

## Cultivating translinguaging online

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This special issue explores whether and how practices, pedagogies and teacher beliefs about translinguaging across formal educational settings translate to formal online teaching modes. Literature across the various subfields comprising educational linguistics characterises translinguaging as a theory about how the bilingual mind works, a multilingual phenomenon and an array of pedagogies that support the use of students' and teachers' linguistic repertoires as a resource for learning and positive identity formation (Goodman and Tastanbek, 2021; Li Wei, 2018; Otheguy, García and Reid, 2019). While research has been increasingly demonstrating the benefits of translinguaging as a pedagogical approach and decrying its absence in monolingual and discrete bilingual teaching, little research has been conducted, until recently, on teachers' and students' beliefs and practices of translinguaging in instructed online spaces.

As the world experienced unprecedented disruptions in education and everyday life in 2020, questions arose about how to continue to support and advocate for multilingual learners. Yet, long before the Covid-19 pandemic sent education into an online format, scholars who advocated for translinguaging also advocated for awareness of the multimodal nature of communicative processes across languages and the need to harness different media for multilingual communication (e.g., García and Kleifgen, 2020; Kleifgen, 2013). Thus, translinguaging practices and pedagogies had been flowing into online spaces before the pandemic and are likely to continue to change and fluctuate across modalities as the current pandemic ends.

Given the broad implications of translinguaging for language policy, curriculum and instruction offline and online, it is not surprising that this

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concept has also garnered criticism. Scholars, even those sympathetic to translanguaging, have observed that deconstructivist orientations towards conceptualising language may de-emphasise the centrality of named languages in multilingual education, which jeopardises the effectiveness of policies intended to protect and promote minoritised languages (Martínez-Roldán, 2015). Outside the global north and English-speaking contexts, Bonnin and Unamuno (2021) contend that translanguaging has been theoretically unhelpful in accounting for language dynamics among Indigenous speakers leading revitalisation projects in Latin America, where naming languages prefigures centrally in political struggles. These scholars maintain that clear-cut distinctions between Spanish and Indigenous languages remain crucial for minority speakers' socio-political struggles against Spanish cultural, political and social hegemony.

Bonnin and Unamuno's study echoes other language policy-oriented work raising concerns around minoritised peoples' understandings of multilingualism in ways that challenge linguists' emancipatory discourse (Barros and de Oliveira, 2022). MacSwan (2020), for example, notes that deconstructivist orientations of translanguaging can work counterproductively to the strategies employed in language policy activism in education. In response to Pennycook's (2006:27) calls for language to be taken up and studied as 'an emergent property of social interaction and not of prior system tied to ethnicity, territory, birth, or nation,' MacSwan (2020:323) cautions educators and policy activists in education to be mindful that 'there can be no rights associated with nonexistent language communities, and no multilingualism in a world where languages, *per se*, do not exist.'

Regardless of how linguists and educators may express their support and advocacy of heteroglossia in classroom instruction, the processes through which minoritised communities imagine themselves linguistically and culturally require an acknowledgement of the politics of difference that drives militancy around minoritised language groups' activism and decolonial efforts. Because language operates as a symbolic demarcator of groups' authority, ethnolinguistic communities may choose to represent their language as a site of difference, accentuating or attenuating cohesive aspects of their linguistic repertoires to achieve political objectives and survive economically, as in the case of the minoritised languages speakers' repertoires deployed in commerce and tourism (Chiswick, Patrinos and Hurst, 2021; Heller, 2010). As de Swaan (2020) remarks, languages are 'hypercollective goods', and for this reason, the struggle for defining and operationalising them in curriculum and instruction involves a myriad of converging interests in constant need of careful disentanglement. The confluence of interests in curricularising language determines the visibility of options for realising public education as a socially just and humane

common good. For this reason, how languages are framed and articulated in academic instruction bears profound implications for how teachers attempt to ethically influence students' attitudes towards diverse communicative practices, expanding or restricting the meaning of language by drawing attention to it as a local or translocal phenomenon.

