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Translanguaging Is Here to Stay

Retos and Oportunidades for a Linguistically Sustaining Bilingual (and Non-Bilingual) Teacher Education

Eduardo R. Muñoz-Muñoz
San José State University

I began to realize that I had absorbed the strengths of two cultures
and lifestyles. Was that good or bad?

Pocho

Good, que no. I have an innovative way of expressing myself that re-
lates to both sides of the border.

Pocho

—*Los Alacranes Mojados, Pocho*

Ríos de tinta have been and will be written about translanguaging since it poses a paradigmatic challenge to business as usual in language education. Allow me to start with an anecdote in the context of a bilingual advocacy event in San Diego, California. As part of a group of seasoned and committed bilingual educators, I attended a presentation that problematized the cultural relevance of instruction for U.S.-based populations modeled after the educational structures and pedagogies in nations where Spanish is the hegemonic language (i.e., Spain, Central America). In this event, we had been inspired by Ramón “Chunky” Sánchez and his *Alacranes Mojados*, his activism, and his song “Pocho,” which brought echoes of Anzaldúa’s “*lenguas de*

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fuego,” “*deslenguadas*,” and “*ni de aquí ni de allá*.” Over lunch, a dear colleague leaned to me and said: “Clearly, we cannot be educating our Spanish ELs as if we were in Mexico, because we are here, and we cannot be teaching as if we were elsewhere.” As this veteran educator honored the Chicano experience’s heritage, I felt the need to add: “Well, this is related to what some of us are trying to convey when it comes to language use and sustaining the language practices of our communities here.” Suddenly, this colleague reacted: “Ah no, but when we are teaching language, I want them to be speaking the language of the Real Academia or of the UNAM.” A translanguaging controversy had just been served as the main course in this *almuerzo*.

The translanguaging debate transcends the outward-facing concerns to defend bilingual education against English nativism, which have pervaded the bilingual education literature in the last thirty years. Translanguaging demands that bilingual language educators engage in an inward-facing analysis into often deeply-seeded views of their world: What is bilingualism? What is bilingual education? Who is it for? Apropos translanguaging, Ofelia García (2019) stated:

The question then is: *Cómo* is bilingualism best developed in school? There is no answer that is separate from people and comunidad. If *la educación bilingüe* is to serve *la comunidad bilingüe*, then a translanguaging approach *que refleje el modo de usar la lengua* of that *comunidad* is most *apropiado*.

These statements merit unpacking and posing the questions implicit in them: Is *la educación bilingüe* to serve *la comunidad bilingüe*? Who determines the *modo apropiado de usar la lengua*? In other words, who has the power? The translanguaging issue, in line with general calls to decolonize language education (e.g., García, 2019) and specifically to guard against the gentrification of dual immersion (e.g., Delavan et al., 2021), is then the bilingual question of our time, and not an easy one to be resolved.

Translanguaging as a concept is neither new, nor a fad. It was first used to describe language dynamics and pedagogies in Wales, United Kingdom, in the 1990s (García, 2017). However, it acquired its current relevance after García relaunched it in the late 2000s to tackle the perennial issue of appropriate linguistic minorities in the U.S. (García, 2009). Translanguaging counters oppressive theories such as semilingualism or incomplete acquisition (Montrul, 2011), which account for Spanglish and describe its users as not having a complete linguistic system, but rather fragments of English and Spanish. When internalized, these theories lead to linguistic violence (Ek & Sánchez, 2008),

the “*no sabo* kids,” and the loss of countless teachers with bilingual skills that succumb to the belief that their “home Spanish” *no está a la altura del* “school Spanish,” the “native or near-native proficiency” that the job postings call for (Briceño et al., 2018).

Translanguaging, as a paradigm-shifting conceptualization of language, reverts how the phenomenon of hybrid language practices is apprehended, moving from an external perspective where it is seen as an alternation of linguistic structures (a language hopscotch or “codeswitching”) to an internal perspective that is, how bilinguals experience language (as flowing creatively to fit communicative needs) (Otheguy et al., 2019). Recognizing Spanglish as linguist prowess rather than faulty language, *una lengua chueca*, defies the canon and how language may be conceived in the UNAM or the Real Academia. How is the Real Academia (*que “limpia, fija, y da esplendor,”* per its motto) going to deal with these *lenguas* so alive and so “*sucias*”? Nevertheless, let us first and foremost recognize that, before the term coinage and the academics that have brought translanguaging to boiling relevance, these *lenguas vivas* were already here. They are here to stay in our schools and society, outside of our academic quarrels.

