

## Chapter 24

# Translanguaging With Immigrant Languages: Parents Leveraging Children's Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

*This study reports on the experiences of immigrant parents as they engaged in their children's learning during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Research has shown that the pandemic caused challenges for parents who could not balance family and work. Schoolwork and homework were done with the assistance of the parents. However, there is a paucity of research that seeks to explore parents' and children's practices during homework sessions, and the research engages translanguaging during the homework sessions. Two immigrant children, Taurai (16) and Yeukai (10), and their mother are the participants. A total of 24 homework sessions were recorded in six weeks with each child in the two subjects English Language and Natural Science and five-minute reflective conversations that were recorded after every lesson. The findings reveal that translanguaging was best for the meaning-making process, and the children were able to mirror themselves in the learning content.*

### INTRODUCTION

As global migration continues to be the norm, many families have experienced displacement effects with regard to social and linguistic encounters. In their transiting trajectories, migrants as multilinguals have experienced changes in their political, economic, and social lives. The social changes include language complexity. In most cases, they are forced to adopt the local languages of the host nation-states. (Muhammed, 2015, Vandeyar, 2014). Normally, the immigrants are forced to assimilate into a new political, social, and cultural context. In their host countries, multilinguals are viewed with a monolingual lens,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5034-5.ch024

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which means they are regarded as sums of two or more monolinguals. Their languaging systems are misunderstood as separate and hence they are presumed to operate in a linear system (Lopez, Turkan & Guzman-Orth,2017). Therefore, because of this view of language the multilinguals-immigrants are often immersed, assimilated, and discriminated against, and their languages are treated as illegitimate tenders in the host country's social and institutional use. This often leaves the immigrant group linguistically minoritized and discriminated against. Elsewhere, this discrimination of immigrant languages has often been the norm, and pluralism of multilingualism has been frequently ignored, (Garcia & Torreves-Guevara, 2010). In schools, separate programmes which treat multilingualism as a deficit have been created to assist the multilinguals / bilinguals. In the South African context, this practice of adopting local languages is more observable in the learning institutions where the immigrant learners are left with no choice but compelled to take up a local language and assume it to be their home language, and English is taken as the language for teaching and learning (Broom,2004). The learners become zero percent tenders of their own linguistic armoury, especially in the classrooms where monolingual ideological practices still reign. During learning sessions, the teachers resort to English and local languages for explanations without considering the complex multilingual nature of their classrooms. As a result, the multilingual immigrants languaging practices are left out and therefore this may ultimately erode their confidence, identities, and their sense of being (Makalela,2016). Their languages and other linguistic repertoires as learning mirrors are obstructed and at the same time, their language learning doors may be completely closed. As a result, the learners may struggle with accessing knowledge.

In current developments, research has however confirmed that translanguaging is the global norm amongst the multilingual including the immigrants. It is important to note that translanguaging as a discursive approach can be used to open up the third space for meaning making (Makalela,2016, Garcia 2009). This process of translanguaging captures the communicative practices of the individuals as they are able to bring into contact their biographies, histories, and linguistic backgrounds (Blackledge & Creese, 2017). Therefore, the learners are able to communicate with whatever resources are available without being restricted to specific language practice. In addition, with translanguaging the learners are able to go beyond words in their meaning-making process and they become proficient in extracting the embedded meaning within words. Although some researchers argue that translanguaging brings confusion in the classroom, the best side of it is that it bridged the home and school, Dhokotera, (2021) decolonises the learning space (Chaka, Chaka,2021). The learners are able to understand what goes on within the school system through leveraging their learning with their home languages. Translanguaging affords learners with space to bring in their funds of Knowledge (Moll, & Amanti, 2011). This means that the learners can use home practices and linguistic resources to learn new things in the school.

The advent of the Covid 19 pandemic in 2019 totally relegated the learning assistance to the children's families. During this time most of the schoolwork and homework was done with the assistance of the parents. Due to the pandemic, many learners and parents underwent psychological and emotional distress having challenges engaging productively (Pokhrel, & Chhetri, 2021). The greater part of the teaching load was also given to the parents. Although some parents understood this additional responsibility of helping their children to learn at home, there were enormous challenges in the implementation of learning with the parents at the helm of the programme. However, despite all these developments, there is a paucity of research on how multilingual children navigated their everyday learning at the hands of their parents and also the parents' practices when they are helping their children. Therefore, this chapter explores the role of translanguaging in the home as parents assist the learners with their homework. The main questions raised were, to establish the affordances of using multiple languages including im-

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