


Chapter 4

Translanguaging in German Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the application of translanguaging to German language education for promoting inclusivity among emergent bilingual and multilingual students in the United States. Based on interviews with six German language teachers, it discusses their diverse perspectives regarding the inclusion of students' home languages in the classroom. Outcomes indicate different levels of engagement with the concept, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement of translanguaging to steadfast adherence to monolingual approaches. The study underlines professional development and revised instructional designs with multilingual resources as imperative, while it ultimately advocates for translanguaging as a transformative tool in the enhancement of learning experiences and the affirmation of students' cultural identities.

INTRODUCTION

The term “translanguaging” refers to the utilization of one’s whole linguistic repertoire (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Celic and Seltzer (2013) described translanguaging as the flexible use of two or more language varieties without separation to help people make more sense of their lives. When it comes to instruction, translanguaging teachers intentionally use all of their students’ linguistic and cultural resources, welcoming their use of Spanish, German, and other languages (Lubliner

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& Grisham, 2017). According to Ladson-Billings (1995), making use of the full linguistic repertoire of students in the classroom establishes the groundwork for inclusivity, culturally relevant teaching, and multicultural education. Recent research shows that using a student's home language can serve as a scaffold for learning new languages and academic content (Cui & Pacheco, 2023; Pinho Feller, 2021; Setyaningrum et al., 2022; Strade, 2018).

García et al. (2016) created a highly valuable translanguaging guide that provides recommendations for translanguaging strategies, including grouping students according to their home language, using multilingual resources, flexible use of languages in the classroom, presenting the content in the students' home languages, and labeling classroom objects in multiple languages. Through these techniques, educators set up a learning environment that is inclusive and productive using the linguistic resources provided by multilingual students. Certainly, it takes work and preparation to create a classroom that is culturally sustaining, which also yields full student engagement. By identifying and emphasizing the resources that emergent bilingual learners bring to their classrooms, educators can encourage students to participate more while also assisting them in learning language and literacy (Jaffee & Salinas, 2024).

Despite the cogent advantages of translanguaging pedagogies, full potential of translanguaging pedagogies, particularly in German language teaching, remains underexplored in the global literature, which indicates that there is much work to be done to implement these strategies. Studies, such as Celic and Seltzer (2013), García and Wei (2014), and García et al. (2016), have primarily focused on bilingual education, multilingual classrooms, and the general adoption of translanguaging strategies in varied educational settings. In the light of emergent spaces of globalization and diversity in the era we live in, there has been a dire need for a translanguaging framework to be integrated into every instructional design across all nations. In response to this exigency, German educators across the world have started making efforts to support full language repertoires of the students recently. In Slovenia, pedagogical experiments such as translanguaging spaces have been implemented to facilitate contextual diversity and enhance communicative competence among students (Jazbec, 2024). The TRANSLANG program at the University of Hildesheim in Germany brings translanguaging principles into their teacher education program (University of Hildesheim, 2022). Translanguaging pedagogy emerges as an initiative in early childhood education in Luxembourg to normalize multilingual communication among young children. This approach mainly focuses on the transferring across languages among the learners of German as a foreign language (Kirsch & Mortini, 2021). Research is being undertaken on the use of translanguaging practices in German schools abroad, especially in Southern Europe so that these pedagogic strategies can be further understood and implemented in practice (Rosen et al., 2020). These

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