

6 Translanguaging as an Act of Transformation

Restructuring Teaching and Learning for Emergent Bilingual Students

TATYANA KLEYN AND OFELIA GARCÍA

While the focus of classrooms labeled English as a Second Language (ESL), English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), or English as a New Language (ENL) is English, these spaces are undeniably multilingual. The students, who are often a combination of immigrants and those born in the United States, come from homes where a range of languages—including English—are spoken by different family members for different purposes. Yet, when these students enter schools and specifically spaces where they are tasked with learning English, their home language practices are often disregarded and even perceived as a problem or challenge to overcome (Ruíz, 1984). This chapter explores how enacting translanguaging as a stance *and* pedagogy can restructure ESL spaces to be inclusive of emergent bilingual students' language practices while also supporting their English learning.

The TESOL field was traditionally centered on English monolingual approaches that aimed to support students learning English for social and academic purposes, yet often disregarded the backgrounds of students and the way they languaged (Taylor & Snoddon, 2013). ESL pedagogy was focused on teaching language as a structural system, which was taught in isolation of the larger context and without connection to other content areas (Lin, 2013). This structuralist approach to teaching language as a set of skills, rather than a practice (Pennycook, 2010), resulted in classrooms that were focused on English grammar rules and vocabulary, to the extent that home languages were banned and students were punished for speaking them (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Students' language practices that were not associated with English were not included in their ESL classes, nor viewed as a place from which to build upon and make connections and comparisons. The goal was for students to achieve what was described as a "native speaker" objective. This almost impossible goal was not about speaking like someone who learned English as their "first language," but speaking like a White, middle-upper class monolingual individual. This goal overlooked the variety of ways English is spoken by people who should—but often do not—fit within this "native" label due to their race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Thereby the native speaker myth is more about privileging and giving power to some speakers, while oppressing others (Bonfiglio, 2010; García, 2009).

This traditional approach to the role of ESL instruction can be seen in a practice test question from a test prep book for the New York State TESOL teacher certification (Postman, 2015):

1. Question: A teacher is using an ESL approach to teach reading to a group of LEP students. Which of the following is most consistent with that approach?
 - a. Use content clues to help students identify English words.
 - b. Help students learn to read in their native language.
 - c. Translate reading passages into the students' native language.
 - d. Ask students to bring in original literature in their native language. (p. 304)

Answer: A) ESL means English as a second language. This approach requires the teaching and use of English. The approaches in choices (B), (C), and (D) rely on the student's native language. (p. 312)

This sample question and the proposed answer positions students as "Limited English Proficient" (LEP), a term that focuses on what they don't know as opposed to what they do. It also requires future ESL teachers to limit their instruction to English only. The reliance of what are called students' "native languages" is positioned as a crutch and outside of the role of ESL teachers.

In the 21st century, the field of TESOL has undergone a number of significant shifts. A series of counter-narratives were laid out by García (2014) in the inaugural issue of the *New York State TESOL Journal*. They stand in opposition to the approaches described above and start with the premise that language is something that you do, it is "a series of social practices and actions embedded in a web of social relations that orient and manipulate social domains of interaction" (p. 4). Language is not simply a set of structures or codes, but practices that are influenced by one's social interactions and context. This view of language positions students in ESL classrooms as more than "English Language Learners" or "Limited English Proficient." Students are considered emergent bilinguals (García & Kleifgen, 2010) or multilingual learners who come to school with developed oral and/or literacy practices that enable them to communicate with their families and communities. Their emergent bilingualism is not seen as sequential and linear. Thus, educators do not simply add an autonomous named language like English as in traditional additive language education approaches (Cummins, 2017). Instead, students' emergent bilingualism is seen as dynamic, as they add new linguistic features (words, affixes, constructions, meanings) to their unitary expanding repertoire. Therefore, the instruction of English cannot be devoid of the emergent bilingual's full linguistic repertoire. Within this perspective, TESOL is not equated with monolingualism, but with multilingualism. Each of these shifts sets the stage for a *translanguaged TESOL approach* that we will address in this chapter.

