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Contexts of learning in TEYL

Farrah Ching and Angel M. Y. Lin

Introduction

This chapter focuses primarily on TEYL in bi/multilingual contexts, i.e., where English is often used as medium of instruction (MOI) for young learners whose first language is known to be other than English. In these contexts, learning in schools is accessed through English and educational achievement is demonstrated through English. Apart from the BANA countries (Britain, Australasia and North America), many schools in other multilingual societies, such as Hong Kong (Lin 2016), Singapore (Chua 2011), South Africa (Broom 2004) and Zimbabwe (Mufanechiya and Mufanechiya 2011), have also opted for English-medium education to promote the use and learning of English. The latter are often former British colonies, engaged in different processes of postcolonial nation-building in the current globalised world.

In English-dominant BANA countries, the term ‘English as an Additional Language’ (EAL) is now widely adopted to acknowledge linguistic diversity as an asset for these students. EAL, as a contemporary reconceptualisation of ‘English as Second Language’ (ESL), reflects an ideological shift in the positioning of bi/multilingual learners and the educational response to them, i.e., mainstreaming (Leung 2016). This categorisation, however, does not denote a homogeneous group but encompasses a range of English learning experience and proficiency (Murphy and Unthiah 2015). In the United States, EAL students are often known as ‘English Language Learners’ (ELL), a term generally used to refer to students with limited proficiency in English in the American context (Genesee et al 2006).

The teaching of EAL to young learners has seen tremendous growth over the last two decades or so globally and commercially, as evident in the expansion of bilingual and multilingual education (Graddol 2006). English is at the apex of the complex political, economic and cultural hierarchy of languages (Graddol 2007). Its prestige is buttressed by its crucial role in school and higher education, digital communication technology and the entertainment industry. Driven by globalisation and rapid growth in migration, recent years have witnessed a sharp increase in the need for support for EAL children in English-dominant countries. For example, in the UK alone, official statistics (NALDIC 2013) showed that
almost one in five primary school pupils do not speak English as a first language; the num-
bers have doubled in the last decade.

The growing currency of English has prompted policymakers in various parts of the
world to introduce the language as integral to primary education (Kirkpatrick 2012, Nikolov
2009). English is a compulsory part of the primary curriculum in all of the ten countries of
The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Among these countries, English is
adopted as an MOI in primary schools in Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines (Kirkpat-
rick 2012). In Hong Kong, where English has been a colonial language, English-medium
schooling continues to be more easily accessible to the children of the educated elite due
to the streaming policy segregating schools into English-medium and Chinese-medium. In
some countries even where the national policy stipulates mother-tongue education, English
remains the preferred MOI at the local level, contravening the national policy. For example,
it was found that in both urban and rural schools in Kenya, English dominated instruction
in all subjects (social studies, mathematics, science, life-skills and religious education) in
the first three years of primary education except in Kiswahili and mother-tongue ‘language
classes’ (Trudell and Piper 2014). This is despite the fact that Kenyan children do not speak
English at home and their level of English proficiency at that stage presents a serious chal-
lenge to their learning through the language.

In pre-school years, there is an increasing trend towards introducing English learning,
often as priority language (Gardner 2012, Johnstone 2009). It seems that the TEYL pendu-
lum has swung the other way, some may argue too far, from the earlier myths about bilin-
gualism confusing children (Genesee 1989) to the controversial superiority of ‘the younger
the better’ hypothesis (Pinter 2011). Depending on the specific educational contexts, the
definition of ‘young learners’ could conceivably be extended to a start as early as three years
old (Pinter 2006, p. 2). The fashionable discourse of ‘winning at the starting line’ in Asian
societies has also helped to sustain widespread popular beliefs that earlier is better and more
is better, despite the lack of empirical evidence supporting this claim in foreign language
contexts (Muñoz 2006). Bottom-up forces arising from parent demand for English linguistic
capital persist in places such as Hong Kong, Japan and Korea, where affluent parents pay
for private English-medium education and tutoring at younger grade levels than the national
policy regulates, often in immersion programmes and international schools (de Mejía 2002;
Imoto 2011; Song 2012; Yee 2009). Kindergartens in both China and Korea are facing a
strong demand for English from parents even though both countries have already ambi-
tiously mandated an early start from Primary 3.

