

## Languageing-for-learning: Legitimising translanguaging and enabling multimodal practices in third spaces

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**Abstract:** While there have been significant paradigm shifts in conceptualising language in applied linguistics and in critiquing the historical monolingual bias in the discipline, monolingual approaches continue to dominate officially prescribed language teaching and learning approaches, curricula, policy and materials in South African education. In this paper we argue that monolingual ideologies have negative consequences for the positioning of South African learners as well as for their participation in the curriculum. We focus on how learner capacities are enabled when a heteroglossic and multimodal orientation to language practices and meaning-making is taken up. We explore processes of languageing-for-learning in two established third spaces—the first, an after-school literacy club for Grades 3–6 learners in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, and the second, a mathematics holiday programme for Grade 11 students in the rural Eastern Cape. We argue that our cases show how it is possible to bridge the gap between heteroglossic conceptions of language and languageing in applied linguistics, and what is conceived as legitimate language practices in the classroom. We conclude that the translanguaging and multimodal strategies in the two cases offer new pedagogical strategies for meaning-making that challenge the dominant monolingual orientation to children’s languageing in many classrooms.

### Introduction

Paradigm shifts in the conceptualisation of ‘language’ and in the use of language for learning have prompted acclaimed North American bilingualism and language in education specialists García and Sylvan to argue that ‘monolingual education is no longer relevant in our globalized world’ (2011: 398). In contrast to this, however, monolingual approaches continue to dominate officially prescribed language teaching and learning approaches, curricula, policy and materials. In South Africa, the average learner must, at minimum, be bilingual to succeed in achieving a Grade 12 or Matriculation school leaving qualification. Despite this, the majority of learners are continually positioned as deficient bilinguals, and as not having mastered the academic registers of schooling in English. It is with this context in mind that we focus our paper on how learner capabilities and capacities are enabled when a heteroglossic orientation to language practices and meaning-making is taken up. We explore two learning spaces, the first, an after-school literacy club for Grades 3–6 learners in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, and the second, a mathematics holiday programme for Grade 11 high school students in the rural Eastern Cape. Both of these spaces can be described as ‘established translanguaging spaces’. García and Wei (2014) distinguish between translanguaging as an adaptive space—viewed by policy makers, educators and learners as a necessary evil—and as an established space—where ‘the translanguaging norm of bilingual communities’ is authorised (García & Wei 2014: 133). While we are used to seeing translanguaging as an adaptive space which addresses the mismatch between learners’ home language and the official language of learning and teaching in South African classrooms (usually English), we aim to show how the two third spaces in our case studies actively encouraged the use of translanguaging and multimodal meaning-making for learning, and therefore became established translanguaging spaces.

Increasingly scholars have drawn attention to the monolingual bias in linguistics and associated disciplines such as sociolinguistics and applied linguistics (e.g Pratt 1991; Kachru 1994; Makoni

& Meinhof 2004; Firth & Wagner 1997; Auer 2007; Canagarajah 2007; García 2009; May 2014). Such scholars have productively unsettled the assumption that the ideal or 'normal' language user has command of only one named language (and frequently has command of the set of resources we recognise as English, given that English speakers are the most likely to be monolingual). We see the legacy of this assumption in several key concepts in applied linguistics: first language acquisition; second language acquisition; the native speaker; fossilisation; and interlanguage (Kachru 1994; Canagarajah 2007). At the same time, the conception of languages as bounded, autonomous and stable systems that exist with or without speakers and that are continuous across a range of contexts which underlies language in education policy and curricula has been recognised as a language ideological construct. Blommaert (2006: 512) draws attention to the complicity of the discipline of linguistics itself in 'the cultural construction of language in general as a stable, contextless individual mental object'. This ideology of autonomous, clearly separable and bounded named languages is central to monolingual or monoglossic ideologies. In the South African context it is often also linked to particular registers of English as the sole 'legitimate language' (Bourdieu 1977) in the schooling and higher education system. This in turn leads to *Anglonormativity*: the expectation that people will be or should be proficient in English, and are deficient, even deviant, if they are not (McKinney 2017).