Overview of Issues and Approaches

Language, Bilingualism, and Translanguaging

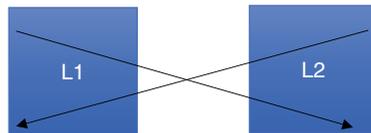
The mid-20th century studies of bilingualism were based on monolingual standards, attributing the linguistic behavior of bilinguals to language contact phenomena (Haugen, 1953; Weinreich, 1953). This language contact was seen as what Weinreich (1953) called *interference*, "deviations from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals" (p. 1). Among the most studied forms of language contact between bilinguals has been the alternation between languages, which is known as *code-switching*.

Since the 1980s, and in an attempt to legitimize the speech of bilinguals, many linguists offered the idea that code-switching is systematic and not a mark of haphazardness (Auer, 1998; MacSwan, 2014). And in the early 21st century, some applied linguists started claiming that code-switching could be an important strategy in the education of language minoritized students in postcolonial contexts. For example, Martin (2005) described a teacher’s code-switching from English to Malay in an English class in rural Malaysian community as a “safe” practice that facilitated comprehension.

But as multilingualism became more visible in the deeply interconnected world of the 21st century, sociolinguists started to question the conventional wisdom of studying the behavior of bilinguals through the lens of named languages, increasingly seen as mere social constructions. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) claimed that the invention of named languages was a political strategy of western nation-states, and set out to reconstitute language as social and cultural practices in which people engage. Blommaert (2010) defined languages as mobile resources within social, cultural, political, and historical contexts. This “human turn in sociolinguistics” (Jørgensen & Juffermans, 2011, p. 2) has led sociolinguists to coin terms that capture the dynamic human interactions of bilinguals in other than simply dual named languages—*metrolinguism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015), *polylingualism* (Jørgensen, 2008), and *translanguaging* (García & Li Wei, 2014) or *translingual practices* (Canagarajah, 2011, 2012).

An important aspect of the term translanguaging that we adopt is the “trans.” This prefix implies that when bilingual speakers translanguage, they transcend named languages by going beyond them (García & Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2011). Bilingual speakers are drawing from a unitary language system (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015, 2018), selecting features that offer the best hints to those with whom they are communicating. Sometimes, the listeners are said to speak one language or another. And in some classrooms, the goal is to get bilinguals to speak one named language. In those situations, bilinguals monitor their language and select only those features that are appropriate for the communicative act. But sometimes, bilinguals perform their language in unmonitored situations with listeners who are also bilingual. The language repertoire of these bilingual listeners has more overlaps with the features of the linguistic system of bilingual speakers, thus making translanguaging visible.

Tracing the trajectory of translanguaging, we can refer to the traditional model of bilingualism (Figure 6.1) which began from the view of languages not only as discreet systems, but also chronological in the sense that they describe how a bilingual acquires a first (L1) followed by a second (L2) language. Those who adhere to a theory of code-switching, position bilingual speakers as going from one language to another, as in the upper half of Figure 6.1. From a translanguaging lens (see bottom part of Figure 6.1), nominal features (Fn)



Translanguaging

Fn, Fn,

Figure 6.1 From Languages to Linguaging. Source: Adapted from García and Kleyn (2016, p. 13).

make-up a bilingual's language repertoire, or a unitary system. The bilingual speaker selects which language features to employ and suppress, based on the social context of their interactions.

While on the surface level, translanguaging and code-switching may look/sound similar, sociolinguists who adhere to a translanguaging theory consider the bilingual speaker as drawing from a dynamic and fluid repertoire that is not compartmentalized into two separate named languages.

Translanguaging positions bilingual and multilingual practices as the norm. Grosjean (1989) explains that, "the bilingual is an integrated whole which cannot easily be decomposed into two separate parts. The bilingual is NOT the sum of two complete or incomplete monolinguals; rather, he or she has a unique and specific linguistic configuration" (p. 6). By viewing bilinguals holistically, rather than as double monolinguals, their language practices are seen as the deployment of different features from a unitary language repertoire for diverse social interactions with many social actors.

