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(Trans)languaging-for-learning: A perspective from the South

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Background: While the concept of translanguaging has gained significant traction in education in multilingual contexts, it is also debated and contested. Claims are made about what translanguaging can and cannot do, how different it might be from code-switching, whether it arises from a single repertoire of language resources or from use of separate languages, and whether it is detrimental to or supportive of the development and inclusion of marginalised languages.

Objectives: In this article we consider what these debates might mean in the South African context and how translanguaging might be different in South Africa with its particular racialised history of marginalisation of African languages. Drawing on epistemologies of the South, we align with the argument that there are multiple multilingualisms. We argue for (trans)languaging pedagogies that embrace both more fixed or monolingual uses of named languages as well as fluid, multilingual use of repertoires.

Method: We will review early conceptualisations of translanguaging, showing how these are born out of different contexts as well as how translanguaging is taken up in South African research. We will draw on three examples of fixed and fluid pedagogical translanguaging to show what is possible within a South African classroom context.

Results: The three examples show that (trans)languaging-for-learning goes beyond communicating bilingually in a classroom and involves planned meaning negotiation.

Conclusion: In (trans)languaging-for-learning, the emphasis is on using one's full linguistic and semiotic repertoire in order to develop and show understanding of learning, rather than to demonstrate mastery of the use of standard named languages.

Contribution: The article expands translanguaging theory by theorising (trans)languaging-for-learning from a Southern perspective.

Keywords: translanguaging; multilingual education; language ideologies; Anglonormativity; languaging-for-learning.

Introduction

(Trans)languaging-for-learning brings together three concepts from different disciplines: translanguaging (TL), languaging and learning. It explicitly aims to synthesise developments and insights into our understanding of language and language use from the disciplines of critical applied and sociolinguistics as well as bilingual education with a socio-cultural approach to learning. Although the concept of TL is contested, as is the use of TL in classrooms, we will argue that it is crucial in order to maximise bilingual and multilingual[1] children's opportunities to use language (and other semiotic resources) for learning, or to engage in languaging-for-learning. Our aim in this article is to review the origins of the concept of TL and to outline how it has been taken up in research in South African classrooms as well as how we have taken it up in our work with teachers and learners. We will argue that TL not only describes the heteroglossic nature of language use but is itself a hybrid concept, drawing from both Southern and Northern experiences of multilingual languaging and encompassing notions of named languages as well as fluid languaging. The appeal of the concept in South Africa we argue arises from attempts to interrupt and shift deep-seated colonial ideologies of language in the schooling system which position African language-speaking children and teachers as deficient rather than as resourceful bilingual and multilingual languagers.

1. We use the terms bilingual and multilingual to refer to speakers of more than one named language and bilingual when we are referring to an academic field of study, for example bilingual education, as well as to examples where the resources of two languages are being used, meshed or separately. We see translanguaging as a communicative practice of bilinguals and multilinguals and as a strategy of dynamic or flexible bilingual education.

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We begin with a review of the concepts of languaging, TL and learning from a sociocultural perspective of bilingual and multilingual education. We then discuss the take-up of TL in South African classroom-based research as well as our view on the appeal of TL in our context. In the final part of the article we consider three different examples of the use of TL in classrooms, not all of which are fully supportive of children's learning. We draw on these examples to identify important principles of TL-for-learning and show how both integration or fluidity of languaging and language separation are useful in supporting learning.

Background
Languaging

In languaging-for-learning, our focus is on the process of using language and other semiotic resources to make meaning, and 'how languaging-for-learning can be enabled when learners are allowed to access the full range of resources in their linguistic repertoires (Busch 2012), as well as to work multimodally' (Guzula, McKinney & Tyler 2016:213) We can say it enables the full use of learners' semiotic resources. (Lin 2015). In an earlier explanation of their use of languaging, Guzula et al. (2016) trace the concept in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. Merril Swain is well known for her contribution in language learning on the need not just for comprehensible input (exposure to language that the learner can understand), but comprehensible output (learners' own production, both spoken and written), later replacing the concept 'comprehensible output' with languaging (Swain 2006). Emphasising its origin in Vygotskian approaches to the relationship between language and thought, Swain and Watanabe (2013) explain languaging thus:

> [W]e can think of languaging as an activity, a 'process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language' (p. 1)

Swain (2006) continues:

> [A]nd as such, it is part of the process of learning. The verb languaging forces us to understand language as a process rather than as an object. (p. 98)

Sociolinguists such as Jørgensen (Jørgensen et al. 2011) used the terms 'languaging' and polylanguaging in their research on the highly diverse or heteroglossic spoken and written language use of teenagers in multi-ethnic urban Denmark and Northwestern Europe. They used languaging as a descriptor for what young people do with and through language in their daily lives. While not focused on the use of languaging-for-learning, Jørgensen et al.'s emphasis on language as process rather than as (countable, autonomous) object aligns with the psycholinguistic use of the term. Both García and Li (2014) as well as Veronelli (2015) draw on the Chilean biologist Maturana's notion of languaging as a verb to counter the colonial invention of 'languages' as nouns and to think about communicating outside of the logic of coloniality. Following Maturana (1999:44, cited in Veronelli 2015:122), languaging is 'the way in which human beings live together as they live together'. One of the implications of this that Veronelli outlines is that 'languaging is not an instrument of representation but of bringing about and moving in, a space of coexistence' (Veronelli 2015:122). Languaging in this use emphasises a relational ontology in which people use language to coexist.

