TRANSLANGUAGING AND ORACY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Développement des compétences orales des enfants multilingues
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What does Gabo speak at 16 months?

- Árbol
- Car
- Truck
- Leche
- Más
- Agua
- Bottle
- Tete
- Duck
- No
- Guagua

Translanguaging and oracy in early childhood

City University of New York

Two perspectives on Gabo’s language

HIS words
The Internal Perspective
One language system

Two "named" languages
The external perspective

- English
- Spanish

What does Gabo speak at 16 months?

- External perspective
  - Gabo “has” “English” words and “Spanish” words

- Internal perspective
  - Gabo is developing (through social interaction with a bilingual family) a unitary system of language features with which he “does” language (he languages) to communicate and make meaning.

Translanguaging as the internal perspective

External Perspective
- 2 languages with language-specific features
- Bilingualism as double monolingualism – Additive bilingualism

Internal Perspective
- 1 complex language system from which speakers select features
- Dynamic bilingualism

What is Gabo doing linguistically at 16 months?

- Gabo is translanguaging

Translanguaging is the use of the full linguistic repertoire "without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages" (Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015, p. 281).
What can we say about Gabo and other young bilingual children?

- Most are simultaneous bilinguals
  Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA, De Houwer, 2009)
- They develop a unitary language system of linguistic features to communicate.
- They have to learn to select linguistic features that are appropriate for different audiences.
  - They have to learn to perform in "named languages"
- Their receptive performances (listening and understanding) are more developed than their productive performances (speaking and communicating).

How do young bilingual children use language?

- They want to communicate
- To communicate, they translanguage. They use ALL the resources in their semiotic (meaning-making) repertoire to make meaning.
  - They do not separate "named languages"
  - They do not separate speech from other semiotic meaning-making systems: gestures, acting, pitch (screaming, screeching), singing, drawing (multimodal resources)
- Once they enter school, schools validate some meaning-making practices and not others.

How do early childhood education institutions use language?

- Monilingually and monomodal
  - Dominant language only
  - Print superior to other multimodal resources
- Bilingually/Multilingually
  - Two+2 separate "named" languages
  - Negate "his/her" language
  - Force children to suppress more than half of their linguistic features

How can early childhood education institutions develop the language performances of young multilingual children?

Starting with what they use and know, their strengths:

- Building on the use of their full repertoire of meaning-making resources. Nurturing their translanguaging potential to
  - Use their full linguistic repertoire
  - Use other multimodal meaning-making resources
- Carefully assessing their use of ALL their meaning-making resources.

How can early childhood education institutions develop the literacy of young multilingual children?

Literacy refers to any communication that takes place around text (print and multimodal) to make meaning.

What does it mean to engage in literacy practices for young children?

- Listening actively to what others say about a text.
- Representing text through play, gestures, drawing
- Participating in oral discussions to make meaning of text.

Oracy/Literacy Interconnection

What are the components of a translanguaging pedagogy to nurture bilingual children’s language/literacy performances

1. The teacher’s stance/beliefs/ideologies
2. The teacher’s design
   - The classroom detective
   - The classroom architect
   - The classroom lifeguard & transformer
### Classroom detective

- Close observation/assessment of young children’s performances to distinguish between
  - General semiotic performances
  - Language specific performances

### Differentiate between Language specific performances General semiotic performances

**RENATA ……**

- Does not speak “Luxembourgish” at home
- Performance in oral “Luxembourgish” at school is insufficient

### Differentiate between General semiotic performances & Language specific performances

**RENATA ……**

- Listens to stories
- Represents experience, feelings, ideas through play, gestures, drawing.
- Is comfortable with books & pretends “reads”
- Plays with crayons & pencils

### Classroom architect

- **Classroom space** to allow ample opportunities for children to engage in authentic talk and multimodal play, art work, and rehearsal.
- **Print and pictures/art** reflect children’s home language practices and cultures.
- **Collaborative structures/grouping.**
- **Multilingual & multimodal** instructional material (audio, video, realia, manipulatives, ex: ITEO)