It is important to recognise that the contexts in which young learners are exposed to and
engaged in English learning are varied and complex. Children’s learning trajectories and
outcomes depend on the linguistic and learning conditions provided by their significant
others (parents, families, caregivers and schools), and are in turn shaped by wider social
processes. The early bird may or may not catch the worm, but for teachers the TEYL boom
brings with it many pedagogical challenges (Copland et al 2014).

**Historical perspectives**

In predominantly English-speaking countries, languages other than English have been his-
torically and primarily regarded as a problem to be remedied by the schools (Ruiz 1984).
Improving the English language proficiency of immigrant children from newly decolo-
nised territories was high on the national development agendas of BANA countries in the
1950s. In the case of the UK, it was expected that immigrant children should become ‘truly
integrated’ into the community ‘as soon as possible’ (Derrick 1977, p. 16). ESL, as it was known until the late 1980s, took the form of separate language provision outside the regular school curriculum. It was usually delivered through full-time or part-time reception ESL classes, and conducted by specialist teachers where resources were available. The assumption was that these young learners would impede the academic progress of local students and should join the mainstream classes when they were adequately prepared. Leung and Franson (2001a) pointed out that ESL provision in the 1950s and 60s in BANA countries was found to be limited and compartmentalised. Using a language-as-structure approach as informed by native-speaker norms, it was a short-term intensive form of initial provision often carried out in isolation from the child’s school (Leung 2016).

By the mid-1980s, the pull-out arrangement for new arrivals was being challenged as socially divisive, and national policies began to shift to ‘mainstreaming’ in response to societal and political demands for equitable access to the mainstream system (Leung and Franson 2001b). The positioning of bilingual learners was changed from being ‘outsiders’ to ‘mainstream participants’ in school education. Official documents stated that ‘where bilingual pupils need extra help, this should be given in the classroom as part of normal lessons’ (DES 1989). In the mainstream classroom, the ESL student and the subject teacher might be supported by an ESL support teacher. This arrangement could be seen as an attempt to provide language-minority children equal access to education (Bourne 1989), but it clearly had to rely on effective collaboration between mainstream and language support teachers.

Another impetus for mainstreaming arose from how language was conceptualised in the development of sociolinguistics (e.g., Hymes 1974) when considerations of communicative competence broadened the notion of correctness beyond grammatical accuracy. The idea that language learning is achieved through the active and meaningful use of language provided the basis for the development of such language pedagogy as communicative language teaching. Cummins (1984, 1993, 2000) makes the distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), while highlighting the need for all teachers to be teachers of language in their subject. The BICS/CALP distinction has contributed to the mainstreaming of EAL students and further discussions on the instruction and assessment of linguistically diverse students (e.g., Coelho 2004, Lin 2016). The shift of emphasis to language as communication and positive findings on bilingual education (Cummins 1984, Lambert 1981) helped to reframe bilingualism as a potential educational advantage.

Between the 1950s and the 1980s researchers and educators in the teaching of English as second or foreign language were preoccupied with ‘models’ of bilingual education and ‘balanced bilingualism’ from structural-functional and cognitive perspectives in language majority and postcolonial settings (Martin-Jones 1989, 2007). Most of the formal approaches to language learning took a strong line with regard to classroom language. One of the myths about best practice has been that instruction has to be carried out exclusively in the ‘target language’: translation between L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) is prohibited in case learners become confused (Conteh et al 2014a). The notion of ‘bilingualism without tears’ (Swain 1983) was based on the development of bilingualism through parallel monolingualism, separating L1 and L2 by subject, by timetabling and by teacher.