### **Heteroglossia: From autonomous languages and code-switching to linguistic repertoires**

Accepting that named languages as stable, bounded phenomena are social constructs, the products of language ideologies, a number of researchers working in different, mostly urban, geographical locations have proposed *heteroglossic* approaches to understanding and describing language and languaging practices. Following Bakhtin (1981), heteroglossia can be defined as the complex, simultaneous use of a diverse range of registers, voices, named languages or codes in our daily lives. Heteroglossia also draws attention to the potential tension between different kinds of registers and voices (Ivanov 2000; see also Bailey 2007). As Ivanov (2000: 100) has argued, 'heteroglossia is opposed to monoglossia (the dominance of one language)...and to polyglossia (the [monolingual] coexistence of two languages'. This emphasises the ways in which different resources are not necessarily equally valued or distributed, i.e. the stratification of linguistic resources that a number of scholars have drawn our attention to (Bourdieu 1977; Blommaert 2010; Makoe 2007; 2014; McKinney et al. 2015; Piller 2016).

Heteroglossic language practices involving movement across different named languages have commonly been described in variationist sociolinguistics using the term code-switching, broadly defined as 'the juxtaposition of elements from two (or more) languages or dialects' (McCormick 2001: 447). In applied linguistics, code-switching in classrooms has been a research focus, frequently in postcolonial settings (Ferguson 2003; Arthur & Martin 2006; Chimbutane 2011). Underlying the notion of code-switching as defined above is

- the assumption that two or more named languages are identifiable in the discourse,
- speakers are drawing on resources from distinct languages, and
- speakers have competence in the 'individual' languages they are drawing on.

Given the deconstruction of the notion of clearly identifiable and bounded, named languages, and the acknowledgement that language is itself an ideological construction, we can see the potential problems with the code-switching paradigm. While it is true that it is often possible to identify different named languages in language use, this is not always the case. The plethora of new heteroglossic languages of description such as polylinguaging or polylingual languaging (Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen et al. 2011), metrolingualism and metrolingual multi-tasking (Otsuji & Pennycook 2010; Pennycook & Otsuji 2014), translanguaging (García & Wei 2014), and ubuntu translanguaging (Makalela 2015) signal a paradigm shift. Blommaert (2013: 614) writes about the 'epistemological rupture' which these terms signal: a move away from multiplicity and plurality towards complexity. Following Jørgensen et al. (2011), Blommaert argues that

*[p]eople learn, acquire, and deploy features, some of which are conventionally (that is, ideologically) attributed to 'a language' such as Danish, whereas others are part of recognizable indexical orders such as genres, styles, registers, jargons, and so forth.*

*'Language', thus conceived, is an emergent indexical order, a non-random arrangement of features that can be enregistered as a conventionally recognizable 'language' X or Y (2013: 614).*

Aligned with this 'epistemological rupture', we work with an understanding of language as socially, culturally, politically and historically situated sets of features that form resources (Heller 2007; Blommaert & Rampton 2011), which are part of a multimodal repertoire (New London Group 2000; Jewitt & Kress 2003) for meaning-making. As mentioned above, we want to draw attention to the disturbing lack of impact that this heteroglossic and multimodal view of meaning-making has had on formal language education, whether in official language in education policy, curricula or directives for teachers.

While there is no explicit directive in the 1997 South African Language in Education Policy nor in the current curriculum, the majority of schools are officially encouraged to, and do, follow an early exit model of bilingualism (Walter 2008) where children are expected to transition abruptly from 'home language' (HL) instruction in Grade R to Grade 3, to English as language of learning and teaching (LoLT) from the beginning of Grade 4. This sudden switch in LoLT can only make sense if one is working with a monoglossic ideology of languages as discrete and clearly bounded entities. Additionally, the idea that one can learn exclusively through a language after only a few hours of exposure when that language is taught as a subject over the course of a week, depends on the mythical 'cultural construction of language in general as a stable, contextless individual mental object' (Blommaert 2006: 512). The reality of South African classroom practice is the heteroglossic use of language for learning, which is often censured (Setati et al. 2002; Probyn 2009), or face-saving practices such as monolingual 'safe-talk' (Chick 1996; Chimbutane 2011). 'Safe-talk' involves chorused answers and rote repetition, and prevents learners from producing their own meanings. In this way learners encounter restricted opportunities to participate meaningfully in learning and to access the curriculum (McKinney et al. 2015; Williams 1996).