Translanguaging

Drawing on the notion of languaging, TL also emphasises the fluidity of bilingual and multilingual language use, and the process of communicating. Li (2011) explains that the 'trans' should be understood as going beyond the notion of language, both in terms of the idea of fixed or bounded named languages and to acknowledge the multiple modes beyond language that humans use when engaged in meaning-making (e.g. gestures, facial expression, eye gaze). Translanguaging (Creese & Blackledge 2010; García 2007, 2009; García & Li 2014) is one example of several new terminologies developed by sociolinguists and applied linguists over the last 15 years in their attempts to make sense of the increasingly diverse and complex nature of multilingual and multimodal communication in a range of spaces, physical and virtual as well as social and geo-political contexts. Other terms include polylanguaging (Jørgensen et al. 2011) and trans-semiotising (Lin 2015), code-meshing (Canagarajah 2011), translingualism (ed. Canagarajah 2013) and metrolingualism (Pennycook & Otsuji 2015).

Translanguaging describes language practices where bilingual and multilingual speakers draw on their full linguistic repertoires without concern for the boundaries of named languages in order to co-construct meaning. This happens spontaneously as a naturally occurring phenomenon in a range of domains (in linguistic terms, the use is unmarked), as well as deliberately, as in the case of pedagogical TL in classrooms (Probyn 2015, 2019). The research literature on TL within and outside of educational contexts has grown rapidly with Google Scholar producing over 34 000 hits in 0.4 secs in a recent search (01 April 2024). Rather than a comprehensive review, our focus here is on the development and use of the concept in early influential publications that have been highly cited, and that have shaped the take-up of TL in education (García 2009:8228 citations; Creese & Blackledge 2010:3200 citations; Li 2011:2332; Canagarajah 2011:1979 citations, Google Scholar 23 April 2024). It is important to note that all four of these scholars, García, Li, Creese and Blackledge, based in the geographical North, have researched language practices of marginalised speakers, making sense of the kinds of bilingual and multilingual languaging that is not valued in mainstream institutions.

Attributing their use of TL to García (2007), Creese and Blackledge (2010) describe languaging in classrooms and assemblies of complementary language schools in the UK. They show how what are considered separate named languages (such as Mandarin and English or Punjabi and English) are meshed in teachers' and children's talk without diglossic separation (i.e. languages were integrated spontaneously and not used for different domains or for different functions). Examples of classroom talk illustrate

that 'it is the combination of both languages that keeps the task moving forward' (Creese & Blackledge 2010:110). Naming of separate languages as well as meshed languaging is used.

Seldom acknowledged is the significant influence that Makoni and Pennycook's (eds. 2007) edited collection *Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages*, and particularly their emphasis on the invention or social construction of languages as bounded and autonomous objects, had on García's theorising of TL. Most scholars acknowledge the origin of TL in Welsh bilingualism researcher Cen Williams's work on *trawsieithu*, followed by Colin Baker's (2003) translation of the term as TL. *Trawsieithu*/TL was used to describe alternation of input and output languages in English and Welsh bilingual classrooms (e.g. reading a text in Welsh and providing written answers in English). However, in García's foreword (2007:xiii) to Makoni and Pennycook's book, she argues that 'in disinventing language, Makoni and Pennycook go way beyond William's pedagogical innovation' in their notion of 'translingual language practices' as they ask readers to consider what language education might 'look like if we no longer posited the existence of separate languages'. García (2007) discusses the profound ways in which disinventing languages, or recognising the socially constructed nature of named languages, challenged her own thinking on bilingual education, which emphasised the separation of languages, and the foundations of this field. García and Lin (2016:5) explain that García's (2009) development of TL 'begins to extend the Welsh TL concept as it questions, based on Makoni and Pennycook's influential 2007 book, the concept of language that had been the foundation of all bilingual education enterprise'. Makoni's (1999) research on the colonial invention of African languages, and his specific argument that the official, constitutionally recognised indigenous languages in South Africa are colonial scripts, is thus central to García's fluid theorising of languaging captured in the term TL. This is an interesting example of how knowledge is constructed in dialogue between North and South, making TL a theoretically hybrid concept that brings together empirical work from the global South and North.

