Translanguaging

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ACTIVITY 1

Before we begin, think about the following

- What do the terms '**language**' and '**multilingual speaker**' mean to **you**? Could you provide a brief definition of each term?
- Sometimes people use **other languages** (e.g. their mother tongue) while using English. **Why** would you say they might do that?
- Have **you** ever done that or **noticed** anyone else do it? If so, **what did you think** then? **Why**?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views if you haven't done so yet

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Changing views of language

- **Today's societies**: globalisation, technology, diversity, mixing, mobility
- **Communication**: dynamic, complex, constantly changing, fluid

- A **'language'** is no longer viewed as a discrete, bounded entity or just a system of structures—it is a **dynamic**, **social practice** in which users employ **all linguistic resources** at their disposal to achieve their **communicative aims**

Changing views of language

- **Language**: "a social resource without clear boundaries, which places the speaker at the heart of the interaction" (Creese & Blackledge, 2015: 21)

- **Languaging**: a "social process **constantly reconstructed** in sensitivity to environmental factors" (Canagarajah, 2007: 94)

- Various terms to define the language practices of **multilingual speakers**—e.g. flexible bilingualism, translingual practice, **translanguaging**

Defining translanguaging

Defining translanguaging

- The term **translanguaging** originally comes from the Welsh *trawsieithu* (Cen Williams, 1994, 1996) — it referred to a pedagogical practice where learners were asked to shift between languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use

- Now it is widely used to address the **complex language practices of multilingual speakers**

Defining translanguaging

- The "ability of multilingual speakers to **shuttle between languages**, treating the **diverse languages** that form their repertoire as an **integrated system**" (Canagarajah, 2011: 401)

- The "**flexible use** of their linguistic resources to **make meaning** of their **lives** and their **complex worlds**"(Garcia, 2011: 1)

- "[M]aking meaning, shaping experiences, gaining **understanding** and **knowledge** through the **use of two [or more] languages**" (Baker, 2011: 288)

Code-switching vs. Translanguaging

Code-switching	Translanguaging
• The languages of bilinguals are two **separate** mono-lingual codes that could be used **without reference** to each other • Use of two or more **autonomous** languages • Focus on the code / language • Marked or unusual	• Bilinguals have a **unified** linguistic repertoire from which they can **select** features **strategically** to communicate • **Flexible** use of two or more languages **together** • Focus on the speaker / user • Normal mode of communication

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Code-switching vs. Translanguaging

- **Code-switching**: a linguistic movement from one separate language to another — **monolingualism**

- **Translanguaging**: an ability to use all language resources for meaningful communication — languages reinforce each other, no hierarchical relationship between them, **multilingualism**

Think about the language-switch function, e.g., on smartphones — multilingual speakers' linguistic repertoires do not have such a function (e.g. Garcia, 2009, Garcia & Wei, 2014)

ACTIVITY 2

Picture the following two **scenes**:

1. Two students are sitting together, working intently on a handout. They have different first languages but some shared knowledge of the words and phrases of each other's languages, so they are moving in and out of English to get their message across.

2. Another two students are sitting together nearby. Both of them are Spanish speakers, but are very competent in English and often use it as their main language. At other times, as now, they blend Spanish and English together.

In your opinion, to what extent are **translanguaging** practices illustrated in these scenes? — Click the **link** under the video to share your views