### **Languaging-for-learning**

Our concern in the two case studies we present is with the use of language resources and other semiotic modes to facilitate children's participation and ultimately their learning, both in the language and literacy classroom and in other subject areas such as mathematics and science. Our priority then is to focus on the process of using language and other semiotic resources to make meaning. This aligns us with the notion of 'languaging' that has recently been foregrounded in sociolinguistics (e.g. Jørgensen 2003; 2008; Jørgensen et al. 2011) and psycholinguistics (Swain 2006; Swain & Watanabe 2013). Sociolinguists such as Jørgensen (2003; 2008) use the term 'languaging' to describe the *process* of using language whether in spoken or written forms, that is as a descriptor for what people do with and through language in their daily lives. At the same time, the term has been taken up in psycholinguistics. Swain argues that the notion of languaging derives from a Vygotskian view on the relationship between language and thought. Swain and Watanabe (2013: 1) explain their view of languaging thus:

*[W]e can think of languaging as an activity, a 'process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language' (Swain 2006: 98), and 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.*

For Swain, languaging is very clearly a "source of second language learning", and replaces her earlier notion of "comprehensible output". While Swain's focus is on languaging for learning, the emphasis on language as process rather than as (countable, autonomous) object is compatible with the sociolinguistic use of the term.

Our own use of the term 'languaging-for-learning' brings together meanings from sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and composition studies (Emig 1977). We too acknowledge the complex and heteroglossic nature of everyday language use, with the use of resources from more than one named language, register and voice, ubiquitous in meaning-making. However, our focus is on 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. The concept

*third space* (Bhabha 1994; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López & Tejada 1999; Gutiérrez 2008; Anzaldúa 1987) is useful to us in characterising the kinds of learning spaces which go beyond monolingual, autonomous notions of language use and which embrace multiple modes for meaning-making. Gutiérrez (2008: 152) defines third space as 'a transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened'. She argues for the importance of collaborative or collective 'Third Space' as 'interactionally constituted' and characterised by hybrid language and literacy practices. Gutiérrez, Baquedano-Lopez, Alvarez and Chiu (1999) argue that hybrid language and literacy practices are

*not simply codeswitching as the alternation between two language codes. They are more a systematic, strategic, affiliative, and sense-making process among those who share the code, as they strive to achieve mutual understanding (Gutiérrez et al. 1999: 88).*

Hybrid language and literacy practices as described above prefigure the renewed focus on translanguaging in applied linguistics. Drawn from the original Welsh term *trawsieithu*, the term translanguaging has been developed by a number of scholars in the US (e.g. García 2009; Canagarajah 2011), the UK (e.g. Creese & Blackledge 2010; Wei 2011) and in South Africa (Makalela 2015; Probyn 2015). Translanguaging refers to an

*approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages (García & Wei 2014: 2).*

It also refers to specific language practices: 'the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages' (García 2009: 141).

In thinking about the productive use of languaging for learning, it is also useful to revisit Barnes' (1992) central work on talk and learning, where he distinguishes exploratory from presentational talk in the UK context, as well as Gibbons' (2006) work on bridging discourses in science lessons with English language learners in the Australian context. Barnes' (1992) focus is not on the use of multiple linguistic or semiotic resources; rather he assumes a monolingual context. This is important to note as so often the discussion of language for learning in multilingual contexts gets obscured by debates on which language should be used when, or on the virtues of home language versus English-medium instruction. Barnes (and related sociocultural work on dialogic pedagogies, e.g. Edwards & Mercer 1987; Lefstein & Snell 2014) draws our attention to the fact that *even* in a so-called monolingual context where learners and teachers share the same dominant language, explicit attention must be paid to enable the productive use of languaging for learning. The dominance of teacher-talk and of 'tight', or restricted Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) sequences using closed questions is not unique to contexts where the language of instruction is unfamiliar to learners and/or teachers. And as Barnes points out, these patterns are most often accompanied by an emphasis on presentational talk, or 'final draft'-type talk where fluent answers and explanations in full sentences using discipline-specific registers are the expectation. In other words, what Gibbons (2006) would refer, to using her Systemic Functional Grammar-inspired mode continuum between spoken-like and written-like language, as more written-like language.

