



Chapter 16

Affordances and Challenges of Translanguaging Pedagogy for In–Service Content Area Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how two in-service content area teachers responded to translanguaging pedagogy that was briefly introduced in a teacher education course. Qualitative analysis of the online course work, interviews, and researcher journals revealed that each teacher demonstrated a translanguaging “stance” as well as potential in creating “design” and in initiating “shifts” while their understandings and implementation could be more refined. While understanding translanguaging mostly as a strategy helped the teachers develop a translanguaging stance more easily, it did not lead to more critical examination of complex language ideologies that directly affect teaching of multilingual learners. The study has implications for teacher educators who grapple with creating room for translanguaging, an equitable educational practice for multilingual students, in existing curricula.

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INTRODUCTION

The current study joins a small, yet growing number of studies that examine the implementation of translanguaging within language teacher education (LTE) courses as a way to contest the prevalent monolingual ideology and practices in the US schools that continue to position multilinguals' multilingualism as a deficit (Barros et al., 2020; Deroo & Ponzio, 2019; Flores & Aneja, 2017; García & Li, 2015; Tian, 2020). The purpose of this study from larger research was to examine how two in-service content teachers (ICTs), who work at a K-12 school and also attend a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) teacher educator program in the US, responded to the translanguaging pedagogy in an online master's course, Applied Linguistics. We focus on ICTs as opposed to pre-service teachers (PSTs), who are working to earn their teaching certifications in the US and are not employed in an educational setting, for the following reasons. The number of studies on translanguaging pedagogy taught in teacher education programs is little (Vaish, 2019). More particularly, research on how educators perceive and implement the translanguaging pedagogy in different content areas and various grade levels is scarce. Most existing studies have focused on the translanguaging practices of PSTs (Barros et al., 2020; Flores & Aneja, 2017; Tian, 2020). These studies highlighted the affordances and challenges of translanguaging and underlined that teachers do not have enough support in learning about the implementation of the pedagogy. We need more studies about how and why ICTs, who have more teaching experience and ongoing access to the classroom, apply this new pedagogy to their teaching contexts. For this purpose, we ask the following research question: What are the perceived affordances and challenges of two ICTs concerning the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy in P-12 classrooms? Translanguaging pedagogy embedded in LTE courses and implemented in K-12 schools contributes to an equitable learning environment or a classroom with multilingual ecology for all students in schools (García & Li, 2015; García et al., 2017).

In the subsequent sections, we discuss the theoretical framework, followed by pertinent literature, the description of the course, methods, findings, discussion, implications, and conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Translanguaging Theory and the Translanguaging Classroom Framework

Translanguaging theory and pedagogy, highly popularized over the last decade in language and literacy education, Applied Linguistics, TESOL, and the LTE fields advocates for bringing minoritized languages of multilinguals into the center of school learning that has long operated on one language policy (García & Li, 2015). Translanguaging as a theory explains named languages as external sociocultural realities and makes an emphasis that languages should be viewed as the single, unitary, and internal language system of individuals. Translanguaging scholars underlined that translanguaging is not just a strategy, practice, or a spontaneous human communicative phenomenon, but is a pedagogy that defines the set of design-based principles for scaffolding multilingual development of all students (García & Leiva, 2014). The pedagogy requires leveraging students' full language repertoire and, more importantly, an ideological shift in attitudes toward a linguistically-just classroom.

Acknowledging multilinguals' natural, spontaneous language-mixing behaviors and multimodal communication channels (e.g., video, audio, and kinetics) in everyday social contexts, translanguaging

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