The strategy separating languages by timetabling (as in immersion programmes) found support in studies such as Legarreta (1979). In this study, the children in the only bilingual kindergarten classroom using Spanish and English separately made significantly greater gains in oral comprehension in English than those in the five classrooms that mixed the
two languages. Another oft-quoted analysis by Wong-Fillmore (1980) reported children tuning in and out as the teacher translated between Cantonese and English in an American classroom. The students stopped listening attentively when the teacher used the language that they did not understand. The researcher went on to assert the exclusive use of target language in enhancing student motivation (Wong-Fillmore 1985). Dual-language immersion advocates monolingual instruction for adequate language development (Howard et al 2007; Lindholm-Leary 2012), culminating in the negative positioning of L1 and pressure on increasing English time based on the time-on-task rationale. This separation approach also helps to explain why codeswitching has been discouraged in mainstream education contexts as a sign of deficiency (Cheng and Butler 1989). The myth of this approach, which surveils and prohibits students’ leveraging of their multilingual resources through restricting their use of L1 and ‘mixing’ languages, became entrenched in the practices of language teaching up to now (Lin 2015a, Scarino 2014).

Various researchers have discussed the loss or erosion of children’s heritage languages among immigrant children in school contexts, i.e., ‘subtractive bilingualism’. It was first discussed by Lambert in relation to Canadian immigrant children (Lambert 1977, 1981). The intergenerational language shift within three generations is often the norm (Fishman 1991; Clyne and Kipp 1997). Wong-Fillmore (1991) documented how American native and immigrant children tended to lose their L1, as young children were susceptible to the social pressures against valuing their linguistic or ethnic diversity in the United States. In families whose parents and grandparents spoke little English, such language shift often resulted in native-language loss and intergenerational alienation. Related studies on immigrant and ethnic minority children in Scandinavia and the United States have also given rise to the derogatory label of ‘semilingual’ (a term first coined by Hansegård 1968, as cited in Martin-Jones and Romaine 1986), characterising the unequal performance of bilingual children in their two languages when compared to monolingual children norms. The lack of equal competence in areas such as vocabulary, linguistic correctness and degree of automaticity was used to highlight a deficit view of bilingual children. However, MacSwan (2000) was careful to point out that the so-called semilingualism was associated more with low socioeconomic status rather than language background.

**Critical issues and topics**

Over the last two decades, multilingualism has been fast becoming an asset to postmodern citizens in the face of globalisation (Canagarajah 2005). In this age of ‘superdiversity’ (Vertovec 2007), new patterns of transnational migration and their fluid mixing of languages have blurred the traditional boundaries of languages (Blommaert and Backus 2011). On the other hand, researchers have increasingly problematised the static and bounded ideological conceptions of ‘language’ and monolingual myths in language education as part of the ‘multilingual turn’ (Conteh and Meier 2014b, May 2014). The growing number of EAL speakers has also prompted examination of issues such as notions of ownership of English (Kramsch and Sullivan 1996, Phillipson 2008) and hierarchical multilingualism (Lin 2015). Critical approaches to language education questioning the power relations and ideology inherent in schooling (Kumaravadivelu 2005) have offered new understandings of how children who come with bi/multilingual repertoires can participate meaningfully in education and negotiate identities through language. In what follows, for critical reflection, we focus on the enduring interrelated issues of monolingual bias and hierarchical multilingualism that have permeated into school practices, as well as their pedagogical implications within the
contexts of TEYL. We also discuss how translanguaging can harness children’s complete linguistic repertoires to help them learn.

**Monolingual bias**

The myth of the monolingual nation-state has meant that only the linguistic practices enacted by monolinguals are assumed to be legitimate (May 2014). Although it is now recognised that linguistic plurality has always been a part of life in human history (Canagarajah 2007), young EAL learners are often taught and assessed against monolingual ‘standard English’ norms unconnected to their local social realities and heritage. ‘Bilingualism through monolingualism’ stems from uncritical acceptance of received knowledge claims of second language acquisition (SLA) (Lin 2012). By extension, ‘balanced bilingualism’ has been misguidedlly hailed as the idealised benchmark for measuring learners’ developmental capabilities in learning additional languages (Martin-Jones 2007). The construction of second language learners as failed monolinguals rather than successful bilinguals runs the risk of condemning them to a permanent ‘subaltern’ subjectivity (Sridhar 1994).