Three premises of translanguaging have been outlined by Vogel and García (2017):

1. It posits that individuals select and deploy features from a unitary linguistic repertoire in order to communicate.
2. It takes up a perspective on bi- and multilingualism that privileges speakers' own dynamic linguistic and semiotic practices above the named languages of nations and states.
3. It recognizes the material effects of socially constructed named language categories and structuralist language ideologies, especially for minoritized language speakers (p. 4).

Translanguaging has important consequences for language education and especially for teaching what are considered second or additional languages. For sociolinguists, named languages are most important, and the teaching of named languages, including English, is considered an important endeavor. However, the difference is that language educators who base their work on translanguaging theory do not believe that a named language can be added whole as a second language and independent of the language system that the student already has. Translanguaging distinguishes between the *external sociocultural* reality of named languages, and the *internal language system of individuals*, which it considers to be single and unitary (Otheguy et al., 2015, 2018). This is notably different from the view of MacSwan (2017), even if we acknowledge and celebrate the *external sociocultural* reality of two named languages and of bilingualism and multilingualism. Whereas one can speak of the addition of named languages as sociocultural and sociopolitical units (Cummins, 2017), language educators must think of what are the affordances they must provide emergent bilinguals so that they can add new linguistic features to their existing linguistic repertoire in order to expand it.

Defining and Teaching Through Translanguaging

Although translanguaging has become more prominent in the literature within the last decade, it is not a new concept. Translanguaging was originally conceived of by Cen Williams (1994), a Welsh researcher who saw it as a way to develop Welsh students' bilingualism by engaging in tasks that required them to use Welsh *and* English to speak, read, and write. The concept has been taken up and extended by many academics to refer to the use of language not as a system with socially and politically defined boundaries, but as a dynamic and fluid linguistic repertoire (see, e.g., Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009; García & Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2011, 2017; Otheguy et al., 2015).

For us then, translanguaging for educational purposes “means that we start from a place that leverages all the features of the children’s repertoire, while also showing them when, with whom, where, and why to use some features of their repertoire and not others, enabling them to also perform according to the social norms of named languages as used in schools” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 15). It allows for the freedom of a speaker to language in a way that is not necessarily aligned with how languages are defined socially and politically. Instead, speakers add new features and appropriate them into their own language repertoire.

García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017) identify three components of translanguaging educational practices: stance, design, and shifts. A teacher’s *stance* refers to their beliefs and ideologies about emergent bilingual students and their language practices—regardless of the named language or variety. For translanguaging to live up to its full potential, an educator must view all linguistic features and practices of any given student as a resource in general and specifically for their learning. This view positions translanguaging as a right of the child to fully bring themselves into the classroom to achieve academically. This also transforms their position from students inferior to English monolinguals to students with extensive language practices that are outside of mandated standards and standardized exams. This transformative stance seeks to disrupt hierarchical structures of power and differs significantly from a scaffolding stance that solely includes translanguaging as a way to transition students to English.

A translanguaging pedagogical *design* refers to how teachers set up affordances as they construct learning experiences for emergent bilinguals. Attention to how students actually practice language requires consideration of a number of factors. First, teachers have to set up group work with speakers of similar home languages and design collaborative tasks to give students the opportunity to use their full linguistic and semiotic repertoire, which includes gestures, pictures, technology, and so on. A translanguaging design also requires the inclusion of a range of resources that are both multilingual and multimodal. This provides students with multiple points of entry to make meaning of the new language features. *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide of Educators* (Celic & Seltzer, 2011) describes a number of translanguaging strategies, among which are how to work with multilingual writing partners, as well as using and analyzing multilingual texts. A translanguaging design also includes the opportunity to see and hear bilingual people and writers using their entire repertoire. For example, Pérez Rosario (2014) offers a guide to Latinx literary authors who translanguage in their writing and provides suggestions on how to use these texts. Also important in a translanguaging design is attention to assessments that clearly distinguish between language and content.