Language conceived through a translanguaging lens questions the assumed borders of languages tied to nation-state projects (Makoni and Pennycook and “named languages,” 2005). Once the theoretical tenets of translanguaging as a real societal phenomenon “click together” to deconstruct modernist views of language, an essential and pragmatic question past theories is laid bare: What does it look like in the classroom? Even before that, should it be happening in classrooms? On the one hand, proponents of language separation have called for “staying true to the model” as portrayed in the Center for Applied Linguistics *Principles of Dual Language Education*, whose 2018 edition (Howard et al., 2018) is revered and often referenced by practitioners as the compass (vadamecum) of current bilingual education. Using a percentage frame to talk about language allocation imposes a managerial and quantifiable view of languages as separate entities (despite openly admitting that there is less than empirical clarity when determining efficacy across its allocation models).

On the other, studies such as Henderson and Ingram (2018) document what I have called “the White lie,” pun intended, of teachers serving as models of language X to their students while pretending that they are not proficient in language Y. Other articles, such as the call for reframing the language allocation debate by Sánchez and colleagues (2018) document the practical implementation of translanguaging-based pedagogy. The rift between these models two language

models, static allocation versus dynamism, runs deep and is unresolved in typical classroom bilingual practice.

At this controversy's core are paradigmatic ideological differences in the understanding of language ontology and its role in society. Monoglossic ideologies (Silverstein, 2018) approach language as an object that can be segmented, categorized, abstracted, and kept pure, as if these analytical exercises did not impact speakers' lives. Hence, notions such as "standard language" and "academic language" remain incontrovertible and commonsensical. Conversely, heteroglossic ideologies and their pedagogies adopt a fluid stance regarding language, rejecting constructed hierarchies purported to exist on purely linguistic merit. Translanguaging is not just about "mixing language" or not, but about how we conceive the role of language and its variation in the world, indissociably embodied in the speakers that use it. In this paradigmatic clash, it is possible to understand how Cummins considered that raciolinguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015) is "unwanted baggage" tagging along the concept of translanguaging, while some of us see these two ideas as inherently interconnected because there is no language without embodied experience.

We, teacher educators, are confronted with the question of translanguaging praxis in our task to elevate the capacity of our schools to embrace and cultivate our youth's linguistic diversity and dynamism. More often than not, teacher educators are challenged by the degree to which our transformational practices during coursework can "rhyme" with the hands-on experiences of student-teaching, in the knowledge that hours of preparation work can be undone in an instant by the dissonance of a misaligned example in the "reality of the classroom." In a 2021 article, I conceived this transitional stage from theory into practice as a "friction space" where teacher candidates may get contradictory messages and get caught between heteroglossic stances at the university (i.e., embrace the language flow) and monoglossic structures in schools (i.e., languages are to be separated). One of the participants in the study, Julia, captured the essence of this external and internal tension in bilingual teacher candidates:

Pero también yo puedo decir que uso translenguaje si yo estoy estudiando en casa o estoy teniendo discusiones con alguna de mis compañeras [in the credential program]... pero como que mi mente los quiere separar. (p.54)

Julia is torn between her actual usage and sense of language separation, having received well-meaning monoglossic messages from her close entourage. While she thinks that there is potential for translan-

guaging pedagogies “*para que las dos lenguas suban,*” the program where she has completed her student teaching student teaching placement “*es muy estricto, como que se le penaliza al estudiante si está hablando inglés en un momento que se habla español, hasta que le quitan puntos.*” At the local level, translanguaging fights countless battles like Julia’s every day.

At the macro level, California’s language policies in the last decade, while somehow satiating a bilingual thirst after years of Proposition 227 dessert, have remained relatively conservative (i.e., monoglossic) in their conception of bilingualism (Muñoz-Muñoz et al., 2022). Well-meaning additive bilingualism and utilitarian, social-mobility arguments sustain the bilingual arguments of recent policies like the El Roadmap or California 2030. However, the new edition of the *Bilingual Program Standards* and the newly-minted *Bilingual Teacher Performance Expectations* (CTC, 2021) to enter into effect in September of 2023 have made California programs’ encounter with translanguaging an unavoidable and necessary rendezvous. Translanguaging is now policy. For instance, BTPE 4, item 2 states:

Apply knowledge of research on the cognitive and metacognitive effects of bilingualism, biliteracy, translanguaging, and transliteracies as developmental processes when designing and implementing engaging instructional practices with all students. (p. 9)

While California has thus taken a stride in advancing translanguaging on the policy front, other systemic issues challenge the translanguaging project. Translating a freely-flowing human activity such as language into teaching practice (Valdes’ curricularization, 2018) proves especially challenging when it comes to translanguaging, precisely because these practices do not easily conform to institutionalizing practices such as dictionaries, grammars, or language academies of nation-states. The conundrum of testing is particularly relevant: How does the standardized testing industry capture translingual dexterity? How do we renounce our inherited role of curators (i.e., police) of colonized linguistic practices in teacher education while having to prepare our candidates for the language proficiency standardized measures that are part of the bilingual teacher authorization process?