Critical analyses of language and power in social processes reveal how English-only pedagogical ideologies reproduce social inequality and academic failure (Heller and Martin-Jones 2001; Lin and Martin 2005; Martin-Rojo 2010). It is self-evident that monolingual children tend to perform to the expected mean of standardised tests as they constitute the normative sample for these tests (Oller et al 2007). The monolingual mandate of California’s Proposition 227 is a case in point: when children enter the classroom, the teacher speaking only English – ‘proper English’ – places the burden on her young students to adapt to her delivery (Manyak 2002, p. 434). Chen (2006) found that some kindergarten children in Taiwan have developed a negative attitude to English as a result of being punished for speaking Mandarin in English classes. Such disabling contexts prevent children from fully participating in classroom learning, particularly when in some cases teachers are unable to distinguish between language acquisition and learning disabilities (Orosco and Klingner 2010).

**Hierarchical bi/multilingualism**

Socially and critically informed understandings of bi/multilingualism in the recent decade (Heller 2007; Pennycook 2010) suggest that language constructs and is constructed by social relationships, characterised by unequal relations of power. In postcolonial contexts, children’s more familiar local languages are often relegated to the bottom of the linguistic hierarchy. For instance in Singapore, where English has been installed as the L1 and the chief medium of instruction, ‘pragmatic multilingualism’ is in practice multilingualism dominated by English (Rubdy 2005). This form of hierarchical multilingualism is also evident in Hong Kong, where higher education has been English-medium since its colonial days and English-medium schooling is favoured by many local parents over mother-tongue (Chinese) education.

In Anglophone countries, the naturalised language practices of the white, educated middle-classes top the language hierarchy (Garcia and Otheguy 2017). Johnson (2016) alerted us to a new generation of minoritised youth borne out of the ‘language gap’ discourse in the USA today, referring to a so-claimed delay in the vocabulary acquisition in young children of lower socioeconomic status. Language minoritised families are blamed for turning their children into limited language users by not speaking and using English effectively in the
family. The ‘language gap’ is purportedly located at the beginning of the educational process, even before the children enter school. Garcia and Otheguy (2017) cautioned that the ‘language gap’ is more dangerous than the ‘achievement gap’ discourse (Mancilla-Martinez and Lesaux 2010; Genesee et al 2006), as it ruptures and devalues the natural bonding of families through their own home language and cultural practices.

**Translanguaging**

In response to the dynamic multilingualism ushered in by globalisation, contemporary scholarship has pointed to the ‘multilingual turn’ (Conteh and Meier 2014b; May 2014). As multilingualism is foregrounded as the new norm in applied linguistics and languages education, children’s multilingual repertoire is considered a potential resource rather than impediment to language learning. The idea of drawing on the linguistic repertoire of learners is increasingly known as ‘translanguaging’ (Hornberger and Link 2012; Lewis et al 2012). To capture the heteroglossic (Bakhtin 1981; Bailey 2007) discursive practices of bilinguals, Garcia and Li (2014) advocate a ‘translanguaging’ epistemology and pedagogy for developmental bilingual education. Coined in the 1980s by Welsh educator Cen Williams, the term was used originally to refer to the ‘planned and systematic use of two languages for teaching and learning inside the same lesson’ (Lewis et al. 2012, p. 643). Translanguaging starts from the speaker, and leads us away from a focus on the code or language to a focus on the agency of individuals engaged in communication. In educational settings, it refers to the process by which students and teachers engage bi/multilingually in the many multimodal practices of the classroom, such as reading, note-taking, show-and-tell, discussing and writing (Garcia 2009). It goes way beyond codeswitching and translation to offer educators the possibility of viewing bilingual language practices holistically instead of as two languages competing with each other. In other words, translanguaging seeks to destabilise and remove linguistic hierarchies. For Garcia and Li (2014), translanguaging is a potentially transformative sociocultural process that enables students to constantly modify their sociocultural identities as they respond to changing conditions critically and creatively.

