ENHANCING PARTICIPATION THROUGH TRANSLANGLUAGING:
HOME LANGUAGES AS A RESOURCE IN BASIC LITERACY TRAINING

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IN THIS PRESENTATION…

• What is translanguaging?
• Translanguaging, why?
• The scope of translanguaging, examples
• How to harness translanguaging as a pedagogical resource?
WHAT IS TRANSLANGUAGING?

1) A theoretical perspective to language, and especially multilingualism

2) A pedagogical approach to learning and teaching in multilingual classrooms
WHERE DOES THE TERM ORIGINATE?

- In practices of bilingual classrooms in Wales
- Originally *trawsieithu* – a term coined by Cen Williams (see Williams 1994)
- Adopted to English medium literature in 2001 edition of Colin Baker’s *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*

Translanguaging – transpråkande – limittäiskieleily
TRANSLANGUAGING AS A THEORETICAL OUTLOOK ON LANGUAGE
WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

Language as a code

Language as action

Source: Saussure (1972) [1916]
WHAT IS BI-/MULTILINGUALISM?

Monolingual view to bilingualism

Dynamic bilingualism: Languages as a unified bank of resources
WHAT ARE LANGUAGE SKILLS?

Linguistic competence as whole languages

‘perfect knowledge of language x’

Language skills as bits or fragments of language, as partial repertoires
WHY DOES THEORY MATTER?

• Our view of language is like a pair of glasses or a worldview that guides how we see language, and how we teach language
• Everyone has a theory of language
TRANSLANGUAGING AS PRACTICES THAT GO BEYOND LANGUAGES
WHAT IS TRANSLANGUAGING IN PRACTICE?

- Ofelia García describes translanguaging as ‘turning off the language-switch function on the iPhone’ (Garcia & Li Wei 2014: 22-23)

- In multilingual classrooms: utilizing all interactional resources
  - Participants’ languages, gestures, facial expressions, pictures, writing, drawing, objects (e.g. food packages, furniture in the classroom)…
WHY TRANSLANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM?

1) A way to make minority languages visible
2) A way to support students’ multilingualism

Ofelia Garcia (2009) notes that all pedagogical decisions should be based on social justice and social practice (learning by doing)
ADVANTAGES OF TRANSLANGUAGING

1) Supports deeper and more varied understanding of the studied theme
2) Supports the development of the weaker language
3) Facilitates connections between home and school
4) Brings together language users of different levels

(Source: Baker 2011: 289-290)
HOW TO HARNESS TRANSLANGUAGING AS A PEDAGOGICAL RESOURCE IN THE CLASSROOM?
TRANSLANGUAGING FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

• Translanguaging is a normal mode of operation for plurilinguals

→ students often translanguaging to learn even if translanguaging to teach is not part of the classroom practices

Translanguaging to teach requires sensitivity to the ways in which students translanguaging to learn

(For the distinction, see García & Li Wei 2014)
TRANSLANGLUAGING FOR LEARNING

• In the basic literacy classrooms the students translanguage to learn in order to:
  • Make sense either of the ongoing interaction or a written assignment
  • Participate in the classroom activities, or aid a fellow student to do so
  • Be able to revise the study material
TRANSLANGUAGING FOR TEACHING

• Can take either the form of spontaneous translanguaging to teach or be part of a pre-planned lesson plan

• Spontaneous translanguaging to teach includes e.g. student translations and using sites such as Google translate

• Example of a more complex lesson plan: reading the story ‘the liars house’
CHALLENGES SPECIFIC TO MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

- How to balance between several home languages, how to take everyone into consideration equally?
- How to utilize linguistic resources that the teacher does not have access to?
- How to balance between the classroom language and students’ home languages?
TO CONCLUDE

- Translanguaging for teaching is a way to support students in their language socialization
  
  - Utilizing home languages as a pedagogical resource is a part of a broader array of translingual practices
  
  - Translanguaging for teaching often means co-learning and partly giving up one’s authority role
  
  - Translanguaging pedagogies are always tied to a specific group and its linguistic resources
Bibliography


Saussure, Ferdinand de (1972) [1916] Course in general linguistics. Edited and annotated by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in collaboration with Albert Riedlinger. Translated by Roy Harris. La Salle, IL: Open Court.