Finally, translanguaging pedagogical practices include *shifts*, moves a teacher makes in response to their students. García et al. (2017) explain how the translanguaging corriente in a classroom is akin to a flowing body of water, a “dynamic and continuous movement of language features that change the static linguistic landscape of the classroom” (p. 21). Because translanguaging ultimately “stems from the speaker up and not from the language down” (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 23), the educator must always position the student at the center. This entails negotiating the instructional design while also making unplanned changes to best facilitate student learning and understanding. Focusing on standards, curriculum, and materials, created with English monolinguals in mind, without consideration of how bilingual students learn in the moment, will ultimately be harmful to them and most likely reproduce negative outcomes for minoritized students. Instead, an educator who is able to shift in response to the students’ dynamic languaging practices shifts toward an education that liberates and gives space to students’ voices (García & Leiva, 2014; Velasco & García, 2014).

From English-Only to Translanguaging in TESOL

It is impossible to have an ESL translanguaging classroom without first knowing your students because only seeing them as “English learners” is insufficient and problematic. Our students come from homes where named languages other than (and sometimes including) English are spoken. Therefore, it is important that students are asked about the language practices in their homes and communities. Then the teacher—whether they speak the same named languages of the students or not¹—can create spaces to include the students’ linguistic practices in the classroom’s physical space and instruction.

Although ESL settings aim to improve students’ English abilities, there is no reason classrooms should be policed English-only spaces. The linguistic landscape of a classroom and a school—made up of the signage, bulletin boards, student work, visuals, and resources—speaks to what and who is and isn’t valued. A setting where everything is in English sends a clear message: English is the only named language that is accepted and valued, thereby letting emergent bilingual students know that their full linguistic repertoire is neither welcome nor included. However, when signage exists in the home languages of the families, when students have the opportunity to write without suppressing their language features, when instructional resources are available in a variety of languages, and when students see how authors and writers use translanguaging in texts creatively, educators come to see that ESL spaces are not English-only, but represent the linguistic practices of the students and society.

The physical space, combined with the school and classroom culture, set the stage for translanguaging. If students are in a hostile environment where linguistic differences are shunned rather than affirmed, then the best planning for enacting translanguaging will prove unsuccessful. Therefore, explicitly discussing what it means to be bi- or multilingual, either as individuals, in families, schools, and society is crucial. Reyes and Kleyn (2010) provide suggestions to do this by having elementary students create a school-wide campaign to promote the benefits of being bilingual. They also propose leading secondary students in a mini-research study of job advertisements to see where bilingualism and biliteracy is necessary, as well as consider why it is required. These types of conversations and activities can help to set the stage for students to embrace translanguaging in ESL settings, as well other types of programs.

Main Findings from Current Research

The literature on translanguaging in education began to increase in 2011 and has continued to enjoy significant attention and interest (Poza, 2017). Poza’s review of 53 published pieces on translanguaging found that the majority were focused on PreK-12 education, with less on adult/tertiary education. A welcomed addition to translanguaging at the university level is Mazak and Carroll (2017). Poza’s analysis concludes that “while the term translanguaging has mostly maintained its sociolinguistic critique of prior language conceptualizations, its connections to a critical pedagogy are more sporadic in the literature” (2017, p. 104). Therefore, while the research has focused on combating the heavy slant toward monolingualism and the centering of monolinguals, the call to heed translanguaging as a political act (Flores, 2014) has been less prevalent across the literature.

Translanguaging as a Transformative Stance

Most ESL settings are highly multilingual, with students or their families coming from homes where one or more languages other than English are spoken. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect any teacher to speak those languages (although learning a few words in

each could be very meaningful to students and their families). But teachers must give up a certain level of control and become co-learners (Li Wei, 2014) and risk-takers, if ESL programs are to be inclusive of their students' backgrounds.