**Current contributions and research**

Current research shows that educators have begun to increasingly leverage their students’ multilingual competence in their practices. In the following, we share examples of different translanguaging pedagogies enacted in various TEYL contexts, where emergent bi/multilinguals fall along different points of the bi/multilingual continuum. While not all teachers in the studies can speak their students’ heritage languages, they were observed incorporating the young learners’ languages in their instruction in productive, creative and sometimes playful ways.

Though traditionally immersion classrooms have been promoting strict separation of languages, it is becoming clear to practitioners that the ‘two-solitudes’ mode can be counterproductive (Cervantes-Soon et al. 2017; Fitts 2006). In a dual-language school in central Texas, two bilingual teachers were observed modelling translanguaging in their respective pre-kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms (Palmer et al. 2014). To accommodate their very young emergent bilingual students, these teachers codeswitched purposefully between Spanish and English to validate or mirror their students’ language practices. They also raised their students’ metalinguistic awareness by drawing attention to the moments when the children noticed similarities between English and Spanish. In the Grade 1 class, the teacher
made use of critical bilingual literature, e.g., bilingual poems about naming, to encourage children to think about the power of naming someone and different cultural norms for naming teachers (Garcia-Mateus and Palmer 2017). She went on to ask the students to act out the scenes from the poems, placing them in positions of power by empowering their bilingual identities.

Peer collaboration among students in the forms of helping, practising, sharing and respecting were identified as ways of supporting children’s translanguaging and positive identities in an English/Chinese bilingual classroom in Canada (Sun 2016). Two-thirds of the children in this Grade 5 class spoke a variety of Chinese languages and the rest spoke English at home. This study demonstrated how the students actively helped each other by drawing on their varied language and mathematics expertise. They also appropriated strategically their linguistic resources by negotiating, interacting and practising with each other. Both the Chinese-medium and English-medium teachers have encouraged the children to share their Chinese/English writing and assignments so that they could develop biliteracy meaningfully. The students were also observed sharing the method of using the Chinese times table to do multiplication, taking advantage of the monosyllabic characteristic of the Chinese language as a mnemonic aid. Stressing the importance of respect, the teachers were able to cultivate a supportive environment in which young students would ask for help without feeling embarrassed about their lack of language proficiency. The different forms of peer collaboration through translanguaging, promoted by the teachers, legitimated the resources children brought to the classroom and opened up spaces for them to shape their own learning and achievement.

Translanguaging and community literacy activities (Jiménez et al 2009) were used by a third-grade teacher in the USA with her EAL students (Pacheco and Miller 2015), bridging in-school literacy activity with the textual world of multilingual students’ lives outside school. The lesson was about making sense of informational texts using text features, such as title, author, caption and chart. The teacher distributed newspapers written in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic and English that she had collected, and asked the children to work in pairs to identify the text features. The young students argued about where to find the author’s name written in Arabic, and made attempts to guess the meaning of numbers below a weather map in the Chinese newspaper. Within this 20-minute lesson, the teacher helped students develop conceptual understandings of text features across languages, capitalising on the students’ heritage languages. She continued the lesson by reading an English-language article with the assistance of text features.

Another case study, in northern England, also demonstrated how a multilingual teacher in a Primary 4 Geography class tapped into the children’s funds of knowledge (Conteh et al 2014b). In this class, over half of the children shared their teacher’s first language of Punjabi. During the lesson, the teacher was translanguaging between English and Punjabi fairly extensively. To explain the notion of bartering, she referred to a common practice in the children’s communities: buying things ‘on tick’ from the corner shops. Her approaches to empowering the students’ learning highlighted the links between language, social practice, culture and identity.

