

1.2.3 Translanguaging

Transcript

Slide 1

Welcome to the “Translanguaging” section of the course. In this section, we are going to focus on the notion of translanguaging by addressing its emergence, definition and different approaches to the use of it.

Slide 2

Before we begin, we would like you to take some time and think about your personal experience as a user of the English language and reflect on the following questions:

- Firstly, what do the terms ‘**language**’ and ‘**multilingual speaker**’ mean to **you**? Could you provide a brief definition of each term?
- Secondly, sometimes people use **other languages** (such as their mother tongue) while using English. **Why** would you say they might do that?
- And lastly, have **you** ever done that or **noticed** anyone else do it? If so, **what did you think** then? **Why**?

Pause the video to think about these questions and click the link under the video to share your opinions.

Slide 3

Let’s now begin with some information about changing views of language in today’s world. As you might know, today’s societies are characterized by globalization, technology, diversity, mixing, and mobility. In such societies, it comes as no surprise that communication is defined as dynamic, complex, constantly changing and fluid. We can also say that all these characteristics of today’s societies and communication led to some changes in the views of language.

‘Language’ is no longer viewed as a discrete, bounded entity or just a system of structures—rather, it is defined as a dynamic, social practice in which users employ all linguistic resources at their disposal to achieve their communicative aims.

Slide 4

Several scholars give recent definitions of language in light of today’s changing societies and means of communication. Despite some minor differences, these

recent definitions share a common view of language. As Creese and Blackledge address, language is seen as a “a social resource without clear boundaries, which places the speaker at the heart of the interaction”. In other words, what we have now is not a system of structures but the act of **linguaging**. In Canagarajah’s terms, linguaging is «a social process constantly reconstructed in sensitivity to environmental factors». Flexible bilingualism, translingual practice, and translanguaging are also other terms used to define the language practices of today’s multilingual speakers. Among them, as previously mentioned, our focus will be on the notion of “translanguaging” in this section.

Slide 5

Let’s now begin with the definition of translanguaging. Before moving to the definitions given by various scholars, we would like you to work on your own personal definition of the term translanguaging. Please examine the key words in the given word cloud and think about a potential definition in your mind.

Slide 6

So now let’s move to the origin of the term translanguaging. It originally comes from the Welsh word *trawsieithu* first used by Cen Williams to address a pedagogical practice where learners were asked to shift between languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use.

However, now it is widely used to address the **complex language practices of multilingual speakers**.

Slide 7

The term translanguaging has been defined by various scholars in similar ways. For instance, Canagarajah defines it as the “ability of multilingual speakers to **shuttle between languages**, treating the **diverse languages** that form their repertoire as an **integrated system**”.

In a similar vein, Garcia defines translanguaging / as the multilingual speakers’ “**flexible use** of their linguistic resources to **make meaning** of their **lives** and their **complex worlds**”. /

A final definition of translanguaging we would like to present here comes from Baker, according to him, Translanguaging / is “[M]aking meaning, shaping experiences, / gaining **understanding** and **knowledge** / through the **use of two [or more] languages**”.

Slide 8

Translanguaging is sometimes used interchangeably with the term code-switching, which might be a more familiar term to you. However, it is argued that

these two terms are both ideologically and practically different from each other. Let's go through some distinctions made between the terms code-switching and translanguaging.

As you can follow from the given chart, according to the notion of code-switching, the languages of bilinguals are seen as two separate monolingual codes that could be used without reference to each other. However, the notion of translanguaging suggests / that bilinguals have a unified linguistic repertoire from which they can select features strategically to communicate. It means / code-switching makes possible to use two or more autonomous languages, with no connection; / while translanguaging allows for flexible use of two or more languages together.

In addition, code-switching focuses on the language viewed as the code, whereas translanguaging emphasizes the language user or speaker.

As for the last distinction, while code-switching is conventionally considered marked or unusual, translanguaging is viewed as normal, natural mode of communication.

Slide 9

To recap, code-switching is seen as a linguistic movement from one separate language to another; however, translanguaging points to an ability to use any and all language resources for meaningful communication. Furthermore, translanguaging suggests / languages reinforce each other and there is no hierarchical relationship between them, it rejects the monolingual paradigm of language and adopts a multilingual one.

To explain translanguaging, Garcia and Wei give the example of the language-switch function on smart-phones. They state that multilingual speakers' linguistic repertoires do not have such a function. That is, it is not possible for them to switch off one language while speaking the other.

Slide 10

Now that you have been introduced to the term translanguaging, let's stop here for a moment and turn to the next activity in this section. Please picture the following two scenes which mention language practices of multilingual students. In your opinion, to what extent are translanguaging practices illustrated in these scenes? Once you have reflected on the scenes and thought about the question, please click the link under the video to share your views.

