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## THE GERMINATION OF TRANSLANGUAGING: IN AND OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

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### Abstract

*In 1994, the term translanguaging emerged in the Welsh secondary schools. Its first use is attributed to Cen Williams who referred to this pedagogical practice as receiving the input in one language and producing in a different one. Translated later by Colin Baker, translanguaging has been extended to the scholarly literature to entrench, and become part of various educational and social domains. Pedagogical translanguaging is the name given to the language practice that takes place in the classroom context, while non-pedagogical translanguaging is the umbrella term for the bilinguals' practices inside and outside the educational settings. Though the word translanguaging is frequently used in the literature, there is no exact definition to it, so the interest in this current language practice resulted in many definitions. This paper begins by reviewing the origins of translanguaging as well as its development from educational settings to outside the classroom then returning to the school. Furthermore, as translanguaging is controversial, the discrepancy between translanguaging and the different teaching and learning approaches and methods will be scrutinised to make a distinction between translanguaging and the use of the students' home language. This can be better understood by explaining the notion of approach and how such a language practice can fall under the name of a teaching approach.*

### Keywords

Bilinguals, Home Language, Language Practice, Non-Pedagogical, Pedagogical, Teaching and Learning Approaches, Translanguaging

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## 1. Introduction

In the eighteenth century when French was positioned as the global language, the ideologues of the French revolution believed that ideas-conveyance is successfully reached through a single language (Phillipson, 1992, p.19). In this regard, the monolingual principle stresses the instructional use of the target language (TL) which has three principles: the direct method assumption, the no translation assumption, and the “two solitudes” assumption (Cummins, 2007, pp. 222-223). For Cook (2010, p.8), the main feature of the monolingual approach is to provide students with opportunities to practise and use the target language in situations without any reference to other languages. This aspect, which was underlined by the direct method proponents, has made a powerful impact on the following approaches and methods of language teaching and learning (Cummins, 2009, p. 317). However, the problem with this monolingual approach, or “the two solitudes system”, is the failure to address emergent bi/multilinguals; it undermines the students’ home language and its effective role in the language classrooms. As a result of these inadequancies, this principle has been challenged by the “dynamic bilingual” norm, which subsides the rigid separation between languages and acknowledges the students’ full linguistic repertoires (Garcia and Wei, 2014). The bilingual strategies and the process bi/multilinguals follow when using these languages is labelled *translanguaging* (Garcia and Lin, 2016). Depending on the context investigated, translanguaging has been termed variously as in the following:

Composition: codemeshing (Canagarajah 2006; Young 2004); transcultural literacy (Lu 2009); translingual writing (Horner et al. forthcoming)

New literacy studies: multiliteracies (Cope and Kalantzis 2000), continua of biliteracy (Hornberger 2003), pluriliteracy (Garcia 2009),

Applied linguistics: plurilingualism (Council of Europe 2000), third spaces (Gutierrez 2008); metrolingualism (Pennycook 2010).

Sociolinguistics: fluid lects (Auer 1999); hetero-graphy (Blommaert 2008); poly-lingual languaging (Jorgenson 2008). (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 2)

These given terms are related to the educational settings; however, the term translanguaging is used to refer to the language practices that bilinguals utilize to transmit the message successfully and effectively in their bilingual lives, either in educational or non-educational world. Taking these different terms as the starting point and by examining the previous studies in different contexts, the origins of translanguaging and its connection with the language teaching and learning approaches will be reviewed to question whether there is a possibility that this language practice can be considered as an approach to language teaching and learning or just a continuum to the communicative language teaching approach (CLT). Consequently, this paper will examine the following:

- The origins of translanguaging and its development from educational contexts to the non-educational ones, and its return to the classroom.
- The difference between the use of translanguaging and the student`s home language through displaying the most adopted teaching and learning approaches and methods in the language
- Classrooms.

## 2. The Origins and Definitions of Translanguaging

Language is defined as a system of rules and structures which we acquire to listen, speak, read and write (Garcia and Wei, 2014, p.6). For many linguists, language is *langue* and *parole* (De Saussure), a structuralist view; competence and performance (Chomsky), a mentalist view; a heteroglossia (Bakhtin), a contextual view (Garcia and Wei, 2014, pp. 6-7). All the notable linguists were focusing on the notion of what language(s) is or what are the functions that language(s) serve(s)? However, a shift from language to languaging has gained attention in the literature. Even when the term languaging is written in Word, it is marked as a word to be corrected, by rather suggesting the word “language”. The term languaging has been introduced in biology by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in 1973 and 1980 (Lankiewicz, 2014, p. 9). Nevertheless, it has been adopted in linguistics as the shift from the structural view of language to what language users do with languages; it “shapes and is shaped by context” (Swanwick, 2017; Garcia and Wei, 2014), as speakers interact in their settings.