Li (2011) argues that the use of TL or going 'between' and 'beyond' different linguistic structures and modalities constructs a 'translanguaging space'. In his view (Li 2011), TL creates:

> [*S*]ocial space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, and making it into a lived experience. (p. 1223)

Li Wei attributes his development of the TL concept *not* to Welsh bilingual education, but rather as arising from the notion of languaging in psycholinguistics and as used by Becker in attempts to move away from language as noun, countable object, to language as verb, or languaging. There

are important synergies between Becker's theorising of language as verb and Makoni and Pennycook's rejection of the enumerability of autonomous named languages. It is thus not surprising that García and Li (2014) collaborated to theorise TL not only as a way to describe fluid languaging of bilinguals and multilinguals but as an approach to dynamic or flexible bilingual education. García and Li (2014) of TL space, describing and contrasting two kinds of TL spaces: adaptive and established TL spaces. In an established TL space, the expectation is that people will use their full linguistic repertoire, which is positioned as legitimate and welcome. In an adaptive TL space, bilingual or multilingual languaging is not seen as legitimate but as a 'necessary evil'.

García (2009:44) developed TL in an attempt to emphasise the artificial or socially constructed nature of language boundaries, and to more accurately describe the ways in which bilinguals and multilinguals engage in 'multilingual discourse practices'. Two frequently cited definitions of TL are 'the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages' (García 2009:141) and the 'deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named … languages' (Otheguy, García & Reid 2015). Canagarajah (2011:401) refers to 'teachable' strategies of TL for students' writing in higher education, explaining TL as 'the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system'. To the extent that it emphasises the porous nature of language boundaries, and the existence of a single unified linguistic repertoire, TL is ideologically distinct from code-switching even though the language practices described are not necessarily different.

An ideological difference between TL and code-switching is that code-switching relies on the possibility of clearly identifying different codes (or languages) that are often used for different purposes (functional diglossia). For example, as defined by Myers-Scotton (1993:vii), code-switching is 'the use of two or more languages within a conversation', and according to McCormick (2001:447) it is 'the juxtaposition of elements from two (or more) languages or dialects'. Code-switching as concept assumes that:

- Two or more named languages are identifiable in the discourse.
- Speakers are drawing on resources from distinct languages.
- Speakers have competence in the 'individual' languages they are drawing on.

We use two examples from Probyn's (2009, 2015) research in isiXhosa-English bilingual Grade 8 science lessons to problematise the notion of identifying and quantifying the use of separate codes:

Teacher: When we say iron filings are magnetic what do we mean by that? What does the magnet do to the iron filings? *Izenza ntoni* [what does it do]? (Probyn 2009:123)

In the example above, it is easy to describe the first two questions as spoken in the named language English, while the third as spoken in isiXhosa.

Teacher: If *amanzi siyawagalela ejagini athath' i*-shape *yalo* jug [if *we pour water into a jug they take the* shape *of that jug*]. (Probyn 2015:226)

In this second example, while we can identify the use of isiXhosa and English resources, it is more difficult to categorise 'ejagini' (into the jug) as an isiXhosa or English word, and similarly for 'i-shape' which we would prefer to represent as 'ishape'. This kind of meshing of codes and resultant fluidity of languaging has led to many researchers in different parts of the world becoming uncomfortable with the idea of clearly identifiable codes as assumed in code-switching. In analyses that quantify the 'amount' of a particular language used by a teacher (e.g. teacher talk is 30% isiXhosa and 70% English), how are meshed terms such as 'ejagini' counted? Both of the examples from science lessons above could be described as code-switching but the use of TL as a descriptive term emphasises that the focus is not on what code is used for what particular function, or on identifying named languages, but rather on what the speaker is communicating using their full repertoire.

Translanguaging as a descriptive concept as well as its use in education is not without critique. Jaspers and Madsen (2019:235) argue that conceptual over-reach in the use of the term to serve 'descriptive, ontological, pedagogical and political purposes' has led to confusion. They also caution against transformative claims for fluid languaging in education where TL can be seen as a threat to the promotion of marginalised or less powerful languages (see also Bonnin & Unamuno 2021; Hamman 2018). In the context of strengthening the minority language Basque in relation to Spanish, Cenoz and Gorter (2017) call for the design of 'functional breathing spaces' for the monolingual use of Basque. Such monolingual spaces protect opportunities for students to learn and use marginalised languages, such as Basque in a context of Spanish dominance. However, monolingual languaging using the minoritised language takes place within the same programme that also creates spaces encouraging the fluid use of learners' full linguistic repertoires through TL. There is thus space in education programmes for both fixed (monolingual) and fluid (translingual) stances and pedagogies. Similarly in the USA context, Hamman (2018) calls for critical TL spaces where opportunity to learn the less familiar and less powerful language (in this case Spanish in an English-dominant context) is protected. Ramadiro (2022) argues that a particular concern for the use of TL in post-colonial contexts is an assumption that learners will have an adequate level of exposure to the dominant language, in our case English, in their daily lives, as do speakers of minority languages in the USA and UK. This highlights the dual pedagogical challenge that we face in a context of English dominance of providing access to proficiency in English as well as the curriculum through meaningful learning.