Approaches to translanguaging

I – Translanguaging as an **act of multilingual speakers**

II – Translanguaging as a **social space for multilingual speakers**

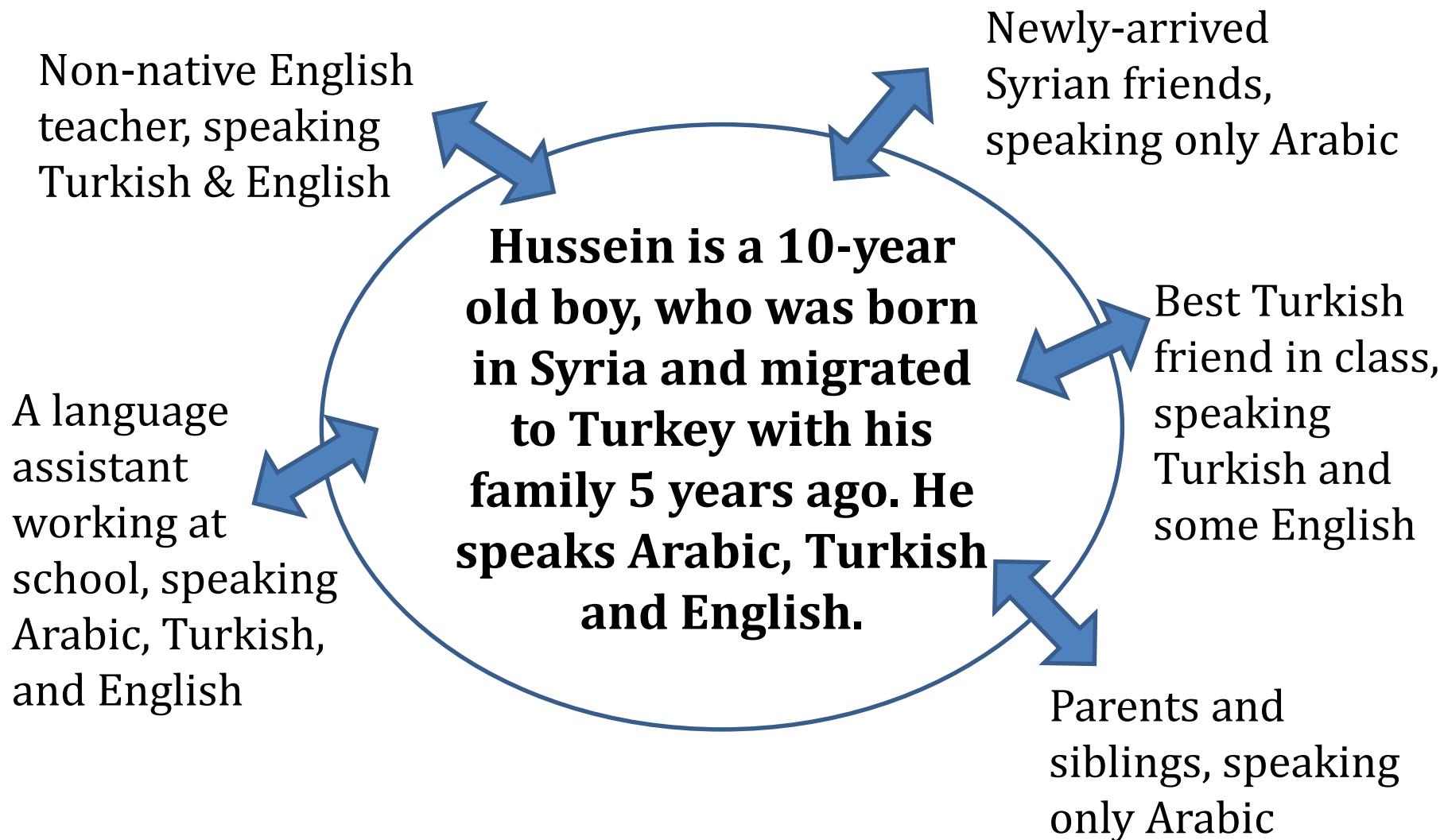**III** – Translanguaging as a **multilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning**

I – Translanguaging as an act of multilingual speakers

- Translanguaging as an **integral part** of multilingual speakers' **everday interactions**

- They have one **integrated** linguistic repertoire and flexibly and naturally use a **variety of resources** to construct meaning—**dynamic adaptation** to the demands of global and local situations

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II – Translanguaging as a social space for multilingual speakers

- The act of translanguaging is "**transformative** in nature; it creates a **social space** for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment" (Wei, 2011: 1223)

- The **context** and **audience** are two of the main factors determining which languages or language varieties a speaker will use each time—**What could that social space look like in practice?**

Hussein's translanguaging space

Hussein is a 10-year old boy, who was born in Syria and migrated to Turkey with his family 5 years ago. He speaks Arabic, Turkish and English.