### Classroom lifeguard & transformer

- Opportunities to perform linguistically suppressing some linguistic features when one “named” language is expected
  - WITH TRANSLANGUAGING RINGS for scaffold when needed (German teacher in Argyro’s presentation)
- Opportunities to perform linguistically freely as young bilinguals
  - TRANSLANGUAGING SPACES spaces where students use their full semiotic repertoire to make meaning (ITEO, Claudine’s presentation)

### Conclusion

- Young bilingual children come into school with their own language & translanguaging ability (internal perspective), and not two named languages (external social perspective).
- Schools only recognize external social perspective of “named languages.”
- For educators to leverage young bilingual children’s potential, they must acknowledge and use their natural translanguaging by
  - Separating their ability to use language & meaning-making resources from using appropriate linguistic features (the detective),
  - designing classroom spaces for collaboration & use of multilingual/multimodal material (the architect)
  - Providing translanguaging rings when needed & translanguaging spaces (the lifeguard/transformer).
Attitudes towards multilingual children in Canada

Interview with an Educator in the Kindergarten of the German School Montreal (April 2014)

Project: Educational Professionalism, Migration and Multilingualism in Canada, Germany and Greece.
Principal investigators: Prof. Argyro Panagiotopoulou, University of Cologne & Prof. Lisa Rosen, Osnabrück University

"... Je parle anglais!"
1/3

"The children who are born or raised here in Canada in most cases speak two languages, often times [German] is the mother tongue, but it can also be Spanish, Arabic in addition to English or French or in part all three languages where the children then learn the fourth language [German] at school."

"... Je parle anglais!"
2/3

"We accept all languages, it is not forbidden, during daily interaction as part of free-play they are able to use the language they want to though they should, where possible, speak German when speaking to the educators; [...] since later on in elementary school the language of instruction is German, and so that it is normal for them to speak German to an instructor; but everything that is within the class, whether in the yard outside, they may speak English, French, Spanish, Arabic; they may speak all languages they want to."

"... Je parle anglais!"
3/3

"Personally, they speak German with me, turn around and speak French with their mother and English with their friend; but there are also children who are not aware at a given moment which language they are currently speaking; there I might say Könnest du mal sagen, welche Sprache sprichst du denn zu Hause' and the answer is 'Je parle anglais'."
Using complex language practices

“In fact, students and teachers in all bilingual education programs use complex language practices, and build on complex resources for meaning-making in order to learn and teach; that is, they use what we are calling here translanguaging.”
Ofelia García and Li Wei (2014, p. 59):

Using complex language practices

“I had a child approach me ‘Frau Esser ich habe zu Hause deep deep, was heißt deep’, and then I said ‘tief’. ‘Frau Esser ich habe zu Hause ein tiefes, tiefes’, [...] and ‘what is a hole’: so I say ‘ein Loch’, and then it started again from the beginning and the child asked for a third word and all this in one sentence; so we do not sit down and tell them ‘You have to do it like this and this’.”

Attitudes towards multilingual children in Germany

Interview with an Educator in the Kindergarten of the German School Montreal (April 2014)

... about her experiences in a Kindergarten in Germany

From translanguaging to…. “Semilingualism”? 

“We had in Germany, I worked at a kindergarten and we had two colleagues from Turkey who grew up in Germany but had Turkish origin families, and at some point we noticed that some children had big difficulties learning German; following this we asked, or the two Turkish colleagues offered, to read [meaning to look at] picture books in Turkish and as a result of this we learned that those children also did not know Turkish very well. [...] we noticed, when someone does not know his/her own language very well then he/she can also not learn the foreign language, in this case German, well.”