Learning

Underpinning (trans)languaging-for-learning is a socio-cultural approach to learning which recognises the importance of talk (and writing) for learning (Barnes 1992). Giving learners opportunities to formulate and express their developing ideas in their own words, or engaging in what Barnes has called 'exploratory talk', is central to their internalising of new knowledge. Exploratory talk is contrasted with 'presentational talk' through which learners display their knowledge. Barnes points out that presentational talk tends to dominate in classrooms. Especially in contexts like South Africa where children are learning through English and prevented from using all their familiar language resources, their talk is often reduced to rote repetition or short one- and two-word answers (see the example of Grade 4 learners' choral production of the fixed wording 'matter is anything that occupies space' without developing conceptual understanding of what that means in McKinney (2017). Exploring ideas and 'working on understanding' (Barnes 1992:125) is impossible to do in an unfamiliar language. Learner talk and writing also plays a significant role in their appropriation or learning of scientific discourses, mastery of which is essential for them to display their knowledge through discipline-specific language (Hicks 1995). From a sociocultural perspective, '[*t*]hrough meaningful classroom activity, children appropriate the discourses that situationally define "what counts" as knowing within disciplines' (Hicks 1995:60). Meaningful activities depend on learners being able to use their familiar language resources.

Extending the idea of learners 'appropriating' the discourses that count as knowing, Gibbons's (2006) research on English language learners in Australian English-medium classrooms shows the importance of teachers supporting learners by building bridges from informal language use (which she characterises as spoken-like) to producing academic discourse (in Gibbons's terms, written-like language). Tyler's (2016, 2023) research shows that this is not a unidirectional process that moves from producing informal language towards scientific register, but rather a process of register-meshing and constant moves back and forth between codes (also called languages) and informal as well as scientific registers. This process requires conscious attention and planning from teachers to enable active participation from learners.

The take-up of translanguaging in South African classroom-based research

In 2016, the journal *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* published a special issue edited by Leketi Makalela and Dumisile Mkhize (2016) entitled 'Translanguaging in the 21st century: New pathways for epistemic access and identity formation'. Building on decades of research into code-switching and other bilingual and

multilingual practices, the six studies presented in the special issue constituted a collection of early Southern African research drawing on the construct of TL. In the first paper, Makalela (2016) theorises TL by drawing on the African value system and epistemology of ubuntu to propose 'ubuntu translanguaging'. The pillars of ubuntu TL are: simultaneous horizontal and vertical flows between speakers, the interdependence of languages and the incompleteness of linguistic entities on their own. The remaining five papers present empirical studies of TL in classrooms in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Two papers report on classrooms that García and Li (2014) describe as 'adaptive TL spaces' in that participants draw spontaneously on TL without making explicit the use of more than one language as a pedagogical device or having the official go-ahead to do so. Mwaniki (2016) presents three autoethnographic accounts of adaptive TL pedagogy in a mother-tongue education programme in Kenya, English language and literature classes in a Kenyan secondary school and a parallel-medium BA programme in a South African university. Mkhize (2016) demonstrates how isiZulu-English emergent bilingual children employed TL to gain access to the English additional language curriculum and affirm their multiple identities. The other three papers describe 'established TL spaces' (García & Li 2014) where TL is explicitly encouraged and recognised as a legitimate pedagogical approach. Guzula et al. (2016) report on two spaces in South African schooling where teachers and learners employ TL in a deliberate way to enable epistemic access to literacy and Mathematics. Mbirimi-Hungwe (2016) presents a study of TL pedagogy in an academic literacy course at university. Motlhaka and Makalela (2016) report on TL in writing by Sesotho-English bilingual university students.

Translanguaging studies in South African schooling contexts have focused on a range of grade levels and academic subjects. In a primary school context, Krause and Prinsloo (2016) draw on classroom discourse data and interviews to show that despite teachers' productive use of TL in class, monoglossic ideological constraints work against the full realisation of the learning potential that TL offers. Foregrounding similar monoglossic constraints, Makoe (2018:13) analyses African language-speaking children's agentic use of TL 'to reposition themselves as meaning-makers' in a multilingual Grade 3 classroom in Johannesburg where only English is valorised. Kerfoot and Bello-Nonjengele (2014) focused on multilingual primary school learners' language practices in the classroom and on the playground in one school in Cape Town. They argued that TL carried multivocality and enabled the children to try out different speech functions for different languages and to resist essentialist identity positionings around race and language.

Probyn (2015, 2019) and Tyler (2023) have conducted studies on TL in science teaching and learning in high schools. Probyn (2015) draws on the concept of pedagogical TL, which she defines as the strategic and purposeful use of learners' home language as well as English for curriculum access. She describes one teacher out of eight using pedagogical TL, while the others switched between languages in a more spontaneous way and not often to address the science content under discussion. In a later paper Probyn (2019) showed how this teacher developed the science content through translanguaged dialogic exchanges with his learners. Probyn's research, and the notion of pedagogical TL more broadly, underscores that it is not only the presence of TL in classrooms, but *how* it is used that determines whether it is beneficial for learning (see also McKinney & Tyler 2019; Mendoza et al. 2023 for this argument). Tyler's study (2023) traced a group of Grade 9 learners' TL in a traditional science classroom setting and an after-school study group intervention. These learners engaged in subversive spontaneous TL practices in class where an English-only policy was strictly enforced by the teacher. In the study group, which constituted an established TL space, they engaged in pedagogical TL both orally and in writing. When reflecting on both contexts, the learners expressed an unresolved discomfort with their own use of their home language, isiXhosa, in a context that privileged English.