Presentational talk is closest to the kind of languaging required in written assessments that evaluate learners' understanding at the end of a learning process. It does not, however, enable what Barnes has so usefully called 'working-on-understanding' (1992: 126). The latter is characterised by hesitant, incomplete, possibly repetitious, exploratory talk through which learners grapple with ideas and express their emerging understandings. While presentational or written-like language might be the final goal, it cannot be the starting point. Gibbons' exploration of the use of bridging discourses carrying learners along the journey from exploratory talk to presentational writing shows many examples of young English language learners languaging-for-learning in science classrooms (see also Probyn 2015 on pedagogical translanguaging in science, and Setati et al. 2002 on the language journey for South African examples). Whether the talk (or writing) is multi- or monolingual, it must be recognised that 'not all kinds of talk (or writing) are likely to contribute equally to working on understanding' (Barnes 1992: 126).

## Methodology

Working from the perspective of language and literacy as social practice, both case studies draw on the methodological and interpretive tools of linguistic ethnography (Lillis 2008; Blommaert & Dong 2010; Snell, Shaw & Copland 2015). We are informed by Rampton, Maybin and Roberts's definition (2014: 2):

*Linguistic ethnography generally holds that to a considerable degree, language and the social world are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity.*

Linguistic ethnography has been used productively to unravel processes of interactive and sometimes collaborative meaning-making in the classroom (Lefstein & Snell 2011; 2014) as well as constraints on this (McKinney et al. 2015.) In our case studies, we acknowledge the constraining and enabling effects of the language ecology in which the cases are situated, as well as how relations of power circulate at the micro-level. Our interpretive analyses of the discourses produced are underpinned by the theoretical concepts of (trans)linguaging spaces (Swain & Watanabe 2013; García & Wei 2014) and third space (Gutiérrez 2008; Flores & García 2013), as well as register-meshing (Gibbons 2006) and trans-semiotising (Lin 2015).

In the first case study of an out-of-school literacy club called Stars of Today Literacy Club# (STLC#), data collection involved participant observation by one of the authors (Xolisa Guzula). Guzula initiated the literacy club, recruits volunteers, trains and models translanguaging and multi-literacies practices in her work with the children. She researches her practice through the production of field notes, selective audio- and video-recording, documentation through still photographs, and the collection of textual artefacts made by the children and jointly by the facilitators and children. In the second case study of a holiday mathematics programme (named here as Focus Education), another of the authors (Robyn Tyler) collected data through observation captured in field notes and by audio- and video recording. In both cases our analyses focus on what kind of meaning-making is enabled when students are allowed to language freely, to use their full linguistic and semiotic repertoires in order to participate and thus to learn. In the sense that students are encouraged to draw on their full linguistic and semiotic repertoires, the case studies constitute 'third spaces', disrupting and transgressing the normative view in formally prescribed South African education policy, curriculum and directives to teachers that endeavour to keep named 'languages' separate (see e.g. Western Cape Education Department [WCED] minute 2014; WCED language plan 2015–2019).

### **Case study 1: Pedagogical affordances of translanguaging at the Stars of Today Literacy Club#**

First, we explore a case study of translanguaging practices and pedagogic strategies in the Saturday literacy club known as Stars of Today Literacy Club#. The club is conceptualised and set up as a physical, conceptual and linguistic or translanguaging third space (Gutiérrez Baquedano-López & Tejada 1999; Flores & García 2013; Canagarajah 2013). It takes place in a primary school in Khayelitsha and has between 30 to 60 Grade 3–6 (ages 9–12) children as members. The children at the school currently experience the commonplace early exit 'bilingual' education model where they learn through the medium of their home language, isiXhosa from Grades R to 3 while taking English as a First Additional Language subject from Grade 1. In Grade 4, there is a sudden switch from HL LoLT, when the First Additional Language, English, takes over as LoLT and the home language loses language status and power through becoming merely a subject. One can see the ideologies of monolingualism, Anglonormativity and languages as stable, bounded entities at play in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase school language policy. While many teachers code-switch or translanguage when they feel that the children do not understand them, they do so with the belief that this practice is illegitimate. The children are not allowed to 'mix' languages or use what is termed 'Xhenglish' in class.