Initial Comparing Findings

• Translangugaging in the German kindergarten in Canada: defined as a family norm and reality of young children, and as a legitimate practice “in order to learn and teach” multilingually.
• Translangugaging in the German kindergarten in Germany: defined as an incompetence of young children who don’t speak their “own” language (L1), have learning difficulties with the German language (L2) and, hence, became semilingual.

Conclusion: Diametrically opposed interpretations of comparable language practices of young children. Professionals observe translangually acting children using widely differing theoretical concepts about bilingualism and multilingualism.
iTEO: a translanguaging space for collaborative language learning in Luxembourg

Assistant-Prof. Dr. Claudine Kirsch

The iPad App iTEO

- Purpose: to develop children’s oral skills
- Capitalizing on the children’s entire linguistic repertoire in a multilingual context
- Promote innovative teaching methods

http://storying.bsce.uni.lu

The iPad App iTEO (cont.)

- The iPad App iTEO
  - Records and edits oral language
  - Automatic replay: materializes language and encourages reflection
  - Endless possibilities for listening to and transforming speech
  - Opportunities to add pictures to structure the recording process
- Working with iTEO fosters the development of language and metalinguistic skills
  (Gretsch 1994, 2014; Kirsch 2014; Kirsch & Gretsch 2015, Kirsch, forthcoming)

Collaborative storytelling on iTEO

- Language learning is a dynamic, active, social process which happens when individuals interact in meaningful, activity-based and culturally specific activities
- Collaborative storytelling on iTEO: encourages authorship, dialogue, autonomy, control and reflection
- Collaboration: shared goal, mutual engagement, jointly created and maintained space, co-construction of knowledge
- iTEO as a translanguaging space: children mobilize their verbal and non-verbal resources to produce an oral text and to develop language skills

Examples of translanguaging and learning on iTEO

Excerpt 1: collaborative language learning in a primary school class (C2.1)

Komm mir schwätzen op Franséisch.
Moi, je m’appelle Aaron et toi tu t’appelles Lina.

First recording
**Excerpt 2: Collaborative language learning in a nursery school class (C1.1)**

- Invitation to translanguage in the C1
- Asking for clarification
- Emphasising “garçon”
- Asking for a replay of “garçon”
- Using “garçon”

**Collaboration**

- The “experts”
  - Elaborating
  - Checking comprehension
  - Breaking down phrases
  - Identifying a mistake
  - Offering a translation, a synonym or the missing word
  - Rephrasing and repeating
  - Emphasising the correct article, phoneme, morpheme
  - Offering explanations and rules
  - Assessing and praising

**Linguistic repertoire of the nursery school children during the iTEO performances**

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<th>Child</th>
<th>Ariana</th>
<th>Hanif</th>
<th>Benjamin</th>
<th>Diego</th>
<th>Mariana</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

✓ ✓ Home language
Translanguaging situations in C1 and C2

- To communicate
  - All: multimodality – use of gestures, tone of voice
  - Individual differences: lack of vocabulary
- To position themselves, to express their voice and to develop an identity as a multilingual
  - "You cannot speak French. It is different." (C1)
  - "I have to speak Luxembourgish because / cannot speak English well." (C1)
- Co-construction of a story
- To position themselves, to express their voice and to develop an identity as a multilingual

Translanguaging situations (cont.)

- To construct knowledge and to develop skills in other languages
  - Paraphrasing: “les bagages … valises”
  - Translating
  - Ask for clarification, for translations
  - Repetitions for the purpose of memorization
  - Translations of text previously used
  - Reflecting on language use
    - "Le tapis, der Teppich" – "I have chosen the wrong word" (C1)
    - Checking comprehension, explaining, (self-) assessment of language use, praise

iTEO: a space for translanguaging and learning

- Role of the learning context:
  - voice, authorship, autonomy, control, dialogue, reflection
  - motivation to produce texts for an audience
- Range of linguistic features used and developed by children
- Individual differences: lack of vocabulary
- Safety space in which to communicate, try out and perform in new languages
- Vehicle that moves the child towards competence

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
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References

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