In higher education where academics have more autonomy to design their pedagogy and assessment, there have been a number of innovative interventions that have experimented with pedagogical TL in established TL spaces. Madiba's (2014) research shows students deepening their understanding of concepts in economics through debating the translation of terminology in concept glossaries (Madiba 2014). Hurst and Mona (2017) describe the use of TL in lectures, tutorials, online interaction spaces and assessments in a course for an extended degree programme that aimed to disrupt English monolingualism and position multilingual students as linguistically resourceful. Antia and Dyers (2019) designed and researched multilingual pedagogies using English, isiXhosa, Kaaps and Afrikaans in a third-year linguistics course on multilingualism where TL in the Kaaps version of lectures was especially productive for developing students' understanding. In her work with multilingual pre-service science teachers, Abdulatief (2022) describes translingual workshops in which she aimed to model TL pedagogies for science classrooms.

The attraction of translanguaging theory in South Africa

Though far from exhaustive, the review above evidences how widely the concept of TL has been taken up by researchers of multilingual language practices and interventions in South African education. This is despite a significant existing history of groundbreaking work in multilingual education, not least that captured in the 1995 publication *Multilingual Education for South Africa* edited by Heugh, Siegrühn and Plüddemann. There are also illuminating accounts of biliteracy and multiliteracies interventions such as an English/isiXhosa biliteracy project in a Cape Town Primary school (Bloch 2002), an intervention with Soweto high school students which resulted in a published translingual poetry collection (Newfield &

Maungedzo 2006) and a pioneering Sepedi/English bilingual Bachelor of Arts degree in Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies (CEMS) running for over 20 years at the University of Limpopo (Joseph & Ramani 2012). Indeed, in an early publication on TL in pedagogy, Canagarajah (2011:2) cautions against ignoring the long histories of multilingual language practices in Africa and Asia which clearly predate the development of TL as theory of language and pedagogical practice. The question that arises then is why has the specific concept of TL been so widely taken up? Our answer to this lies in recognising the powerful monolingual language ideologies that have marginalised and excluded the language repertoires typical of African language-speaking children and teachers as well as dismissed teachers' innovative bilingual and multilingual strategies. Such ideologies have prevented implementation of the post-apartheid language in education policy (1997) which promotes multilingualism and the use of more than language of learning and teaching (LOLT). Furthermore, monolingual ideologies have created a context where many education departments and officials as well as school leadership are hostile to the use of African languages and bilingual and multilingual strategies, further entrenching colonial language ideologies.

With the introduction of the term 'coloniality of language', Veronelli (2015) describes how colonised people were denied the opportunity to be 'communicative agents' and shows our entrapment within a racialised, colonial ontology of language that renders the colonised and racialised as voiceless. Writing about the relationship between English and multilingualism, García and Lin (2018) also highlight the racialisation of different kinds of languaging and the resulting hierarchy of multilingualisms developed through colonialism. Elite or 'authoritative literate multilingualism' in standard written European languages (including the ability to write these languages) was contrasted with indigenous multilingualism in local languages, devalued as a 'linguistic jumble' (García & Lin 2018:81). The perceived superiority of authoritative written multilingualism in European languages is co-constructed against the 'inferiority' of racialised oral multilingualism in local languages.

Kenyan scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo also explains how the perceived superiority of European languages and perceived inferiority of African languages was co-constructed during colonisation, arguing that the glorification or overvaluing of English required the 'humiliation of African languages' (Wade 2018 interview of Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo, n.p.). He concludes that the exclusion of African languages from formal education in post-colonial African contexts is a direct result of colonial language ideologies:

> The language of power is English and that becomes internalized. … You normalize the abnormal and the absurdities of colonialism, and turn them into a norm from which you operate. Then you don't even think about it. (Wade 2018:n.p.)

Anglonormativity, the expectation that people are or should be proficient in English and are deficient, even deviant, if not, thus the compulsory command of English, saturates the education system whether in curriculum and assessment policy or classroom practice (McKinney 2017).

Colonial and Anglonormative language ideologies have also resulted in the severe stigmatisation of bilingual and multilingual practices described as code-switching. A familiar description from Probyn's (2009) research was a teacher equating her use of code-switching to 'smuggling the vernacular into the classroom'. Researchers have also reported on the negative association between the use of African languages as LOLT and apartheid Bantu education which imposed a particular form of mother-tongue education throughout primary school (e.g. Plüddeman 2015). Apartheid ideologies of racial purity were also applied to language. In *The Right to Learn*, Christie quotes from an early pamphlet on Christian National Education, the system implemented for White learners during apartheid:

> We want no mixing of languages, no mixing of cultures, no mixing of religions, and no mixing of races. The struggle for the Christian and National school still lies before us. (SPROCAS 1971:74 in Christie 2006:174)