In contrast to language and literacy classrooms where teachers often frame hybridity as a problem (Palmer et al. 2014), the STLC# facilitators create a linguistic third space (Flores & García 2013), translanguaging in both spoken and written word. Thus they themselves model dynamic bilingualism (García & Wei 2014) and position the children as competent multilinguals by allowing them to translanguage both in spoken and written language (Palmer et al. 2014). Apart from their

**Table 1:** We're going on a lion hunt

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
We're going on a lion hunt	We're going on a lion hunt	We're going on a lion hunt
I'm not scared	I'm not scared	I'm not scared
Got a gun by my side (touching hips)	Got a gun by my side	Got a gun by my side
Bullets, two (showing two fingers)	Bullets, two	Bullets, two
We come to some grass	We come to some mud	We come to a cave
Some tall grass (bending and raising hand to high above the head)	Some sticky mud	A dark scary cave (whispering till the end)
We can't go over it, (showing with hands)	We can't go over it,	We can't go over it,
We can't go under it	We can't go under it	We can't go under it
We can't go around it	We can't go around it	We can't go around it
We have to through it	We have to through it	We have to through it
Let's go...swish, swish, swish (moving the grass to the side with hands)	Let's go...shlip	We have to go into it (tip toeing)
		And...Roarrrrrrrr!
		We went on a lion hunt,
		I wasn't scared
		But I'll never go again

multilingualism, facilitators contribute a range of expertise, including in literacy teaching, visual and performance art. This is important as the club draws on multi-literacies pedagogy (New London Group 2000), challenging the hegemony of language, particularly written language, as the sole means of communication. The integration of modes (image, sound, music, gesture, space and movement) in the process of meaning-making (Stein 2004; Newfield 2011) is explicitly acknowledged. Below we present three examples of meaning-making in the STLC# space.

### ***Affordances of translanguaging expressed through a child's voice***

Since the STLC# is a multimodal literacy club, we immerse children in games, songs and general play. We often start the day playing games outdoors. When we play games, anyone can teach a game or song to the group. The previous week, facilitators had planned to work on the critical framing aspect of the multi-literacies framework. We had a language game in mind, called 'The Lion Hunt'.<sup>1</sup> The game involves call and response, so while Xolisa led the game in a circle, the children followed her words and actions. Despite ideological objections to the references to guns and bullets in the game, we decided to use it as we believed that children play the games anyway and are prevented from developing critical literacy if texts are always 'cleaned up' and made respectable for them. The game we played goes as follows:

After playing the game, we asked the children to reflect on how it made them feel. Almost everyone expressed their pleasure in playing the game. We then introduced the concept of critical literacy by explaining that sometimes the things we say and do, even unintentionally, can be seen, felt and heard differently by different people. Xolisa wrote on the board a column with 'good' on one side and 'bad' on the other and listed all the things that the children said about the game. The following Saturday, as Xolisa was reviewing the previous week's discussion, one of the children began to talk about what was 'good' about the game in relation to the affordances of the heteroglossic and multimodal nature of the game.

In this example we see both the facilitator, Xolisa and the child, Noni translanguaging in their conversation. The facilitator is modelling dynamic bilingualism while also positioning Noni as a capable and competent bilingual (Palmer et al. 2014). Noni catches on to accepted languaging practices and, in her explanation of why she thought the game was good, shuttles between the resources of isiXhosa and English (García 2009). Noni shows that it is not really possible to make her point without using both languages. She speaks isiXhosa but has to draw on specific English vocabulary in the game that some children might not know, e.g. 'umntu akayazi ukuba ukuhamba over it' (Some may not understand what it means to *go over it*). Though she explains this concept in isiXhosa, she has to draw on English examples to make her point that the game is 'good' because it teaches everyone, and that even if one does not understand English, they will understand 'through