Allard (2017) vividly shows how simply including translanguaging strategies, in the absence of a translanguaging stance, does not lead to positive results in a school where students would otherwise be poised to benefit from translanguaging in their education. In other words, translanguaging embedded in instruction cannot be a panacea, but must be part of an overall school and class ecology that is supportive of emergent bilingual students and respective of their cultural and linguistic resources. These findings can be explained by what García and Lin (2016) view as strong and weak forms of translanguaging. The latter only uses strategies to support students in learning language and content, whereas the stronger version is more transformative and could be seen as a strand of critical pedagogy. A strong form of translanguaging aims to break down nation-state imposed hierarchies around named languages that reproduce inequalities.

Practical Applications of TESOL in K-12

Research in translanguaging in education has been both theoretical and empirical. Given the interconnectivity of bilingual and ESL education—serving the same student populations and overlapping in approaches—there is much that can be applied from one setting to the next. We have seen innovative approaches to translanguaging pedagogical practices in a range of ESL contexts that aim to build students' language practices associated with English and their home language(s), integrate language and content knowledge, and build awareness about different linguistic features. To illustrate this, we start with an overview of approaches to teaching through translanguaging that can be applied to TESOL contexts, and then highlight a project that aims to support schools in building a culture of translanguaging. We then zoom into classrooms with instruction in English to see how teachers have enacted translanguaging into their existing curriculum and classroom practices.

Translanguaging for TESOL Contexts

There are big and small ways translanguaging can be incorporated into ESL classrooms with the goals of acknowledging and incorporating students' full linguistic repertoire, developing English, and integrating learning content and language. And while this pedagogical approach may be used to support students who are at the initial stages of their emergent bilingualism, it is in no way transitional, as translanguaging is equally useful and powerful for students who are just starting their journey of learning English as well as those who are more proficient.

The key to any successful ESL lesson is ensuring students are aware of what is required of them. Therefore, taking the extra step to either provide emergent bilinguals with directions and/or learning objectives in their home language, through using an electronic translation site, or by asking peers to assist each other, ensures that a lesson is off to the right start by grounding students in meaning-making (Ebe, 2016).

Next, it is important to distinguish between an ESL lesson's process and product, and how students will language for each one. The *process*, or how students will work to achieve the lesson's goal, can generally be enhanced through translanguaging. This can include students reading an English text and taking notes in their home language or talking through the concepts with their peers while translanguaging or referring to a translated version of a text to ensure understanding. By allowing and encouraging students' translanguaging during the process, they are able to use all their linguistic resources to develop understandings.

Meaning-making is essential to add new language features and expand the linguistic repertoire of emergent bilinguals. Translanguaging also provides emergent bilinguals the opportunity to compare and contrast English with another language, such as asking students to identify cognates (as well as false cognates) to see how their knowledge of one named language assists in learning another. Leveraging students' translanguaging in a multilingual ESL classroom also means that students develop understandings of diverse ways of speaking and being in the world, as they hear and see other languages displayed.

For the *product*, that is, what students must create or submit at the completion of a lesson or unit, ESL teachers may determine whether or not only English could be used. In some cases, a product that embeds translanguaging makes perfect sense and may even enhance it. This was the case of students writing a poem that reflects the traditions and background of their family or a story where bilingual characters speak different languages, or making an oral presentation for a bilingual audience. Some ESL teachers ask students to write as much as possible in English and then complete the rest in their home language. This option allows students to continue the work—regardless of named language—rather than come to a full stop in their production and learning. But there may also be cases where the product must be completed exclusively in English. Once these decisions have been made by the teacher, students must be explicitly told about the linguistic expectation for both the process and product; otherwise they may resort to what has too often been the default in TESOL and most other settings: English-only.