In the face of these powerful monolingual language ideologies, TL theory has offered the opportunity to destigmatise hybrid or heteroglossic language use and to reposition teachers as linguistically resourceful. As a strategy of bilingual and multilingual education, it has also enabled researchers to transcend the either/or binary of monolingual approaches in 'mother tongue education' (MTE) or English-only education, offering a strategy that draws on both of these and more. In a post-apartheid and post-colonial South Africa which has yet to overcome structural racial inequality, the explicit focus on relations between language, power and race by theorists of TL such as García and Li has enormous appeal. Canagarajah (2011:2) has described TL as 'a matter of affirmative action' in applied linguistics where monolingual norms have shaped assumptions and descriptions of language use. Translanguaging has also been aligned with interrupting raciolinguistic ideologies which consistently construct the language practices of racialised individuals as deficient (Rosa & Flores 2017), and thus with a decolonial, anti-racist stance (García et al. 2021).

In our view, although (trans)languaging-for-learning is central to enabling epistemic access as well as to challenging and changing the marginalisation and exclusion of African languages from education, it is not enough. In a context of erasure, where African languages have been deliberately excluded from formal education, it is necessary to recognise named languages (such as isiXhosa, Setswana and others) in order to validate their inclusion and use, as well as the use of so-called non-standard varieties. This could be described as 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1988), a feminist political tactic which strategically deploys the category of women even as it is critiqued. This also recognises that although languaging in everyday practice does not fit the neat boundaries of named languages, and although languages are socially constructed,

they have significant material effects. Lemke and Lin (2022) draw attention to the distinction between first-order and second-order languaging (originally introduced by Love and expanded by Thibault 2017). First-order languaging describes the actual, fluid, embodied practices in which humans engage in the flow of communication with each other: language as verb. Translanguaging is informed by first-order languaging. Second-order languaging describes representations of language as patterned system or code: language as noun, or a more stable object. However, while second-order languaging can be strategically necessary to make language practices visible, it can also be used to assert the exclusive use of 'pure', standard languages as the only legitimate languaging in education. Being conscious of the relationship between language and power and teaching children about this relationship is thus an important feature of critical approaches to TL.

From the perspective of Southern epistemologies, Makoni and Pennycook (2024) argue that we need to pluralise our understanding of language itself, accepting different ontologies of language, as well as of multilingualisms, recognising that multilingual practices differ significantly around the world (see also Heugh & Stroud 2022). Makalela (2016, 2018) theorises multilingual languaging in rural and urban South African spaces with his concept 'ubuntu translanguaging'. He draws on a relational ontology which foregrounds the 'infinite relations of dependency between various linguistic resources employed in classroom discourse' (Makalela 2018:238). Makalela applies the 'African value system of ubuntu (I x we) I am because you are' to argue that in local multilingualism one 'language' is incomplete without the others, emphasising fluidity and the 'porous nature of boundaries "between" named languages' (Makalela 2018:238). Having reviewed TL as a concept in bilingual and multilingual education as well as its take-up in South Africa, we now move to an analysis of the use of language and semiotic resources for learning in different classrooms.

When does (trans)languaging support learning?

As we have argued before, while TL:

> [H]as the *potential* to liberate multilinguals from the tyranny of monoglossic and monomodal conceptions of communicative practice, … in order for translanguaging to be transformative *and* to be productive for learning, *translanguaging as pedagogy* must be deliberately designed. (McKinney & Tyler 2019:146)

A crucial first step in taking up a decolonial, anti-racist stance is to make minoritised and excluded African languages count in the classroom. (Trans)languaging-for-learning positions African languages as legitimate resources for learning as well as for constructing and representing knowledge. Below we present and analyse three brief examples of the use of TL in the classroom, the first from Grade 4 Social Sciences in a school where children have just officially transitioned from home language LOLT to English LOLT, the second from Grade 9 Mathematics and the third from Grade 8 Science in schools

where the official LOLT is English. In all three examples the teacher and learners share a home language of isiXhosa. In our view the first example does not necessarily constitute (trans)languaging-*for-learning* even though the teacher is communicating bilingually. The second and third examples, while working differently with fluid (first-order) and fixed (second-order) notions of language, we identify as using TL-for-learning.

Example 1: Translanguaging in teacher talk in a Grade 4 social science lesson

The very brief extract from a transcript of classroom talk in an official English LOLT Grade 4 Social Sciences lesson shown in Table 1 is illustrative of the interaction throughout the longer plenary session. This followed a tight initiation and response pattern with initiations from the teacher signalled by rising intonation, and short one- or two-word responses from the learners in chorus. The teacher is TL using the resources of isiXhosa and English and in turn 24 is making use of familiar language to explain the new concept of health services. However, the children's talk is limited to short one- or two-word responses mostly in monolingual English. The children are not given opportunities to explain or elaborate on their answers using their own full linguistic repertoire. It seems that the goal of this interaction is for the children to learn, through repetition, to produce the English term 'Health services' an example of presentational talk (Barnes 1992). The potential of TL here is curtailed by the fact that it is limited to the *teacher's* oral discourse, not giving *learners* opportunities to work on their own understanding (Barnes 1992) through either exploratory talk or writing using their full linguistic repertoire. This does not mean that the teacher's translanguaged explanation and initiation in turn 24 is not helpful for learners, nor that they should be speaking monolingually in English. Rather, we draw attention to the fact that (trans)languaging-*for-learning* requires more intentional design and active engagement and participation from the learners in talk and