**Table 2:** Xoli and Noni discuss multimodality and heteroglossia

Original	Translation
Xoli: ...Okay, <i>ngubani okhumbulayo? Siye sathi zintoni ezigood ngala game? Sithetha zintoni esizithandayo ngayo? Zintoni ezilungileyo ngayo? Hayi kaloku siyathetha tyhini abantu bandijongile nje, bandijongile nje abantu balibele ngoku. Sithetha la game igood ngoba kutheni? Noni?</i>	Xoli:...Okay, who remembers? What things did we say are good about that game? What did we say we like about it? What are the good things about it? No, we have to speak hey, people are just looking at me, they have forgotten now. Why did we say that game is good? Noni?
Noni: <i>Ngoba ukuba umntu akayazi ukuba ukuhamba over it mhlawumbi njengoba sithetha ngeEnglish uyabona ngezandla ba we can't go over, it, we can't go under it, we can't go around it uyabona okay uover nguntoni, u-under yintoni, uaround yintoni and then.... (inaudible)</i>	Noni: 'Because if a person doesn't know what walking over it means, maybe because we speak English s/ he can see through the use of hands that 'we can't go over it', 'we can't go under it', 'we can't go around it' and see what 'over' means, what 'under' means and what 'around' means and then...(inaudible)'
Xoli: <i>Ukuba ngaba... umntu... akamazi ...uover it nhe, uyabona ngezandla nhe... ngezandla, naxa usithi under...under it nhe? Utshilo nhe?</i>	Xoli: 'That if...a person...doesn't know...what 'over it' means, hey, s/he can see through the hands, hey...and when you say 'under'...under it, hey? You said so, hey?'
Noni: <i>E-e</i>	Noni: 'Ewe, Yes'
Xoli: <i>Nobani omnye?</i>	Xoli: 'And what else?'
Noni: <i>noaround it</i>	Noni: 'And around it'
Xoli: <i>noaround it... noaround it, nhe? Uyabona ngezandla naxa usithi... ngezandla. Sathi igood loo nto nhe? Iyasifundisa loo nto ukuba kuthethwa ukuthwani andithi? I think uyibeke kakuhle kakhulu uNoni, ngendlela ecacileyo. Wonke umntu ucacelwe nhe? (Audio Recording: 5 March 2016)</i>	Xoli: 'and around it'...'and around it, hey? You can it through the hands when and when you....through the hands .We said that is good, hey? That teaches us what is meant by spoken words, isn't it? I think Noni expressed it so well, so clearly hey? Everybody is clear, hey?' (Audio Recording: 5 March 2016)

the hands', i.e. gestures. Noni is arguing that the game provides opportunities for languaging (Swain 2006), i.e. opportunities for language learning and inclusivity. The use of gesture and bodily movement, in addition to languaging, makes explicit the limitations of an exclusive focus on language as sole means of communication (New London Group 2000; Stein 2004). Using the resources of translanguaging and multimodal meaning-making, Noni is able to express a highly sophisticated conceptual point about the affordances of these resources.

### **Translation as a translanguaging tool for biliteracy and bilingual development**

The second example of translanguaging is shown in a moment where the facilitator offers overt instruction, another aspect of the multi-literacies framework. For some children the instruction in story elements was new, whereas for others, it was revision. The facilitator asked children what 'story elements' are called in isiXhosa, and wrote 'story elements' in English and 'ukwaxhiwa kwebali' below it on the board. She asked children who could remember the five elements in a story. The children gave answers in isiXhosa and the translation in English on request from the facilitator who then wrote the English translation next to the isiXhosa word as follows:

#### Extract 1

Story elements

*Ukwaxhiwa kwebali*

1. *Abalinganiswa* – characters
2. *Imizobo namagama* – pictures and words

3. *Indawo* – place; *nexesha* – time
4. *Umbhali* – author/writer; *nabazobi* – and illustrators
5. Trouble – *ingxaki* – problem/conflict
6. Solution/resolution – *isisombululo*
7. End – *isiphelo*

Although not story elements, ‘pictures and words’ as well as ‘authors and illustrators’ were accepted, showing that we acknowledge that they are part and parcel of story writing, and that we value the metalanguage the children have developed about narrative writing. We observe here that while translanguaging takes the form of translation, this is a two-way translation from isiXhosa to English and from English to isiXhosa, depending on the language a response was rendered in. In encouraging children to engage in translation, the facilitator demonstrated a practical and powerful way to draw on children’s sociocultural resources, facilitating language and literacy learning.

In this example, we observe how bilingualism is a highly valued competence where children are given opportunities to display linguistic flexibility, beginning in English, continuing in isiXhosa and changing to English again in points 5, 6 and 7. The children themselves determine the course of the conversation, and the language resources they will use once the adult facilitator opens up the space. The facilitator’s practice of writing up each response in the language in which it is given affirms the children’s language practices. Thus the facilitator uses a deliberate strategy to move children to an empowering space where they can become academic learners and language brokers for emergent bilinguals, especially the younger learners who are in Grades 3 and 4 and who have just begun learning English more formally (Manyak 2008; Makoe & McKinney 2009; Palmer et al. 2014).