Nevertheless, Scholars added to languaging the prefix “trans” coining the term translanguaging which gained increased attention since its first emergence in Wales. In its first use, Cen Williams (1994; as cited in Garcia and Lin, 2016, p.2) considered “*trawsieithu*” or translanguaging, later translated into English by Baker, as a pedagogical strategy and practice through which students, in bilingual Welsh and English secondary classrooms, receive in one language and produce in another. Translanguaging shifted from the school to the street, from English speaking communities to multilingual contexts, from a pedagogical practice to the discursive practices bilinguals deploy in order to engage in the meaning making process in their worlds (Jones, 2017). Though Baker who was the first to develop William`s idea, both scholars refer to the use of two languages in defining translanguaging. Baker (2011, p.288) defined translanguaging as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages”. However, Baker`s definition focuses on the process through which bilinguals receive and produce by using the languages they know; William`s definition considers translanguaging as a pedagogical practice. Translanguaging has four educational advantages which are the followings:

- It may promote a deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter.

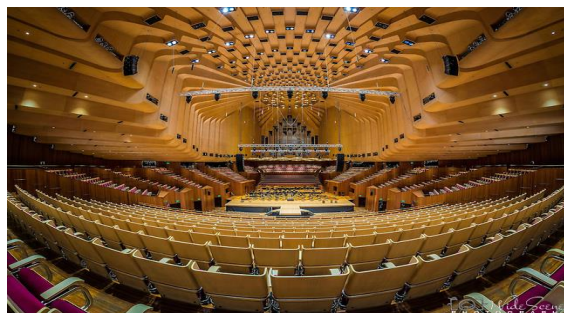
- It may help the development of the weaker language.
- It may facilitate home-school links and cooperation.
- It may help the integration of fluent speakers with early learners. (Baker and Wright, 2017, pp.280-282).

For Garcia and Wei (2014) translanguaging transcends the notion of named and separated languages to imply a new language practice through which bilinguals' languages are deployed while interacting in their bilingual world. Otheguy, García, & Reid (2015) identify two different perspectives of the translanguaging theory. The external perspective is how the society views the bilinguals, while the internal perspective is that languages are the property of the language user, and they form one linguistic repertoire from which they select strategically. For me, I illustrated these two perspectives by the Sydney Opera House in Australia. The first time a person sees a part from the outside of the house, they think that there are boundaries between the wings, and that each wing represents a separate room, this aligns with the external perspective. Nevertheless, once they enter the house, they discover that there is only one Concert hall (the internal perspective) where the performance is taking place. This can be better understood through the following pictures:

The External Perspective



The Internal Perspective



**Figure 1:** *The Perspectives of Translanguaging*

Canagarajah (2011) studied translanguaging in literacy and labelled it as codemeshing. He agrees with Garcia and Wei by stating that multilinguals do not have separated languages, but he emphasises the notion of “an *integrated* system” that resulted in “multicompetence” where the finesse of every single language is not the indication of proficiency but yet the deployment of the capacities of the full linguistic repertoire to serve different communicative situations. In the USA, Hornberger and Link (2012) offer a model that extends the notion of translanguaging in the multilingual classrooms. The model consists of four components: the development of biliteracy, the medium, the context and the content; these elements help in bringing together the student's full repertoire and

enhance their biliteracy in the classrooms. In 2012, however, their study focuses on the relation between translanguaging and transnational literacies by applying the continua of biliteracy model. They conclude that language planners need to consider minoritised people and allow them to make use of their repertoire to develop their biliteracy in their multilingual classrooms. In England, another English speaking community, Blackledge and Creese (2010) conduct an ethnographic study in eight complementary schools across four cities to define translanguaging as a pedagogical flexible approach where both participants use different forms and signs to relate to each other. Their main interest is the relationship between identity and translanguaging; and how these communicative repertoires may assist multilinguals to interact in their worlds. In the same English context, Wei (2011, 2016b) identifies “translanguaging space” and “translanguaging instinct”. The former allows the participants of a communicative setting to transform creatively and critically their abilities and linguistic resources without adhering to the boundaries of the named languages; the latter is the language users` inherent tendency and inclination that creates and yet is affected by the translanguaging space. One of the limitations with these studies is the informal educational context where it has been conducted. Hereof, most studies and definitions in the educational context, to mention a few, in the field of translanguaging have only focussed on emergent bilingual children in the English speaking communities where two languages might co-occur.