Findings from a project on composing dual-language e-books revealed how ICT could be incorporated as part of translanguaging to support learning (Pacheco and Miller 2015). In a pre-school class made up of emergent bilinguals with diverse heritage languages, the students had the opportunity to create translanguaging e-books through digital photos, drawings and voice recordings. They were also asked to take photos of their homes and communities, and to label them in English and their heritage language. These images became visual
stimuli for the children to learn about each other’s lives through translanguaging. Through this activity, the students’ heritage languages and lives outside of school were given a visible and valued place in the multilingual classroom.

Emergent bilingual writers have been found to self-regulate during the writing process by translanguaging (Velasco and Garcia 2014). Writing samples from the K–4th grade students in Spanish-English and Korean-English bilingual programmes in New York were collected in a case study. Researchers observed that translanguaging was used by the children in all stages of the writing process: planning, editing and production. It was sometimes used for scaffolding (through vocabulary glosses in the margins or between lines, or using another language for word retrieval), and at other times for rhetorical engagement (to engage the reader through ‘another voice’). These practices allowed the learners to resolve problems in creating texts and to develop their own voices.

However, translanguaging process in writing could be contentious when only the author-ised code is permitted. Kiramba (2017) analysed the translanguaging strategies adopted by a fourth-grade class in rural Kenya. The children were proficient in one or more local languages and were acquiring English. (Fourth grade is the transitioning year from mother-tongue instruction to English-only instruction in Kenya.) Although the curriculum dictated the use of only one language in academic writing, the children chose to make their texts clearer by drawing on their diverse communicative repertoires. Words from other languages at their disposal found their way into the texts, indexing the students’ multilingual identities and their agency as authors with complex semiotic resources. This study has revealed multilingual children’s natural inclination towards translanguaging in their engagement with literacy despite institutional constraints.

Recommendations for practice

Starting with the students’ strengths and prior knowledge is the primary principle of all education. While many are impressed with how multilingual children ‘pick up’ languages, educators are not often wary of how quickly children may ‘lose’ their heritage languages, particularly when the latter are ‘ghettoised’ or relegated to a lower status (Cummins 2001). Contemporary studies cited in the previous section exemplify how validating and leveraging students’ hybrid linguistic and experiential resources can open up spaces for mediating/enhancing learning and affirm positive multilingual identities. An array of translanguaging pedagogies could be adopted in different TEYL contexts, including:

- Take an active stance in welcoming and developing all of a student’s linguistic resources. Make it visible by offering a multilingual/multimodal classroom landscape that comprises multilingual word walls/sentence starters, listening and visual centres, etc. (Garcia et al 2017).
- Teachers can model translanguaging and adaptation of language choice when interacting with individual students, e.g., through concurrent translation and language brokering; or routinely asking children how to say or write words in their heritage languages (Garcia-Mateus and Palmer 2017; Palmer et al. 2014).
- Invite young students to bring along words they choose to share and teach to their teacher and the class, and share stories of cultural heritage, e.g., about festival and cultural celebrations. Encourage students to create multilingual and multimodal ‘identity texts’ to share with multiple audiences for self-affirmation in these interactions (Cummins and Early 2011).
• Place multilingual labels on classroom objects; put together a museum of community artefacts with multilingual labels, as well as help children create bilingual picture dictionaries in their home language and English (Linse and Gamboa 2014).

• Use bi/multilingual texts to develop critical metalinguistic awareness across languages and scaffold comprehension, e.g., by comparing language forms and structures (García-Mateus and Palmer 2017; Pacheco and Miller 2015; Palmer et al. 2014; see also Lin 2013 for plurilingual pedagogies that can be adapted).

• Make connections between the children’s local community or cultural practices with what they are learning; integrate students’ experiences outside of school with the school curriculum (Conteh et al 2014b).

• Bring multilingual community literacy texts into the TEYL classroom (e.g., flyers, posters, signs, advertisements and newspapers) to construct conceptual understandings of literacy across languages and interrogate power relations (Pacheco and Miller 2015; see also Lau 2013 for examples of working with G7/8 emergent English/Chinese bilinguals).

