!

It turned out that writing this paragraph took a very long time, longer than if they had written it in only one named language or another. The students had to think of what each of the signs selected contributed to the message. Some of the linguistic signs had already been used in the original version, so they would have been understood. Others needed further explanation, and so they used parentheses, repetitions, and even some drawings in the original version. They thought carefully of which signs were cognates and needed no such support, for example, "genio." They also decided to use some onomatopoeic devices, such as for laugh. They had a heated discussion about how laugh was rendered, and they decided to use Ja and Ha. Through this activity, students' linguistic and semiotic creativity is expanded, rather than restricted. By using translanguaging in writing, students are discovering their potential to give voice to others, to be creative writers, as they transform the linguistic and social context that has defined writing.

Next we describe some moments when our second teacher, Justin, leverages translanguaging to develop students' creative potential.

6 Translanguaging and language use in ESL teaching[4]

Justin is an English as a Second language teacher in a middle school, where he co-teaches with the Math teacher. His students speak many languages and have been categorized as "English language learners". There is Fatoumata who recently came from Guinea and speaks Fulani, Yi-Sheng who speaks Mandarin, Pablo, who speaks Spanish, Sara who speaks Polish, and Carole who speaks Haitian Creole. Traditionally, English as a Second Language teachers immerse their students in English, using English only in order for them to develop English, as well as learn content. After having been exposed to professional development where the concept of translanguaging was explained, Justin decides to disrupt the English monolingual ecology in his classroom. He understands that he must engage his students in learning geometry, as well as developing English proficiency, but he also wants to develop their creative potential as language users.

Justin slowly starts encouraging his students to use their own language repertoire to engage with geometry and English. Of course, Justin doesn't speak Fulani, nor French, nor Mandarin, nor Spanish, but he knows that his students speak those languages and can make meaning through them in ways that they can't do if taught in English only. Some of his students are hesitant to use their translanguaging in the classroom, so Justin designs a project he calls *Geometry multilingue* (said with French accent, since so many of his students come from Francophone Africa).

7 Geometry multilingue

The geometry multilingue project engages students in creating children's books that explain a geometric concept. But the books are not to be simple dual language bilingual books with two separate languages. Instead, Justin asks that they exhibit their translanguaging creativity in writing the texts, using all the features of their linguistic repertoire, that is, for example, their words in what are considered two named languages, but also drawings. Justin explains that the purpose of the project is that there are not enough bilingual children's books that explain concepts in geometry. He tells his students that they will then share the books with an ESL class of third graders in an elementary school located across the street. Following

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4   I am grateful to Kate Seltzer for sharing with me her description of Justin's classroom.

are five moments from the Unit of Instruction that show how leveraging the students' translanguaging develops their creative potential.

Moment #1: Translanguaging to make meaning

To get the project going, Justin first gives students a worksheet with two key questions that he has translated, using Google Translate, into French, Spanish, Chinese and Haitian Creole. Unfortunately Fulani is not available in Google Translate, but Fatoumata can read French due to schooling in French in Guinea. The same is true for other students from Gambia and Senegal, who in addition to Mandinka and Wolof, speak French. The questions that Justin poses are the following:

> Where do we see geometry at work in our lives?
> Où voyons-nous la géométrie au travail dans nos vies?
> ¿Dónde vemos la geometría en el trabajo en nuestras vidas?
> 我们在生活中看到工作中的几何在哪里？
> Ki kote nou wè jeyometri nan travay nan lavi nou?
> Gdzie widzimy geometrię pracy w naszym życiu?
> Why it is important to understand the geometry of our world?
> Pourquoi est-il important de comprendre la géométrie de notre monde?
> ¿Por qué es importante entender la geometría de nuestro mundo?
> 为什么要了解我们世界的几何是很重要的？
> Poukisa li se enpòtan ke ou konprann jeyometri a nan lemonn nou an?
> Dlaczego ważne jest zrozumienie geometrii naszego świata?

Justin divides the students into groups of 2 to 5 who come from countries where education is in the same named language. The largest group is that composed by Francophones – 5 Africans with many linguistic profiles, and 4 Haitians who are speakers of Haitian Creole. The Spanish and Chinese groups have four students each, whereas the Polish group has only two students. The students read the questions, discuss them and write answers in their journals. Justin encourages the students to think of how to maximize communication with the young bilingual students who will be the recipients of the books, as well as how to help them understand the value of translanguaging in developing English, the goal of instruction in this classroom. In so doing, the students' creativity is engaged.

Moment #2: Translanguaging to include all

Justin then asks each group to report orally on the many ways in which they see geometry at work in their lives. Justin encourages newly-arrived students to report orally in the other language, but to try to incorporate as many terms and expressions they know in English.