The role of translanguaging in teaching English literacy has been explored in the literature and shown to be a powerful approach to build on what students already know while developing new practices in English. This builds on the continua of biliteracy which posits that “the more students’ contexts of language and literacy use allow them to draw from across the whole of each and every continuum, the greater are the chances for their full language and literacy development and expression” (Hornberger & Link, 2012, p. 243). ESL educators have taken approaches such as allowing students to sit with home language peers for bilingual discussions in guided reading groups, promoting the analysis of text features across pieces in English and other languages, and creating bilingual texts that include both written and oral language (Pacheco & Miller, 2016). Velasco and García (2014) found that young bilinguals naturally leverage their full linguistic repertoire in all stages of the writing process. They conclude that “even to develop the monolingual voice in writing that schools—and even bilingual schools—expect, a translanguaging approach has the most potential” (p. 6). Cummins (2006) has shown the power of students from similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds coming together to co-author identity texts that are written and spoken in the shared named languages of the students to be used as a resource in the school for students from all backgrounds. This approach also makes visible and audible the voices of students who may be silenced in the absence of bilingual programming.

Assessment is a part of the critical loop in the teaching and learning process. Once an ESL educator has teased out whether they are assessing a student’s content knowledge, knowledge of the English language, or knowledge of how to use language in general, the presence or absence of student translanguaging can be determined through well-designed teacher-made assessments. Some technologies have been developed to allow students to translanguage and use their full linguistic repertoire in standardized assessments, even when the educator does not share the language (see, e.g., López, Turkan, & Guzmán-Orth, 2017). Translanguaging offers a promising way to disentangle language from content learning and assess students more fairly based on what they know, rather than asking them to show their knowledge with linguistic features they have yet to acquire or by suppressing certain features. Of course, this requires additional effort by teachers, but with the support of students, families, and the community, in addition to new technologies, translanguaging offers tremendous promise for assessing emergent bilingual students through a bilingual lens.

A Translanguaging Project and Its Lessons

In order to move translanguaging theory into practice in schools, the City University of New York (CUNY)—New York State Initiative for Emergent Bilinguals (NYSIEB) project was conceived as a partnership between the State and higher education faculty and doctoral students.² Since its establishment in 2011, CUNY-NYSIEB has worked with over 70 schools across New York with large numbers of emergent bilinguals and programs that range from ESL to bilingual education.

Framed on a vision of dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging (see vision, www.cuny-nysieb.org), CUNY-NYSIEB developed two non-negotiable principles for all schools: (a) bilingualism had to be a resource for all students, and (b) schools had to develop a multilingual ecology that reflected its students and families. The work began with the administrators, who too often lack an understanding of how emergent bilinguals develop their linguistic repertoire and as a result implement English-only programs (Menken & Solorza, 2014). Principals attended seminars to learn about dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging. They were then asked to think about how to design programming and instruction with additional school leaders and personnel. CUNY faculty and doctoral student teams worked directly with educators in the classrooms to think through how translanguaging would best serve their specific context and students. The school-based work was approached simultaneously with the creation of resources—available for free via <https://www.cuny-nysieb.org>—to guide educators in embedding translanguaging strategies in curriculum and instructional planning, work with specific emergent bilingual subgroups, identify culturally relevant texts that are translanguaged, and access videos to highlight educators' approaches to this work across schools with different populations and programs.

Although CUNY-NYSIEB was primarily a service project, research has been conducted in some classrooms to understand how translanguaging has worked for teachers and students. In our book, *Translanguaging with Multilingual Students: Learning from Classroom Moments* (García & Kleyn, 2016), researchers and teachers explain how they take up translanguaging, or not, in K-12 classrooms within different programs and several content areas.

Here we share three studies of focal lessons that were developed in partnership with researchers that exemplify translanguaging approaches in elementary, middle school, and high school classrooms where instruction was officially in English, and where most students were classified as English language learners. Each lesson was part of the school's mandated curriculum and was modified to embed translanguaging for the benefit of the bilingual students.