TABLE 1: Extract from Grade 4 social science lesson on resources and services.

| Original discourse	Monolingual translation
24. Teacher: Hospitals. And…? Kukho ii-equipment ezinkulu abazisebenzisayo pha ekliniki nasesibhedlele, Neh? Ufakwe i-oxygens. Xa ugulayo ufakwe i-oxygens, plus neenaliti, ne…nantoni? Nabasebenzi phayana. Mamela. When we speak of the clinics, the hospital, the equipments, the workers sithi zii-health //services// [I]	[Hospitals. And? They use huge equipment in the clinics and hospitals. Right? You get given oxygen. When you're sick they give you oxygen, injections and…what else? There are also workers there. Listen. When we speak of the clinics, the hospital, the equipment, the workers, we call that health services.]
25. Learners: //Services// [R]	
26. Teacher: What are they? [I]	
27. Learners: Health services. [R]	
28. Teacher: Zintoni? [I]	[What are they?]
29. Learners: Health services. [R]	
30. Teacher: Zintoni? [I]	[What are they?]
31. Learners: Health services. [R]	
32. Teacher: Sithi zintoni? [I]	[What do we call them?]
33. Learners: Health services.[R]	
34. Teacher: Uthi wena "health", kanti thina sithi ntoni? [I]	[You call it "health", but we call it…?]
35. Learners: Health services. [R]	

Source: Photograph taken by Robyn Tyler (co-author)
Note: [I], Initiation; [R], Response; //, indicates overlapping speech; (…), indicates a pause; ?, indicates rising intonation.

writing. In this case a teacher is doing what they can to develop learners' understanding in a system where code-switching is seen as illegitimate, thus working in what we have described earlier, following García and Li (2014), as an 'adaptive TL space'. Legitimising the teacher's oral TL is an important first step in enabling teachers to build from these languaging practices to use TL for learning.

Example 2: (Trans)languaging-for-learning activity using fluid languaging in a Grade 9 mathematics class

In contrast to example 1, in this example, we show how TL is used to support learning in a Grade 9 mathematics class. The teacher, Ms Bonde, was involved in a Zenex-funded intervention programme, Languaging-for-Learning or L4L, through which teachers were introduced to different strategies of pedagogical TL and supported to use these strategies in their teaching.

Figure 1 is a photograph of a Grade 9 learner's (Noluvuyo) Mathematics exercise book. Noluvuyo's teacher, Ms Bonde, often employs a 'do now' activity at the start of the lesson. The intention with a 'do now' is to stimulate the learners' mathematics thinking through solving a problem that uses knowledge from a previously studied topic. In this case Ms Bonde has chosen to use 'think aloud writing' where learners make their thinking visible through a verbal written explanation of the procedure they conducted to solve the problem. Ms Bonde instructed the learners to use any language resources they liked to write their explanation. In this way she constructs an established TL space in the classroom. Noluvuyo has correctly solved for x and explains her procedure verbally using TL. In the spoken-like register that Noluvuyo uses to get this learning task done, she employs discipline-specific words in English (e.g. 'variable', 'sign' and 'add') and verbs describing her mental procedure in isiXhosa ('ndabeka', 'ndamsa', 'ndathatha'). In so doing, Noluvuyo eases the mental load involved in the task by using a meshed register with which she is familiar in the oral mode and transfers this into writing to complete the task quickly. Translingualism here supports the 'register-meshing' (Tyler 2016) Noluvuyo uses to bring together the scientific register of mathematics in English with more informal description using resources of isiXhosa.
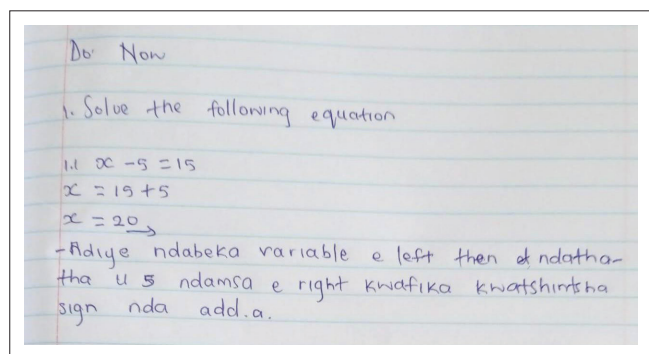
Source: Photograph taken by Robyn Tyler (co-author)
Note: Standard English gloss: I kept the variable on the left then I took the number 5 and put it on the right. Then, I changed the sign and added *the numbers*.
FIGURE 1: 'Do Now' Maths writing activity from Noluvuyo's Mathematics exercise book.

Noluvuyo's languaging resonates with Makalela's description of ubuntu TL where one 'language' is incomplete without the other. While Noluvuyo writes using fluid languaging, what can be described as first-order language conceptions (Lemke & Lin 2022), Ms Bonde's instruction to write their explanation in any language nevertheless draws on the second-order conception of language as named object.