The previous research has tended to focus on the co-occurrence of two languages in the investigated communicative contexts. However, in the Basque multilingual context, Cenoz (2017) studies translanguaging as “pedagogical tool” which is the first use proposed by Williams in the English Welsh schools. The main aim of the study is to address the language awareness towards language and content teaching and learning in the multilingual contexts. For her, translanguaging as pedagogy surpasses the notion of named languages and boundaries, and may entail the reception in one language and the production in another, the inclusion of the students` home language through translation, and comparison of the structure of language and false friends. She concluded that translanguaging as pedagogy, particularly in the multilingual school context is still in its beginning in the growing body of the research regarding the use of the students` full linguistic repertoire strategically and effectively.

The study of translanguaging in higher education in the work of Mazak and Carroll (2017) focuses mainly on the practice rather than theory by adopting research methods that diverge from one context to another. Higher education is often seen as a monolingual context; however, the results showed that it is a space where teachers and students have the possibility to make use of all the available linguistic resources to exchange reciprocal effectiveness when communication takes place. For Mazak (2017, pp. 5-6), translanguaging is “a *language ideology*, a *theory of bilingualism*, a



*pedagogical stance, a set of practices, and transformational*”. Though teachers’ attitudes towards translanguaging have been widely extended in the literature, Rivera and Mazak (2017) conduct a case study to analyse psychology students’ opinions in a Puerto Rican undergraduate classroom towards pedagogical translanguaging through two surveys. The results mentioned that the participants have either neutral or positive perceptions towards their reception and teachers’ use of strategic translanguaging. In the African context, Makalela (2017) introduces the concept of *Ubuntu translanguaging pedagogy* (UTP) and investigates its effectiveness in creating translanguaging spaces where the participants come from different cultural and linguistic parts of South Africa. The results show that UTP can enhance the transformation of the preservice languages teachers’ linguistic repertoire effectively to fit in the community despite of the participants’ linguistic identities and cultural differences. Makelela’s work is similar to Blackledge and Creese’s one as both relate translanguaging to identity, but differs in the context. The former was conducted in a formal university educational setting while the latter in complementary secondary schools.

In the Arab context, Carroll and Van de Hoven (2017) interview six Emirati teachers participants in the English as a medium of instruction (EMI) classrooms to elucidate their views towards translanguaging practices. The findings showed that these professors use Arabic for instruction to keep their jobs through making their students score high marks. Furthermore, the focus on the communication rather than the form by using Arabic when needed is important to acquire knowledge and establish the background for the bachelor degree successive years. However, stating such translanguaging practices and including the students’ home language may result in losing professors’ job positions in the Emirati context as this is considered a taboo by the language planners.

In special education, particularly deaf education in the UK context, Swanwick (2017) discusses deaf children’s language practices and how they relate to their learning in a mobile and diverse world. The main aim is to build the foundation for a pedagogical approach in deaf education similar to the other educational contexts, focusing on a move from language policy to the use of language and learning. Such a pedagogy transcends the previous language policies and calls for teachers’ flexibility and dynamism in the classrooms where “a shift of attention from *mode* to *manner*” is taken into consideration. Analogous with the studies about education and bilingualism, research on deaf education and bilingualism focuses on the separation of the language and emphasizes that bilinguals have two different linguistic repertoires. Swanwick (ibid.) adopts the translanguaging approach and investigates how deaf learners can benefit from their full linguistic repertoire to make meaning and sense in their learning worlds.