The first lesson takes place in a fifth-grade classroom in Queens, New York, one of the most diverse places in the world, with teacher Andrew Brown and researcher Heather Woodley (Woodley, 2016). The classroom is made up of 27 students who have seven home languages among them. The class is self-contained, with emergent bilinguals (officially labeled as English language learners), as well as English monolinguals who are deemed to struggle with English literacy. The social studies lesson focuses on the structures and realities of American slavery, a concept that is rather foreign to students who did not grow up in the United States. The lesson embeds translanguaging as a way to extend Gutiérrez's (2012) concept of windows and mirrors. This allows students to start from their home language (the mirror) and then branch out to learn about new language features with which they have less familiarity (the windows). The lesson begins with the essential question, translated via Google Translate, and posted in four different languages. Students have the chance to correct each translation on the smartboard, while explaining the linguistic rationale as they are becoming more familiar with the goal of the lesson. As the teacher reads aloud from an English text, students are given opportunities to learn key concepts/vocabulary via different languages, while also coming to terms with how some words are not easily translatable.

Beyond developing the topic through different linguistic features, students are also encouraged to make connections to how African Americans were treated and oppressive structures in their countries of origin. In this lesson, students who are in the early stages of learning English are not only learners, but leaders in sharing about their home languages and their histories with students in the class. There are also opportunities for students to put named languages side-by-side to reinforce similarities and differences across language structures, text directionality (i.e., Arabic is read from left to right) and vocabulary.

Another CUNY-NYSIEB lesson, this one at the middle-school level, involved a co-taught English Language Arts (ELA) and ENL³ lesson on translanguaging as a literary device (Ebe, 2016). Charene Chapman-Santiago teaches eighth-grade ELA and collaborated with Ann Ebe to modify a lesson with the book *Inside Out and Back Again* (Lai, 2011). The novel features a Vietnamese author who writes about her immigration experiences to the United States following the fall of Saigon. The 21 students in the class, none of whom has a Vietnamese background, speak eight different home languages. The teachers have little or no knowledge of the languages of their students, but are open to welcoming them into their classroom and instruction. The lesson starts with a “Do Now,” or instructions for what students are to do when they enter the class. It reads, “The author uses a lot of vocabulary words in Vietnamese in this book. Explain your thoughts as to why she didn’t use all English words. How are you about to infer the meaning of the Vietnamese words?” (Ebe, 2016, p. 57). This has been translated in the worksheet into numerous languages with the help of Google translate. Students sit with home language peers to discuss the “Do Now”; some do this mostly through their home language, some mostly in English, and some bilingually, and then write their responses using their full linguistic repertoire. Some choose to employ only English features while those who are newer immigrants use their home language. Then, after reading the author’s translanguaged poem about New Year traditions in Vietnam, students write a similar poem describing their family’s traditions for bringing in the New Year. Students are asked to use translanguaging as a literary device, just as they had seen the author do. They are then told to check in with their families for homework in order to ensure their ideas are accurate and also receive home language support (that the teachers are not able to offer them). One of the students explained, “Using both Spanish and English made me feel like I was at home because I speak both languages at home” (Ebe, 2016, p. 76).

The final lesson takes place in a high school 11th/12th-grade English language arts class, where all students come from Spanish-speaking countries and have had limited formal education or low-quality education, resulting in low literacy in Spanish. The teacher, Katrina Mae Ángeles, has learned some Spanish words since she became a teacher in the school and works to prepare her students to pass the ELA Regents Exam, a requirement for high school graduation in New York and a monumental obstacle for newcomer immigrants (Menken, 2008). Seltzer and Collins (2016) were the researcher-collaborators in this class. Students were asked to read and analyze culturally relevant poems in English from the book *Class Dismissed* by Mel Glenn (1982). The topics touched on areas such as how people are treated in the United States when they don’t speak English. After reading the poems, students were part of small discussion groups, where conversations about the English poems were not restricted to the language of the text. Therefore, students were able to clarify their understanding and vocabulary through Spanish as well. Translanguaging allowed them to express their emotions and connect with peers in a way that doing so in English-only would prove stifling. In this lesson, translanguaging was essential in helping emergent bilingual students access an English text in an ELA classroom. It allowed the students to bring in all their language resources to make meaning and also express themselves fully, as youth who face a number of challenges in a new country where they are racialized and judged to be inferior.