Example 3: (Trans)languaging-for-learning activity which separates languages from a Grade 8 science lesson

Like example 2, this example from a Grade 8 Natural science lesson shows another instance of (trans)languaging-for-learning this time making use of separate named languages, or a second-order conception of language (Lemke & Lin 2022). However, this is still within an established TL space (Garica & Li 2014) where learners' bilingual isiXhosa/English resources are welcomed.

Figure 2 shows a learner's unedited science writing activity which is different to the writing activity represented in Figure 1. While Figure 1 contains evidence of exploratory writing in an everyday register employing features of English and isiXhosa in a meshed way, the writing in Figure 2 was created in response to a translation activity in which languages were kept separate, and is more presentational or formal (Barnes 1992). The teacher first asked the learners to co-construct sentences in isiXhosa about the solar system from the knowledge they had gained through reading notes and engaging in class discussion. Then they were instructed to work individually to provide the English translation of each sentence, thereby generating bilingual notes for themselves. Importantly, the task was set up in a way that privileged the science writing in isiXhosa as it appears in the initial position ahead of English. This was the first time this class engaged in writing bilingual science notes. While the learners need to draw on their bilingual resources to complete the task, it is informed by a second-order conception of language.

Conclusion: Principles of (trans)languaging-for-learning from the South

To conclude we draw out the principles of (trans)languaging-for-learning developed from our Southern perspective, while recognising TL as a hybrid Southern/Northern concept. It is
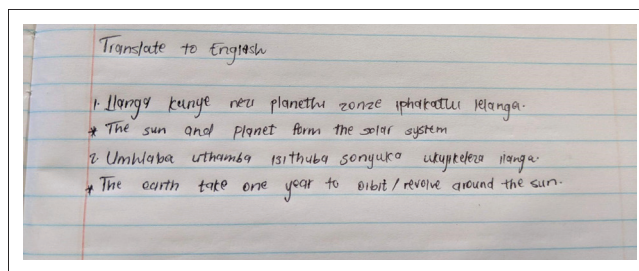
Source: Photograph taken by Robyn Tyler (co-author)
FIGURE 2: Grade 8 learner's Science workbook with a translation activity on the solar system using isiXhosa and English.

important to note that the difference between the use of TL in example 1 and TL-for-learning in examples 2 and 3 is not that the latter are written tasks while example 1 is oral. Indeed, Probyn's (2015, 2019) research discussed earlier gives an example of a resourceful science teacher using pedagogical TL in oral discourse with his learners, as a way of bridging from informal verbal descriptions in isiXhosa and then in English to formal descriptions using scientific register in English. Both the oral and written modes are essential. In (trans)languaging-for-learning, the emphasis is on using one's full linguistic and semiotic repertoire in order to develop and show understanding or learning, rather than to demonstrate mastery of the use of standard named languages. It thus goes beyond the use of two or more named languages to communicate, combining bilingual and multilingual languaging with a socio-cultural pedagogical approach. We have also shown that it is not only unavoidable (in an instruction like 'translate from isiXhosa to English') but also helpful to name languages at times (drawing on a second-order conception of language), even as we know that autonomous named languages don't reflect humans' daily languaging. While TL can be used to describe any bilingual or multilingual languaging, not all such instances of TL will constitute TL-*for-learning*. Below we outline principles of the approach with illustrations from the examples used above:

- Positioning teachers and children as linguistically resourceful (example 2 encourages and example 3 requires learners to use bilingual resources).
- Enabling teachers and children to use their full linguistic repertoires for teaching and learning in spoken and written modes (example 1 excludes learners from this thereby restricting learning opportunities).
- Enabling children to use their language resources actively to produce spoken and written texts in their own words (examples 2 and 3 enable this).
- Enabling children to work collaboratively using their collective language and semiotic resources to learn (example 3 followed an activity in which learners collaborated to express what they knew about the solar system in isiXhosa sentences).
- Scaffolding children's abilities to work with and produce monolingual texts in both minoritised and overly valued languages (example 3 does this).
- Enabling children to demonstrate what they are learning and have learned through translingual and bilingual assessments (example 2 works towards this, though it is not a formal assessment).

What should be clear from these principles is the explicit aim to counter the exclusion of African languages from formal education and to challenge racialised, colonial or raciolinguistic language ideologies which position the language practices of black bilingual and multilingual children and teachers as deficient. Thus, the goal in implementing (trans)languaging-for-learning includes challenging and changing monoglossic and anglonormative language ideologies, that is, the colonial language ideologies that continue to determine legitimate language use in teaching, learning and assessment. Shifting these ideologies is vital in creating implementational spaces for both fluid and fixed languaging-for-learning that include African languages and that enable epistemic access for all children.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

Both C.M. and R.T. contributed to the conceptualisation and writing of the article.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance received from Research Ethics Committee Officer, University of the Western Cape with Ethical clearance number HS22/2/10.

Data availability

Data are not publicly available due to confidentiality.

Disclaimer

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