Slide 11

The notion of translanguaging has been approached in different ways by scholars. Among others, the following three approaches to translanguaging come to the fore, which are first, “Translanguaging as an act of multilingual speakers”; second “Translanguaging as a social space for multilingual speakers” and third, “Translanguaging as a multilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning”. So now, let’s explain these three approaches in more detail.

Slide 12

The first approach to translanguaging, we present here, is titled as “translanguaging as an act of multilingual speakers”. As we mentioned in previous slides, translanguaging is considered an integral part of multilingual speakers’ ever day interactions. In other words, multilingual speakers have one integrated linguistic repertoire, and flexibly and naturally use a variety of resources to construct meaning. They are capable of adapting all their resources according to the demands of global and local situations.

Slide 13

Unlike the first approach focusing on individual aspects of translanguaging, the second approach, “Translanguaging as a social space for multilingual speakers” addresses its social functions in communication. As Wei states, 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”. Here, two main factors, which are context and audience, appear as determining which languages or language varieties a speaker will use each time. So now, after explaining this approach in words, let’s think about “what could that social space look like in practice?”.

Slide 14

This visual presents a multilingual speaker’s translanguaging social space. In this case, a 10-year old boy, named Hussein, who was born in Syria and migrated to Turkey with his family 5 years ago. He speaks Arabic, Turkish and English. The arrows, surrounding the demographics of Hussein, show people with whom he interacts in his daily life. For instance, his newly arrived Syrian friends, speaking only Arabic; or his best Turkish friend in class, speaking Turkish and some English; or his parents and siblings, speaking only Arabic; or his non-native English teacher speaking Turkish and English, and finally a language assistant working at school and speaking Arabic, Turkish and English. Which languages do you think that Hussein speaks to all these people having various linguistic repertoire? Translanguaging will be unsurprisingly one aspect of these multilingual interactions.

Slide 15

Furthermore, translanguaging as a social space for multilingual speakers is mostly characterized by two features: creativity and criticality.

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

According to Garcia and Wei, creativity is the “ability to choose between obeying and breaking the rules and norms” — that is, 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

Slide 16

Similarly, translanguaging social spaces trigger multilingual speakers to use the language in a critical way. Again, according to Garcia and Wei, criticality is the “ability to use available evidence” to “inform”, “question” and “problematize” views “of cultural, social, political and linguistic phenomena”. That is to say, the speakers may reflect on and decide on the spot what is appropriate and what is not in a given interaction.

Slide 17

The final approach is called “translanguaging as a multilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning”. We know that school contexts have increasing numbers of multilingual learners, and they show a lot of examples of translanguaging—given the diverse backgrounds of multilingual learners, they bring along funds of knowledge which are valuable to themselves and others.

Slide 18

Garcia and Kano give a definition of “translanguaging” to be used in educational contexts as follows: 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”

Slide 19

Following this definition of translanguaging provided for educational contexts, a key question arises: How could teachers develop a pedagogy that incorporates the complex, mobile language repertoires of their students?

Slide 20

Before discussing the ways of integrating translanguaging as a pedagogical tool into teaching, let's now turn into the third activity in this section. Please read the descriptions of four classroom scenes and then reflect on the following questions:

The first, "To what extent and in what ways (if any) are translanguaging practices illustrated in each of these scenes?"; the second "Have you ever experienced such situations in your own classroom(s)? If so, have you ever viewed them as potentially translanguaging practice?"

Now click the link under the video to go through the descriptions and share your views.

Slide 21

Let me go through the given scenes first.

Scene 1: A teacher asks students to 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.

Slide 22

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.

Slide 23

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.

Slide 24

Scene 4: A teacher asks 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.

Slide 25

Now, let's continue with how Translanguaging can be used as a pedagogical tool: First, it requires "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' as Wei stated. Second, it asks for "Valuing and promoting linguistic equity and each learner's socio-cultural identity—in other words, a linguistically inclusive approach to teaching and learning".

Slide 26

Now that you have been introduced to the notion of Translanguaging and different approaches to this notion, let's move to the last activity in this section. Please watch the video of the link on screen. In this video, Ofelia Garcia summarizes important issues about translanguaging.

Please reflect upon the following questions:

- 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 under the video so you can share your opinion at the Forum at this section of the course.

Slide 27

As for concluding remarks, we can say that promoting and engaging in translanguaging entails:

- 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
- Suggesting no hierarchical relationships between languages
- And finally, supporting language equity

Translanguaging, in this way, could be a powerful tool for teaching and learning. Thanks for your attention.