There is a scarce research on studying translanguaging quantitatively. However, Beres (2015), questions the effect of the use of two languages in the educational settings to determine whether it is

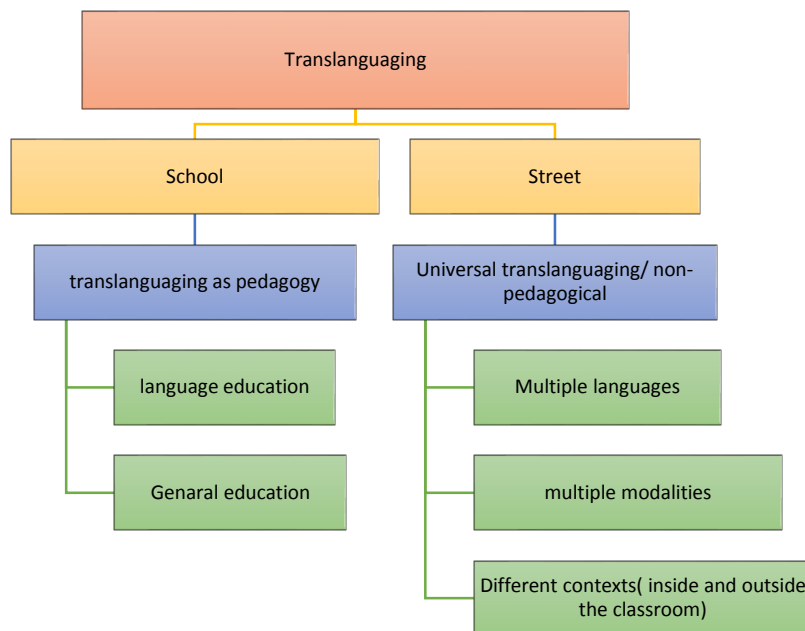
a useful strategy or not. This quantitative research was conducted through event-related brain potentials (ERPs) by adopting Williams` definition which entails the reception of input in one language and the production in another one, focusing on the acquisition of new knowledge. The results showed that students were able to retrieve the information easily and memorize it for several weeks later, and hence added a quantitative perspective to the research and benefits of translanguaging as a learning strategy.

While the first section has gone through the development of translanguaging and its origins in the various educational contexts, the following section will discuss these practices in the society where they are more included.

Perhaps the Translation and Translanguaging (TLang) project that was conducted in four cities in the UK is the most relevant work about translanguaging in different social domains such as home and work settings. The main aim of this project is to better understand the language practices of the participants who are culturally and linguistically different, and eventually whether their communication is done successfully or not.

In 2016, Simpson discusses the pertinence of superdiversity and translanguaging in the modern-day social and linguistic areas. For him, translanguaging is “a superdiverse practice, as an alternative paradigm for describing much contemporary multilingual interaction”. His work mainly focuses on interlingual translanguaging that implies the use of daily linguistic repertoire to explain jargons and technical terms at different places, including home, work and social locations. He concluded that multilinguals can be part of the society regardless the status of their languages and the capacities they have when communicating and engaging in their divergent linguistic and cultural spaces. Another study outside the academic settings within the same project is the business case study of Hua, Wei & Lyons (2015) in which they attempt to investigate the language and cultural in addition to the business practices of Polish couple shop owners in London. After conducting an ethnographic study for four months, researchers concluded that there are no clear-cut boundaries between languages, and the shop owners operate flexibly and dynamically in the surrounding area by keeping their own practices and gaining the ones of the community they are living in to result in new linguistic, cultural and business experiences.

A summary of the studies about translanguaging can be displayed in following figure:



**Figure 2:** *The Development of Translanguaging inside and outside the Classroom*

### 3. The Difference between Translanguaging and the Different Teaching and Learning Approaches

In many studies, the use of the first language was tackled from a quantitative point of view, by asking the question: to what extent or how much the students' home language is used in the foreign or the second language classrooms? The aim of these studies was to explore and find out the percentages of using the students' home language for serving different pedagogic functions: medium-oriented, framework or social goals (Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008, cited in Graham & Guy, 2012). The main question in recent bilingual education, more precisely the growing body of translanguaging, is how the students' full linguistic repertoire is used, or more specifically, how the students' home languages are used in the meaning making process? The central goal is to create the appropriate space and conditions where the language linguistic repertoire is welcomed and valued; a space which Li Wei (2011) referred to as the translanguaging space.