Systemically, we are now confronted with the need to have program-wide discussions about our stance vis-à-vis language, which entails discussions with instructors, field supervisors, mentors, and the entire community-ecology of educators that populates the formative trajectory of bilingual student teachers. Further, we need to press the question of whether these heteroglossic and linguistically-sustaining

stances are only the purview of compartmentalized bilingual teacher preparation programs or, on the contrary, the consequences should more than spill onto regular teacher preparation. Indeed, heteroglossic stances call for a more widely encompassing understanding of language variation, not just where different “named languages” come into contact but where individuals engage creatively across registers, sociolects, dialects, and their idiolects. In simple words, languaging is everywhere and concerns every single one of us.

There are certainly ways to move forward and advance this social and linguistic justice mission. When it comes to raising awareness in the field, the California Association for Bilingual Teacher Education (CABTE) has collaborated closely with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to maximize the official efforts to guide the transition to the new bilingual standard policy (CTC, 2022). Currently, the organization is engaged in the preparation of pedagogical materials to increase awareness about translanguaging and other critical advances in the BTPEs among all stakeholders in the bilingual teacher preparation ecology.

Concerted efforts to engage local district leadership in new heteroglossic perspectives are of the utmost importance, so cultivating district-university partnerships becomes a strategic cornerstone in advancing linguistic justice. At San José State’s *Bilingüismo y Justicia* we work with districts and schools actively pursuing to update their shared pedagogies and skillsets, often encountering Latinx administrators who find in translanguaging a healing response and just validation to their own lived experiences. Recently, a principal in a school in the Bay Area school that had attended a professional development that I conducted on the subject stated: “Even when I was a teacher, this is what I did, and I did not know how to call it, but I felt I had to hide it. Knowing about translanguaging and its potential gives all this a new meaning, and it touches me personally.”

Examples speak louder, and more fluidly, than words. As such, San José State University and California State University Fullerton have just co-sponsored the *Tercera Conferencia de Enseñanza y Liderazgo a través del Translenguaje*. In this event, close to one hundred educators connected virtually to celebrate their linguistic prowess and that of their students, with practitioners that showcased their translanguaging praxis in elementary and secondary classrooms. Moreover, the complete consecration of this experience was that we were communicating profound intellectual ideas with our translanguaging repertoires. The presenters’ depth and reach were not in any way diminished by their explicit disavowal of purism, but rather their message was *sublimado*.

One participant's takeaway was her reflection on "*el poder de la comunidad* in challenging/transforming our colonized minds/perspectives," while another highlighted the importance of "not being hard on ourselves and learning from students."

As academics and agents of change inhabiting el fértil cruce de caminos de la praxis, teacher educators are responsible for embracing and modeling linguistically sustaining pedagogies in our integrated agency within and outside our institutions. Our teacher education practice should be immersed in a love for the free and democratic language performance of our students. Our research should lead to publications that not only pay attention to advancing ideas, but how they do so by pushing the linguistic canon. Our contributions to the field should open ways for the agentic transformation of our educational institutions and the linguistic uninterrogated assumptions that undergird them. Translanguaging is here to stay, *porque no se le pueden poner puertas al campo o al mar*.

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Issues in Teacher Education

Guidelines for Submissions

Issues in Teacher Education (ITE) is a peer-reviewed journal published twice yearly by the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE). The journal publishes original manuscripts focusing on topics, concerns, and methodologies for improving the quality of teacher education, broadly conceived to include pre-service preparation, the induction years, and the professional development of career teachers. The journal welcomes submissions in a variety of genres, including empirical research, philosophical or theoretical investigations, reports by practitioners in various field settings that ground teacher preparation (e.g., descriptions of innovative practices/curriculum situated in the literature), and book reviews related to the theme. All submissions must be scholarly in nature and demonstrate substantive knowledge of teacher education as a field of study. Submissions should be between 5000-7000 words (exclusive of references).