Non-native English teacher, speaking Turkish & English

Newly-arrived Syrian friends, speaking only Arabic

Best Turkish friend in class, speaking Turkish and some English

A language assistant working at school, speaking Arabic, Turkish, and English

Parents and siblings, speaking only Arabic

II – Translanguaging as a social space for multilingual speakers

- Within translanguaging social spaces, multilingual speakers use the language in a **creative** way

Creativity: the "ability to **choose** between obeying and breaking the rules and norms" (Garcia and Wei, 2014: 67)—the speakers may create **new forms on the spot** to make their interaction 'tick', **without** necessarily following the rules of Standard English or even the rules of the speakers' first languages

II – Translanguaging as a social space for multilingual speakers

- Within translanguaging social spaces, multilingual speakers may also use the language in a **critical** way

Criticality: the "ability to use available evidence" to "**inform**", "**question**" and "**problematize**" views "of cultural, social, political and linguistic phenomena" (Garcia and Wei, 2014: 67)—the speakers this way may reflect on and decide **on the spot** what is **appropriate** and what is not in a given interaction

III – Translanguaging as a multilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning

- **School contexts** having increasing numbers of **multilingual learners** show a lot of examples of translanguaging—given the diverse backgrounds of these learners, they bring along funds of knowledge which are **valuable** to themselves and others

III – Translanguaging as a multilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning

In education, **translanguaging** is:

"a process by which students and teachers engage in complex discursive practices that include **ALL** the language practices of **ALL** students in a class in order to **develop new language practices** and **sustain old ones**, communicate and appropriate knowledge, and give voice to new sociopolitical realities by interrogating linguistic inequality"

(García & Kano, 2014: xx)

III – Translanguaging as a multilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning

A key question:

- How could **teachers** develop a **pedagogy** that incorporates the complex, mobile language repertoires of their students?

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ACTIVITY 3

Read the descriptions of **four classroom scenes**

- To **what extent** and **in what ways** (if any) are **translanguaging** practices illustrated in each of these scenes?

- Have **you** ever experienced such situations in **your own classroom(s)**? If so, have you ever viewed them as potentially translanguaging practice?

Click the **link** under the video to go through the descriptions and share your views

Scene 1

A teacher has students listen to a song in their native language about the topic of the day. She then has them answer a series of questions about the song in English.

(Adapted from Garcia & Wei, 2014)

Scene 2

A teacher does a word-for-word translation of a text and tells students to either read the English text or the text in their home language; all students choose to read the home language only or the English only text.

(Adapted from Garcia & Wei, 2014)

Scene 3

The teacher asks a student who is struggling to say something in English during the presentation of a project. The student asks a classmate to translate what he is trying to say into English. Then he repeats what his classmate said.

(Adapted from Garcia & Wei, 2014)

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Scene 4

A teacher has students to look at a series of pictures and discuss in small groups what they see and what they can infer. They can discuss in any language they wish but are asked to share with the whole class in English.

(Adapted from Garcia & Wei, 2014)

III – Translanguaging as a multilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning

Translanguaging as a pedagogy:

- Engaging the learners in **real-life social interactions** where they can use **all of their linguistic resources** (including mother tongues, additional languages) to communicate in a **creative** and **critical** way and develop their '**translanguaging instinct**' (Wei, 2017)

- Valuing and promoting **linguistic equity** and each learner's socio-cultural identity—a **linguistically inclusive** approach to teaching and learning

ACTIVITY 4

Watch the video "**Ofelia García – Translanguaging**" where important issues about translanguaging are summarised

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5l1CcrRrck0

- As a **teacher**, to what extent **do you agree** with the arguments which Ofelia Garcia makes? **Why**?
- To what extent would **your own learners** benefit from creating **translanguaging spaces** in the classroom? **Why**?

Click the **link** below to share your views at the **Forum** of this section

Concluding remarks

Promoting and engaging in translanguaging:

- Viewing **language as a social**, **dynamic resource** rather than a system of discrete, bounded units

- Challenging the traditional views of language and bi/multilingualism

- Focusing on **communication** and the **language user**, not on the language itself

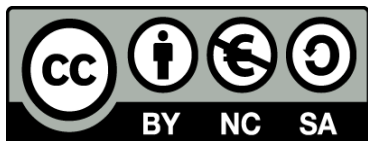- **No hierarchical relationships** between languages → **language equity**

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English as a Lingua Franca practices for inclusive multilingual classrooms

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