These three examples are just a few of the varied ways that translanguaging can be part of an ESL classroom. And although it may not be the case that translanguaging needs to be embedded in every lesson, it certainly must play a role in ESL settings.

Future Directions for TESOL in K-12

In order to move toward a translanguaging theory in TESOL, we must continue to reimagine how to teach students who are increasingly multilingual in a world that is highly interconnected. To do this, TESOL education needs to shift its emphasis from presenting English as an autonomous language structure to thinking about the human capacity to language and make meaning. In this way, English cannot be foreign or second or third or even multiple. Language refers to the human capacity to make meaning that human beings desire in order to broaden their meaning-making, social fields, and worlds of ideas.

In the translanguaging perspective that we adopt, named languages have an important sociocultural reality, but not a psycholinguistic one. That is, English, Spanish, Chinese, and so on, have an important social role in the world, but for human beings, learning a named language means flexing their existing language repertoire, expanding it with new features, reflecting on how the different features are the best hints to communicate with different audiences, acting on different selection processes, and evaluating the success of communication based on the selection of different features. A translanguaging pedagogy thus shifts ideologies about language, positioning named languages in their important sociocultural and sociopolitical plane, while expanding the linguistic capacity of learners to make meaning. The focus of teaching is not the language and its structure per se, but the development of the learner's language repertoire as they add new features that become their own, and as they develop understandings of which features are appropriate for communication.

For the TESOL profession, translanguaging offers the possibility of leaving its cocoon and becoming relevant. It is not about teaching English. It is about teaching human beings who will be users of English, while continuing to be bi/multilingual. Whether it is visible or not, emergent bilingual students in TESOL classrooms are always translanguaging. They are always attempting to incorporate the new linguistic features into their existing repertoire. Ignoring the students' translanguaging efforts just slows down the meaning-making drive of all humanity. It is time for sheltered English to step out into the multilingual world. It is time for English immersion to understand that there is no way to become an English-speaker unless one is given a voice, a voice that for learners in ESL settings is, of necessity, bilingual or multilingual. It is time for language education programs, of all types, to understand that learning a named language relies on human beings' capacity to language, and that this capacity is always driven by the desire to make contact, to make meaning, to engage with others as yourself, not as a "second language" speaker, or a "foreign language" speaker, or even a "dual language" speaker.

The line between the important sociocultural constructions that are separate named languages and the unitary language system of human beings needs to be firmly drawn. Competent English speakers will result when the TESOL field sees students not as "second language" learners and speakers, but when they are allowed from the very beginning to use all their language repertoire to make meaning of the new features, and when they are evaluated not on how these new features are used in comparison with monolingual speakers, but on how these new features are used competently to make meaning, do science, become a historian, be a literary author, teach, or do the myriad things that competent human beings can do.

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NOTES

- 1 See the CUNY-NYSIEB web series “Teaching Bilinguals (Even if You’re Not One),” produced by Sara Vogel (2017) at www.cuny-nysieb.org/teaching-bilinguals-webseries for examples of how teachers enact translanguaging in different classroom contexts.
- 2 From its inception in 2011, CUNY-NYSIEB’s principal investigators have been professors Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia García, and Kate Menken, with professors Tatyana Kleyn and Vanessa Pérez serving as interim principal investigators. Maite Sánchez was project director from 2012 to 2017, with Nelson Flores acting as the initial director (2011–2012). Kate Seltzer served as project director in 2017–2018 and Ivana Espinet currently holds the position. Associate Investigators of the project have been professors L. Ascenzi-Moreno, B. Collins, A. Ebe, C. Espinosa, M. Kaya, E. Kearney, T. Kleyn, D. López, K. Mahoney, Z. Morell, and V. Pérez. Assistant Researchers have been G. Aponte, K. Carpenter, C. Celic, I. Espinet, L. Guzmán Valerio, S. Hesson, L. Herrera, L. Papas, M. Cioè Peña, C. Solorza, S. Vogel, and H. Woodley.
- 3 In NYS, where these lessons take place, the name of the ESL program has been officially changed to ENL.

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