Justin then pairs students in each group so that the two students speak the same language other than English, with one student stronger in English than the other. He then asks the pair to select a geometric concept that is relevant to their lives to be the subject of their bilingual children's book. In planning their book for elementary school bilingual who are said to speak their named languages, Justin asks students to keep a few things in mind:

– It needs to be relevant to the lives of the third graders who will be the recipients of the book, that is, it has to be culturally relevant,
– It needs to use all their language practices directly and simply and be understood by bilingual students along all the points of the bilingual continua,
– It needs to be rich in multimodalities, including not only pictures, but also links to videos and other resources that students might need.

The students' creativity is enhanced because Justin gives them freedom to select signs from their entire communicative repertoire and to use multimodalities freely, the focus of the next instructional moment.

Moment #3: Translanguaging beyond oral and printed texts
Students work assiduously on this project for four weeks. They work on making the text interesting and engaging, developing an initial "hook" that will draw young readers in. They write the text and illustrate it. In some cases, they ask parents or other students to be their illustrators. They find pictures on the Internet. They also locate videos and resources that they could reference. Two teams make bilingual videos of themselves explaining the reading. They also develop questions about the concept explained, as well as activities that readers can do to better understand the geometric concept, all displaying their translanguaging prowess.

After four weeks, the books are ready. The students have been engaged not only in a project that taps their understanding of Geometry, but also their creative potential, going beyond regular school texts to develop their own.

Moment #4: Translanguaging to share
Justin then takes the class to the elementary school across the street. Each pair is matched with one bilingual third grader whose language practices at home match theirs more or less. The pair reads their book to their assigned child. They encourage the children to translanguage in order to fully express themselves. In some cases, the students perform short skits to enact the concept being explained in the book. They show the videos they have created. Translanguaging acts go beyond simple linguistic acts; the children learn to use all the semiotic resources that they have available to express themselves. As a result of this creative action, they are more effective in sharing with others.

Moment #5: Translanguaging to assess

Throughout this Geometry multilingue project, Justin assesses students on their understanding of math content, as well as their creativity and strategic use of language and other semiotic resources. Leveraging the students' translanguaging in this ESL math classroom has enabled Justin to see students as they are – as human beings who are creative users of all their semiotic resources to lead a meaningful life, and not simple robots that complete mechanical and meaningless language exercises.

Justin doesn't evaluate students' linguistic performances based on forms and structures, but on what counts – the ability to select semiotic features that best shows the students' agency and creativity. Again, translanguaging to assess supports the students' creative potential

8 Conclusion

This paper extends the findings on plurilingualism and creativity described in the paper by Hugo Baetens Beardsmore in this volume. We described the conceptual difference between the concepts of plurilingualism and that of translanguaging, as we use it in this article. Taking up a translanguaging lens, we then explore how two different teachers with diverse student bodies, leverage translanguaging, and in so doing not only do they develop children's learning potential, but also their creative potential.

Focusing on how individual speakers are able to leverage their linguistic and semiotic creativity beyond the restrictions placed on them by named national languages, we describe here moments in two classrooms where teachers were successful in doing so. Notice that in neither classroom is there a sense that students speak a full language and have partial competence in another, as plurilingual conceptions would support. Instead, in these two translanguaging classrooms students are treated as creative meaning-makers, able to use their entire linguistic and semiotic repertoire to make meaning.

Through the moments of instruction of the two teachers in this paper, we see how translanguaging:

– Expands the choices of speakers
– Disrupts language correctness
– Authors a bilingual voice and develops critical metalinguistic awareness
– Normalizes translanguaging
– Normalizes translanguaging in writing
– Helps students make meaning

– Includes all speakers
– Takes languaging beyond oral and printed texts
– Gives teachers a more holistic assessment

Clearly these translanguaging classrooms engage plurilingual students in practices that promote what Hugo Baetens Beardsmore in this volume identifies as the gains of plurilingualism for creativity – flexibility, problem-solving, metalinguistic awareness, learning and interpersonal relations. Rather than identify creativity as cognitive gains, however, translanguaging places the gains of creativity in the *interactions and the lives of bilingual speakers*.

Translanguaging classrooms do not just use the students' language practices as a scaffold to learn a dominant language (or languages). Translanguaging classrooms are transformative. They are transformative because they show students how to be agents of their semiotic repertoires, free to create and be. Leveraging students' translanguaging thus has the potential to bring the creative and agentive potential of young people to new heights, as they deconstruct the ways in which language has been used to restrict the imagination and the creativity of students, especially those who have been minoritized racially and linguistically. Translanguaging is not only a political act, as Flores (2014) has said; it is also an act of agency and creativity.

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