In order to make a distinction between translanguaging and the use of the students' home language, a discrepancy between translanguaging and the different teaching approaches needs to be underlined. By labelling translanguaging as a teaching and learning approach, we need to mention how language and language learning are viewed, constituting approach. There are at least three views about the nature of language which are reflected in approaches and methods in language teaching and learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These theoretical positions are: the structural view, the communicative view and the interactional view of language. The structural view sees languages as structural related elements (phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical operations and lexical



items) to establish meaning. The proficiency in the target language is maintained through the mastery of all this system. The second is the communicative or the functional view which focuses on communication rather than on the grammatical structures. It emphasizes creating topics and content for students to develop their communicative competence, fluency over accuracy. The third is the interactional view which “sees language as a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals. Language is seen as a tool for the creation of and maintenance of social relations.” It is referred to as “strategic interaction” which includes aspects other than structures of language such as moves, acts and negotiation (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 20-21). However, these theories of the language nature are incomplete or insufficient without the theories of language learning. At the level of an approach, there are two aspects related to the language learning theory: the process-oriented and the condition-oriented dimensions (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 22-23). While the former entails the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes, the latter presents the affective and interpersonal conditions in the communicative situation. In this sense, translanguaging involves interaction which causes alternate outcomes between participants. It is aligned with the interactional view of language. Concerning the language learning theory, as a psycholinguistic and cognitive processes, unlike the monolingual norm, translanguaging helps in understanding the bilinguals` language practices and languaging. While as a condition-oriented process, it may create the space for the language users that allows them to make meaning and deploy their full linguistic repertoires to engage and achieve successful communication.

Cummins (2007, pp. 222-223) analysed three “inter-related monolingual instructional premises that are fundamental in the language classrooms:

“1. Instruction should be carried out exclusively in the target language without recourse to students’ L1. As one implication of this assumption, bilingual dictionary use is discouraged. I term this the “direct method” assumption.

2. Translation between L1 and L2 has no place in the teaching of language or literacy... I term this the “no translation” assumption.

3. Within immersion and bilingual programs, the two languages should be kept rigidly separate.... I term this the “two solitudes” assumption.”

These are the core principles of the monolingual approach or the separate underlying proficiency (SUP) which is “the traditional cognitive theory of bilingualism” (Cummins, 1980); it claims that students will get proficiency in the target language without exposure or instruction in their home language. However, Philipson (1992, p.185) asserts that in order to attain goals in the English language settings, the teachers` main task is to follow five important policies which can be listed as follows:

- “1-English must be taught in a monolingual classroom.*
- 2- The ideal teacher is a native English speaker.*
- 3-The earlier English is taught, the better.*
- 4- The more English used in the classroom, the better.*
- 5- If other languages are used, English standards will drop.”*

These features were among the important characteristics of the different approaches and methods, advocating the monolingual approach, of language teaching and learning in the nineteenth and twentieth century. An example of this, by the mid of the nineteenth century, Innovator teachers and linguists invited to changes for how to teach languages through various publications and approaches. One of the methods that underpins the monolingual approach is the direct method, unlike translanguaging, which views language from a structural point of view. It relies on the teachers' proficiency in the target language rather than their creativity and criticality to make meaning and meet the learners' needs. Another method is the audiolingual method which emerged from the behaviourist theory of learning and structural theory of language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp.53-54). The main characteristic of this method is to form new habits via communicating in the target language, so that the students' home language habits are overcome. Consequently, the learners' home language and translation are undesirable, not as translanguaging. In addition to these methods, the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) has been influential and adopted in teaching and learning languages, but it has been a subject to rebuffs. At the surface level, it has some common features with translanguaging, as both of them focus on motivating the learners to interact and cooperate with others to work with the language. Meaning making is the desired and the central goal; however, in CLT, the languages the learners know are not invited and valued in the classroom. The presentation of the full linguistic repertoire is still compartmentalised and influenced by the monolingual view. Concisely, language and codes, but not the language user; remain the impetus behind this approach.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This paper is not completely new, but an overview of the development of translanguaging in different contexts. It attempted to tackle the origins of this language practice in the social domains because many of the articles that have addressed this topic were focusing mainly on the educational context. It can be said that translanguaging has given new ways to studying bilingualism, but it is still a long way that this language can be accepted in every context where language users try to communicate and engage in their bilingual lives. Consequently; this may give more insights regarding:

- Further studies in contexts; particularly multilingual contexts where more than two languages co-occur. A project like the TLang can be adopted in different bilingual contexts to address translanguaging from other perspectives.
- The exploration of the effectiveness of translanguaging in valuing the importance of minority languages. This can give the users of these languages a sense of belonging to where they live.
- The studies of translanguaging quantitatively by adopting quantitative or a mixed method approach to gain a better understanding about this language practice and identify its role in the bilingual world.
- Special education like deaf education where translanguaging may have the most desired advantages. This will lead to learning bilingually through gestures and body movements which are part of communication.

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