

Book Review: Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education

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Abstract

Translanguaging as a new term for bilinguals and multilinguals has attracted many researchers' and teachers' attention. The publication of *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and education in 2014* by Ofelia García and Li Wei gives a quite throughout introduction. This thesis concentrates on the reviews based on the book *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and education in 2014* by Ofelia García and Li Wei.

Keywords

Translanguaging; Language; Bilingualism and education; Book review.

1. Introduction

Under the influence of the trend of globalization, the continuous integration of various languages has produced a multilingual environment, which causes the teaching and use of languages to become more and more flexible and complex. It is a great challenge for teachers and researchers to find a suitable approach for bilingual or multilingual students to teach and learn languages. The emergence of translanguaging brings new direction to language teaching and learning. As a new and developing term, the emergence of translanguaging helps teachers break the traditional model of teaching bilingual and multilingual students and encourages teachers to make full use of students' abilities to develop language. Some bilingual and multilingual students and teachers may have some questions and concerns about the use of translanguaging in teaching and education. The book *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and education* will help people know more about translanguaging and change people's thinking of translanguaging and encourage the students and teachers make full use of Translanguaging in the education field.

The book *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and education* was published in 2014. As the leading figures in the study of translanguaging, Ofelia García and Li Wei give a pretty detailed description about translanguaging and the application of translanguaging in education context in this book. This book includes two parts. The first part consists of chapter 1 and chapter 2. The second part comprises chapter 3 to chapter 7. The topic of the first part is language and translanguaging. The second part is education and translanguaging. In chapter 1, this book gives a reflection on language, which also leads to the detailed information about languaging. Readers are able to learn the definition of languaging. Languaging has developed in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. The term languaging in sociolinguistics focuses on the language practice of language users while that in psycholinguistics focuses on the speaker's creative and critical use of linguistic resources to mediate cognitively complex activities (Swain and Deters, 2007). This chapter gives a clear distinguish about the focus of these two fields on languaging. Besides, it presents the definition of bilingual, multilingual and plurilingual and it also introduces the difference and similarity among these terms. Ofelia García and Li Wei state that the term "languaging" is not suitable for the complex multilingual situation, so they support to use

the term “translanguaging” to describe the complex practices of speaker. In chapter 2, it traces the origin of translanguaging and introduces the development of translanguaging. The term translanguaging was first coined by Cen Williams (1994, 1996). However, different researchers have different understanding of the term translanguaging, so the definition of translanguaging is vague. The writers agree with most of the definition made by Canagarajah (2011) that translanguaging is “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system”. It also describes the difference of translanguaging and code-switching to make readers not confused with these two terms. Then it also introduces the relationship of translanguaging with Dynamic systems theory, writing and multimodalities. The big function of translanguaging is that it can inspire creativity which is quite important in education. At the end of this chapter, writers also list many terms that is related to translanguaging. The readers are able to master the differences between translanguaging and these related terms. In chapter 3, it introduces the traditional forms of bilingual education and some information of monolingual education. It also deduces that it is inevitable to use some flexible approaches or strategies to teach students. This chapter has listed some good examples for readers. In chapter 4, it reviews the development of a theory of translanguaging in education context. It also explicitly states the influence of translanguaging to the education field. In chapter 5, it tells the readers how students can make use of translanguaging in their learning process. It briefly describes three cases where students use translanguaging to help them to learn. The first case describes that children (5-6 years old) learn a new language by using translanguaging. The second case describes a bilingual graduate student who uses translanguaging in English writing. The third case describes how Japanese American students who are at different of the continuum use translanguaging in the writing and reading process. All these cases have the function to make the readers learn about the advantages of translanguaging in the learning field. In chapter 5, it presents how teachers in different context can use translanguaging to help them to teach in different kinds of classrooms. It first introduces five cases that use translanguaging as a pedagogy by bilingual teachers at different points of the bilingual continuum in the United States. In these cases, the teacher use translanguaging to teach English reading and writing, math, social studies, science and English language art. There is one thing that teachers who use translanguaging pedagogy need to note that teachers need to have the willingness to learn and co-learn in the teaching process. It then introduces some examples where monolingual teachers use translanguaging in the teaching process. Translanguaging also can play a role co-learning and sociocritical literacy, which have been proved by the examples presented in this chapter. In chapter 7, Ofelia García and Li Wei summarize the different ways where translanguaging is used by teachers in the school and three categories of translanguaging strategy. Translanguaging is inevitable in the learning and teaching process, so it is needed to be acknowledged by the school, especially in the public school. This chapter also presents a part to describe a project that leverages translanguaging in the City University in New York. This project may give a full proof about the advantages of using translanguaging in the education context to the school leaders and teachers. About the potential advantages of translanguaging, writers of this book also present four potential educational advantages of translanguaging discussed by Colin Baker 2001 in page 64. There are also two challenges for teachers to use translanguaging in the teaching process. The first challenge is how to do translanguaging in teaching and the second challenge is how to use translanguaging in assessment.

All in all, this book is well-organized and gives readers a clear description about the origin and its development and it also tells readers how translanguaging is different from other terms that are used in the language study. Translanguaging can be adopted to describe the languaging practice of bilingualisms and multilingualism and it also can be used as an approach to leverage in the education. Translanguaging has broken the traditional ideas in the education context.

After reading this book, the reader can have a confidence to use translanguaging. This book is recommended to the people who are interested in translanguaging. After reading this book, readers can really have a deep understanding of translanguaging and its relationship with education. For beginners in language studies, it can also help you learn more about the field of bilingualism and multilingualism. For teachers in different classroom contexts, they can flexibly apply the translanguaging in their classroom by analyzing and learning the teaching examples in this book.

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