Translanguaging in ESL and Bilingual Classrooms
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Views of Bilinguals and Bilingualism
Changes in our understanding of bilinguals and bilingualism have led to changes in our understanding of how best to teach emergent bilinguals.

20th Century View of Bilinguals
In the 20th century view, the bilingual was seen as two monolinguals in one person. They were taught English using only English.

21st Century Holistic View of Bilinguals
The bilingual is not simply the sum of two monolinguals. Instead, “the bilingual is an integrated whole who cannot easily be decomposed into two separate parts… he has a unique and specific linguistic configuration” Grosjean 2010

A holistic view of bilinguals
A bilingual is like a high hurdler. She doesn’t have to jump as high as a high jumper or run as fast as a sprinter.
Instead, she is a unique individual with special skills.

21st Century View of Dynamic Bilingualism
Both languages are always active in the mind of a bilingual person. (Bialystok, 2011)

The features of the two (or more) languages are a linguistic repertoire bilinguals can draw on to communicate effectively and solve problems.

A translanguaging corriente runs through classrooms with emergent bilinguals
Linguistic Repertoire – a set of linguistic features - phonemes, morphemes, syntactic rules, discourse rules, etc. that people draw on to communicate. Bilinguals and multilinguals have linguistic repertoires with features that are used in more than one language.

What is Translanguaging
Translanguaging is the use of two languages during instruction (Garcia 2009)

Teachers can use translanguaging strategies, to help emergent bilinguals develop both academic language proficiency and academic content knowledge.

In addition, the use of translanguaging strategies helps students build their bilingual identities.

Code Switching
Translanguaging is what many refer to as code switching.

Although code switching is a common practice in bilingual communities and serves different social functions, it may be seen as a sort of crutch for someone who does not have full command of both languages.

Code switching assumes a person has two linguistic systems and switches between them.
Cummins – Use of Two Languages
There are times during instruction to keep the two languages separate. However, there are also times for creating “a shared or interdependent space for the promotion of language awareness and cross-language cognitive processing”
Macro- & Micro Alternation

concurrent translation
The teacher translates each thing she says
Today we will study the reasons for European exploration.
Hoy vamos a ver las razones por la exploración europeo.

Translanguaging
Students read and discuss in English European exploration, the reasons for it, expansion, and colonization. The teacher draws on Spanish cognates for these key concepts by making a wall chart.

Why use translanguaging strategies?
It is a way of valuing students’ cultures, identities, and bilingualism
It promotes metalinguistic knowledge as teachers compare and contrast languages
It is a linguistic scaffold that helps emergent bilinguals make sense of content and develop language proficiency

1. Valuing Students’ Cultures, Identities, and Bilingualism
Multilingual Ecology – murals, signs in the office, student work in two languages

Cool country report
Steps of the lesson
The students talked about the countries where they or their parents /grandparents migrated from to the United States.
The students researched their country and filled in a Cool Country Report. It included the geographical location of the country, its flag, important food, people, sports, etc. Then they designed a miniature travel brochure for their country using books and the Internet for their research.
Students then prepared a poster where they filled in their silhouettes with the pictures, words, images, and symbols from their country.
Student sample of the silhouette posters.
Next steps
The students presented their posters in small groups based on their countries.
Students’ work was displayed in the class and the students did a gallery walk where each student had a post it and he had to look for one thing he found in a poster which was not on his country’s poster but still was similar to his country/ culture. The students noted the common element on the post it.

Cultural Venn, cultural mandala, graffiti board

2. Translanguaging to Build Metalinguistic Knowledge
Access cognates
Compare and contrast text features and structures
Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) list identifying similarities and differences as one of the most effective strategies for improving instruction
Making Connections for Learning -cognates
Multilingual Word Walls, key words in students’ home languages

Vocabulary during Math
English
During math, the teacher wanted to review measurement vocabulary. She gave students a short reading on measurement in English, but put Spanish translation of the reading next to it. Students first read the English side and then read it in Spanish. Students highlighted the words that looked similar in both languages. Students found many cognates for measurement words and added them to their list of math-related English/Spanish cognates. (Could also create picture dictionary.) The teacher took the words students found and added them to a whole-class Math Cognate Chart that was updated throughout the unit.

Comparing Text Structures
Compare and contrast structure of possessives in two languages
Comparing Text Structures
Have emergent bilinguals compare texts in their home language and texts in English and then report back in English

3. Linguistic scaffold
Turn and talk to Scaffold Instruction
Students can talk to a partner using the home language and then report back in English
Group Work to Scaffold Instruction
Students discuss a topic in home language groups and record their findings in their journal in English.

Reading texts that include translanguaging
I love Saturdays y domingos

8th grade ELA class with students who spoke Arabic, Bengali, French, Fulani, Haitian Creole, and Spanish
The teacher had the students read a poem from Inside Out and Back Again, a book written in verse about a girl leaving Vietnam after the fall of Saigon. The book has many examples of translanguaging in Vietnamese and English. The students read the chapter on the New Year’s Eve celebration that had many Vietnamese words
The teacher grouped the students into home language groups and gave them questions in English also translated into the students’ home languages. She wrote, “The author uses a lot of words in Vietnamese in this book. Explain your thoughts as to why she didn’t use all English words? How did you infer the meanings of the Vietnamese words?” The students discussed these questions using their home language and English and wrote responses to the questions in their journals in English. The students each wrote their own New Year’s tradition poems from their own countries using some home language words and English. The poems were edited at home by parents who added cultural information and checked the home language. The individual papers were made into a whole class book.

Scaffolding student reading
Getting the Gist
The Getting the Gist
The teacher encouraged students to read and write on post-its the gist of what they were reading in their home language or in English.

Provide a Linguistic Scaffold:
Exploring Immigration in History/ Social Studies
Using translanguaging to scaffold instruction
Students use bilingual dictionaries, Internet translation programs, or translation pens as a resource
Use bilingual books when studying a theme in a unit of inquiry
Using translanguaging to help with homework
Students are grouped by their home language to discuss in their home language how to do homework.
Students use the home language to discuss homework with parents.

Preview/View/Review
García, Cummins, and others emphasize the importance of drawing on all the language resources of emergent bilinguals.
This strategy provides students with an advance organizer in their home language for the lesson they are about to study in English.
The preview in the home language makes the English input more comprehensible.

Preview
The teacher, a student, or an aide gives an overview of the lesson or activity in the students’ home language.
Give an oral summary
Read a book in students’ home language
Ask a key question
Students can work in same language groups to brainstorm what they know on the topic and report back in English.

View
The teacher teaches the lesson or directs the activity in English.
The teacher uses various techniques to make the input comprehensible
Visuals/realia
Hands-on activities
Collaborative activities
Review
The teacher or the students summarize key ideas and raise questions about the lesson in their home language
Students can work in same language groups to clarify the lesson and then report back in English

Translanguaging involves drawing on students’ full linguistic repertoires
Teachers use translanguaging strategies to:
Value students’ cultures, identities, and bilingualism
Promote metalinguistic knowledge as teachers compare and contrast languages
Serve as a linguistic scaffold that helps emergent bilinguals make sense of content and develop language proficiency

Translanguaging guides (search for Translanguaging Guides or go to the CUNY NYSIEB website)

Bibliography

Professional Resources

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