

Bilingual Teacher Preparation: Exploring a Translanguaging Pedagogy

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- In South Texas, Spanish language teaching and biliteracy development have been and continue to be politically and educationally neglected in spite of the bilingual and bicultural characteristics of the region.
- Biliteracy development in the community has been greatly affected by the hegemonic presence of a monoglossic ideology (Cummins, 2007) in the region.

Purpose of the Study

- Exploring the translanguaging writing practices displayed by our preservice bilingual teachers and the implications for understanding biliteracy development of preservice teachers in the US.
 - What translanguaging practices are evident in preservice teachers' academic writing?
 - How can spaces be made for preservice teachers to utilize their biliteracy competences to negotiate academic content?
- Program: EC-6 Bilingual Generalist
- Course: Content Area Methods in the Bilingual Classroom (taught in Spanish)
- Participants:
 - 50 preservice bilingual teachers (all female)
- Data:
 - Field Experience Reflective Narratives (N=50) collected over 3 semesters.
 - Course resources

Theoretical Underpinnings

- Bilingual communities integrate a wide range of bilingual and biliterate practices that they use to communicate and construct knowledge (Canagarajah, 2011).
- Translanguaging challenges the notion of strict separation of languages for instruction in bilingual classrooms (Garcia, 2011).
- The impact of experiencing conflicting language ideologies that undermine Spanish development (Ek & Sanchez, 2008).
- Preservice teachers tend to identify language as a problem/deficit that needs to be amended through practice of isolated skills and tend to replicate subtractive practices (Flores, et al., 2011).
- Bilingual classroom teachers can translanguague to make content instruction accessible and comprehensible for emergent bilingual students as they acquire academic language (García & Wei, 2014).
- Cummins (2007) explains that translation is appropriate in bilingual classrooms as it facilitates the development of biliteracy and the acquisition of English.
- García (2011) asserts that in bilingual classrooms teachers can translanguague to make content instruction accessible and comprehensible for emergent bilingual students as they acquire academic language.

Context and Methods

- Bilingual preservice teachers struggle with Spanish academic language (self-reported data)
 - 71% identified Spanish as their first language
 - Dominant language: 36% Spanish/26% English/38% both
 - 59% feels more skilled writing in English and 28%, in Spanish
- Different schooling experience-
 - US schooling: English-only or transitional bilingual education programs
 - Prolonged schooling experience in Mexico
- Translanguaging as a resource: Preservice teachers engaging in translanguaging to overcome the challenges of writing in Spanish
- Preservice bilingual teachers made great efforts to avoid English in their narratives.
 - Own translated version of a concept or idea
 - Semantic extensions
 - Creative skills to coin words

Biliteracy skills supporting the academic Spanish writing of preservice teachers. Transferring their knowledge of English academic writing

- Avoiding the use of contractions
- Omitting necessary categories in their Spanish writing such as prepositions and articles
- The nonstandard use of passive voice
- Overuse of the present progressive

Preservice teachers using strategies such as translation and code switching to bridge Spanish and English while building biliteracy.

- They built their biliteracy competence drawing from discursive English social conventions to produce meaningful descriptions of their lessons
 - Literal translations of English phrases into Spanish
- Use of translated academic terms
- Moving from English written text, translating, interpreting it, and writing about it in Spanish was a biliteracy strategy participants skillfully used to bridge both languages.
- When confronting a lexical need:
 - Borrowing English words when they did not know the specific Spanish term:
 - Stickers, popsicle sticks, and snack.
 - Borrowing English terms when providing a translation could alter the intended meaning of their narratives by changing the specificity of their ideas.
 - Para la lección de matemáticas empiezan con una hoja de trabajo nombrada, ‘drops in the bucket’” [*for the mathematics lesson, they begin with a worksheet titled “drops in the bucket”*]
 - “Hay muchos padres positivos y activos que apoyan a la escuela y la educación de sus hijos asistiendo a las reuniones y open house.”

Translanguaging as instructional resource and strategy

- Instructor pedagogical moves: designing materials in Spanish, translating relevant content, using English to facilitate understanding, keeping relevant terms in English, using translanguaging markers to indicate a language switch.

Towards a Dynamic Instructional Approach to Bilingual Teacher Preparation

- Preservice teachers translanguaging practices in writing are an expression of biliteracy competence as well as a medium to develop those competences.
- Teacher educators develop/explore a pedagogy that embraces language fluidity
- Excluding English from the instructional landscape was an almost impossible and an undesirable endeavor (Esquinca, et al., 2014; Palmer, et al., 2014).
- Recognizing translanguaging spaces where the language practices of bilinguals are used for teaching, learning, and assessing (Garcia & Wei, 2014).
- Importance for preservice teachers to experience and understand translanguaging as part of teacher preparation programs

Implications

We propose a dynamic bilingual curriculum for bilingual teacher preparation programs that:

- Integrates bilingual hybrid resources (Palmer & Martinez, 2010).
- Values preservice bilingual teachers' language varieties and develops metalinguistic awareness.

We contend that bilingual teacher education must move away from simply accepting students' languages to using them as resources.

- Use students' translanguaging practices as scaffolding and semiotic tools.
- Use translanguaging spaces to validate students' language repertoires and use them as resources for teaching and learning.
- Use bilingual resources in coursework to capitalize on students' bilingual repertoires and promote biliteracy.
- Use translanguaging to support the teaching of complex concepts building on students' strengths.

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