The risks of framing languages in alignment with or against appropriateness-based discourses are manifold. Consider Parakrama's (1995) warnings about the appropriation of seemingly emancipatory ideas initiated by academics – like the pluralisation of English – which can unwisely camouflage the reinstatement of standardising principles. The reformulation of a standard as an ultimate desired reference becomes something with which minoritised groups must always negotiate as unequal partners, a fact that merits critical attention in emancipatory education debates covering language rights and formal instruction. Parakrama (1995:xii) explains that:

A careful examination of the processes of standardization as they affect these 'Others'... strips the camouflage from standardization which can be seen as the hegemony of the 'educated' elites, hence the unquestioned paradigm of the 'educated standard.' These standards are kept in place in 'first world' contexts by a technology of reproduction which dissimulates this hegemony through the self-represented neutrality of prestige and precedent whose selectivity is a function of the politics of publication. In these 'other' situations, the openly conflictual nature of the language context makes such strategies impossible. The non-standard is one of the most accessible means of 'natural' resistance and, therefore, one of the most sensitive indices of de-hegemonization.

More recently, scholars have been documenting how emerging technologies across social media platforms and hybrid environments have made apparent the multiple centres of authority over language established beyond what conventional linguistic markets and institutions have promoted as 'desirable' (Pujolar, 2007). Despite the weakening of institutions' influence over the management of languages, public schools continue to play a critical role in addressing the inequalities triggered by historical processes of linguistic discrimination and de-citizenship (see, respectively, Spolsky, 2004; Ramanathan, 2013). As curriculum and instruction tend to reflect broader social disparities (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), cultural and linguistic representation remains at the core of social justice debates in academic spaces. Indeed, the growth of online education as an attractive alternative worldwide (Kingsbury, 2021) has brought to the fore the centrality of linguistic diversity.

To that end, the eight articles in this issue elucidate the affordances and constraints of translanguaging in teaching and learning online during the pandemic. We start with Cenoz and Gorter, who provide an overview of research

on the challenges of translanguaging pedagogies in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) settings, which can be mapped onto the pedagogical planning and curriculum design of instructed online spaces. Odugu offers a critical reflection on translanguaging in neo-liberal institutions during the shift to online teaching. He identifies the thrusts in translanguaging pedagogy created during this crisis and the opened and missed apertures for expanding the meaning of translanguaging.

The next two articles by Alarcon et al. and Gomes and De Korne offer self-studies of translanguaging pedagogies and practices by teacher educators in the United States and sociolinguistics professors in Norway, respectively. Both studies point to specific potentials in peer and student communication, tensions in assessment practices and educators' general embodiment of translanguaging. The two studies that follow focus on language teacher awareness and classroom practices and attitudes as Chen and Barros report findings from Chinese teachers of young learners in the United States and Wimalasiri and Seals present reflections from an English as a Foreign Language teacher for immigrant adults in New Zealand. The final two articles by Zhang-Wu and Goodman return to university settings in the United States and Kazakhstan, respectively, to explore how their teaching shapes their students' beliefs about translanguaging, mediated by online spaces for teaching and learning. Both studies find evidence of shifts in students' beliefs and practices of translanguaging during the online courses motivated by translanguaging pedagogical frameworks.

As a collection, we believe these articles show that translanguaging pedagogies can be meaningfully implemented online in ways that affirm and validate students' and teachers' identities and repertoires across time and space. They also remind us that translanguaging remains a conceptual approach to language and pedagogy that does not stand as a panacea. It is embedded in power relations and struggles to shape collective perceptions of language.

Finally, we dedicate this special issue to the memory of Apsara Wimalasiri, one of the contributors to this special issue, who passed away tragically in April 2022. Apsara was a rising scholar, described by friends and colleagues as a powerful activist who laboured to support greater social justice and inclusion through multilingual education. She was actively involved in various initiatives linked to heritage language teaching and learning and was at the forefront of protests in Wellington concerning the recent civil unrest in her native country, Sri Lanka. As a PhD candidate at the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, Apsara worked under the supervision of Dr Corrine Seals.

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