• Promote multilingual students’ peer collaboration (Sun 2016) and collaboration between teachers and students by cultivating a supportive learning environment, e.g., asking children to nominate other students who have helped them and awarding students with helper stickers; purposefully asking students for their help in translanguaging; using circle time or centres in classrooms for children to share their learning strategies and help each other solve problems; and making seating arrangements that facilitate peer-sharing and interaction.

• Incorporate ICT with translanguaging: using mobile apps such as Book Creator, Drawing Pad and iBooks for voice recording and literacy work; harnessing audio and visual affordances to encourage dynamic bilingualism (Pacheco and Miller 2015).

• Make meaning or content comprehensible by explaining grammar usage, providing translations for unknown target-language vocabulary, translating and checking comprehension (Luk and Lin 2016).

• Use multimodal resources (e.g., videos, graphic organisers, mind maps, storyboards, comics and bilingual note) for young learners and educators to scaffold and expand children’s language and meaning-making repertoire (see Mahboob and Lin 2016 for Lin’s Multimodalities/Entextualization Cycle).

• In writing activities, always encourage children to engage with their multilingual semiotic resources during planning, editing and production, such as inserting word glosses in texts for vocabulary acquisition, and employing a ‘postponing’ strategy by writing down words in a familiar language first for future word retrieval in another language.

• Design content-based units and research tasks that integrate content and language learning, so that students can develop linguistic and discourse competence, as well as strategic translanguaging strategies.

Garcia and Li (2014) advised that while teachers may have varying degrees of bilingual proficiency, they can provide children with opportunities for language use without necessarily setting themselves up as the linguistic authority. Teachers who do not speak the languages of the students may enlist the help of their students in translating and scaffolding, and group linguistically homogeneous children together so they can support each other’s learning where appropriate. Teachers may be encouraged to risk saying words in their students’ home languages with their help, so they can act as good models for young learners to risk saying more in the target language.
Future directions

As discussed above, current developments in relation to language and language education have led to a growing body of literature on pedagogies that leverage learners’ linguistic repertoires. While translanguaging work in schools is still in its infancy and is sometimes even contested in bi/multilingual education programmes, we are beginning to see that all children are capable of competence in additional languages. Through the translanguaging lens, we invite researchers and practitioners to consider the following directions for future investigation:

• Various strategies bridging the in-school and out-of-school lives of children have been documented in the above studies. We need to know more about the experiences of children in their social world and how they can enrich the learning of all the students’ learning in class.

• How do children use their semiotic resources in peer-learning and collaboration? How do they negotiate and solve problems when working in a multilingual group?

• We need to better understand how children mediate and resist the monolingual bias to achieve their communicative purposes, and how they learn to suppress or activate language features necessary for specific contexts or tasks.

• What strategies can we employ to validate the linguistic practices of young learners in different contexts?

• Translanguaging is potentially transformative and creative (Garcia and Li 2014). How can EAL teachers collaborate with other teachers to engage students in interrogating identity and power relations? (See Bradley et al. 2018 for ideas about a collage workshop to explore communicative repertoires and linguistic landscape.)

• More research is required into content-based or CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approaches for young EAL learners to access content and academic discourse. (See Lin 2016 and Lin and He 2017 for theory and practice in secondary schools.)

Every learning context is different and students’ access to learning opportunities varies. Legitimating young learners’ linguistic repertoires and identities is a necessary step towards translating the multilingual turn into practice, and into policy, for social justice and equal opportunities in learning.

Further reading


Exemplifies how schools can value and leverage multilingualism in different contexts.


Provides a comprehensive overview of bilingual education theories, policy and practice with global understandings.


Remains a classic volume of ethnographic studies analysing the practices and tensions in relation to the imposition of legitimate language.
Contexts of learning in TEYL


Provides a collection of studies from Asian and African contexts with critiques of policy and practice.

**Related topics**

Policies, multilingualism, critical pedagogy, classroom language

**References**