Manuscripts are reviewed year-round. To submit a manuscript for publication consideration, please click on the submission portal on the journal's website (www.itejournal.org) to begin the electronic submission process. ITE uses Open Journal Systems (OJS), a user-friendly online manuscript submission and review interface that allows authors to track the review process in real time. If you are a new user, click on "Register" in the upper right corner of the screen and follow the prompts to complete the registration process. You will receive a confirmation email with your user name and password. Login to the website again and follow the steps for Author and/or New Submissions. Additionally, please consider signing up to serve as a reviewer at this time, as well. A pool of responsive and active reviewers is crucial to maintaining the rigor and quality of publications, as well as to the health and well-being of the journal as a whole.

Manuscripts should follow the style outlined in the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* and should be submitted in Microsoft Word. Submitted files should: be "blind" (all identifying information removed, including in Word's "properties"); have "track changes" turned off; use 12-point font; be unlocked; and not exceed 2 MB in size (including embedded graphics, if any). If your submission includes graphics, you may need to consult your institution's electronic media department for assistance in re-sizing them to assure they do not make the Word document in which they are embedded too large. Graphics should be camera ready at the time they are embedded in the Word document, and if published, will be reproduced in the journal in black and white. *Issues in Teacher Education* will not consider manuscripts that do not meet these style or electronic file standards.

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Founded in 1945, the California Council on Teacher Education is a non-profit organization devoted to stimulating the improvement of the preservice and inservice education of teachers and administrators. The Council attends to this general goal with the support of a community of teacher educators, drawn from diverse constituencies, who seek to be informed, reflective, and active regarding significant research, sound practice, and current public educational issues.

Membership in the California Council on Teacher Education can be either institutional or individual. Colleges and universities with credential programs, professional organizations with interests in the preparation of teachers, school districts and public agencies in the field of education, and individuals involved in or concerned about the field are encouraged to join. Membership entitles one to participation in semi-annual spring and fall conferences, complimentary subscriptions to *Issues in Teacher Education* and *Teacher Education Quarterly*, newsletters on timely issues, an informal network for sharing sound practices in teacher education, and involvement in annual awards and recognitions in the field.

The semi-annual conferences of the California Council on Teacher Education rotate each year between sites in northern and southern California, feature significant themes in the field of education, highlight prominent speakers, afford opportunities for presentation of research and discussion of promising practices, and consider current and future policy issues in the field.

For information about or membership in the California Council on Teacher Education, please contact: Alan H. Jones, Executive Secretary, California Council on Teacher Education, Caddo Gap Press, 3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118; telephone 415/666-3012; e-mail alan.jones@ccte.org; website www.ccte.org.

The next semi-annual conference of the California Council on Teacher Education will be the Spring 2024 SPAN Conference at The Citizen Hotel in Sacramento, as well as virtually. For details see the CCTE website (see above).

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The California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) invites submission of proposals for each of its semi-annual conferences which address: (1) Research related to teacher education, including policy issues, classroom-based issues, teacher effectiveness, or other related topics; (2) Projects or programs reflecting best practice; and (3) Other innovative sessions related to teacher education. While proposals specifically related to the theme of each conference are desired, other topics within teacher education are always considered and often accepted. Proposals are invited for several diverse formats: presentations, roundtables, demonstrations, interactive sessions, and poster sessions.

General Procedures: CCTE is interested in receiving proposals from faculty directly involved in teacher education programs, school district personnel engaged in teacher development efforts, and graduate students conducting research related to teacher education.

How To Submit Proposals: Go to the CCTE website (www.ccte.org) to complete the online proposal submission which involves the following information: proposal title; lead author name; affiliation; address; work and home telephone numbers; and email addresses; along with an indication of whether the proposal focuses on research, practice, or policy analysis; and the preferred session format. Then attach your blinded proposal as a Word file.

Content of the Proposal: Include the following: A brief overview of the study/project/program session including purpose/objectives, theoretical framework, methods, data source, results/conclusions/points of view, and significance to the field of teacher education.

Criteria for Selection: The criteria are: the proposal contributes to the knowledge base of preservice and inservice teacher education; the proposal is methodologically or theoretically sound; the proposal format is well organized and clearly described; and the proposal clearly states its significance for teacher educators.

Deadlines: The deadline for proposals for spring conferences is January 15 of the year of the conference. The deadline for proposals for fall conferences is August 15 of the year of the conference.

Questions: Questions may be addressed to the co-chairs of the CCTE Research Committee, Kimiya Maghzi and Marni Fisher. e-mail: kimiya_maghzi@redlands.edu & mfisher@saddleback.edu

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