Translation is also used as a tool for ensuring the understanding of children who are at different points on the bilingual continuum. By encouraging children to translate their own or peer’s responses, the facilitator challenges the children to work on their understanding (Barnes 1992) collaboratively, showing how a linguistic third space is ‘interactionally achieved’(Gutiérrez 2008). This resulted in productive languaging (Swain 2006; Manyak 2008) where the children had to push their limits of English. Translation here is also a tool for gauging children’s levels of understanding when they translate back to the home language from English, and then through collaboration, meanings get negotiated. In this example, translation is a highly demanding intellectual strategy which is used as an academic tool for revision and reinforcement of story elements in two languages for those who are already knowledgeable about these, while also serving as overt instruction for those who are still learning. Finally, translanguaging here offers a space to learn vocabulary simultaneously in both languages, thus once again ensuring bilingual language and literacy development.

### ***Translanguaging as a tool for increasing participation and as a resource in story writing***

The third example also shows the simultaneous use of isiXhosa and English for learning as in Extract 1. However, there is no translation this time as children’s responses were given in either isiXhosa or English. Children responded quickly listing what they already knew about story-starters using the languages that first came to mind, and the facilitator wrote these up as follows:

#### Extract 2

1. Kudala-dala
2. Once upon a time
3. There was once
4. Kwathi ke kaloku
5. Chosi, chosi ngantsomi
6. Long, long ago

Different children called out what they knew, again showing their awareness that they were in a linguistic third space where drawing on diverse linguistic resources was legitimate as preparation for the story writing task ahead. As there is a mix of Grade 3 and 6 learners at different levels of the bilingual continuum, we see translanguaging playing an inclusive role and enabling maximum

participation (Manyak 2001; 2008). It also plays a role in activating children's prior knowledge which would be hard to elicit if only one language was required. Manyak points out that in the US context, 'although young bilingual children possess a sophisticated ability to negotiate meaning across languages, this ability is frequently overlooked in elementary classrooms' (Manyak 2008: 13). In most South African classrooms, even though teachers may code-switch or translanguage in explaining concepts to children, it is very unusual for written board work to be bilingual. IsiXhosa often remains the spoken language, while English is seen as the language of authority: written school work and textbooks. The use of two languages both in spoken and written form challenges Anglonormative power and status differences between isiXhosa and English.

### **Case study 2: Focus education – resourceful bilingual learners and a learning facilitator 'working-on-understanding'**

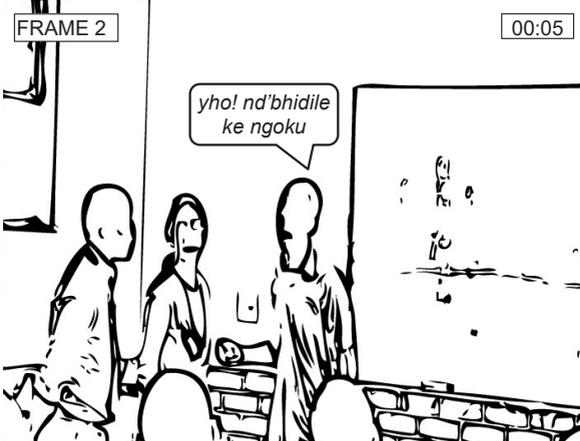
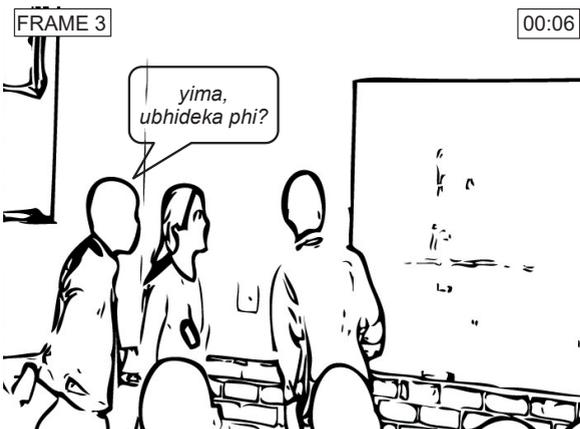
The second case study we present is taken from a winter holiday mathematics support programme run by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) (Focus Education) in the rural Eastern Cape. The NGO's programmes are designed to boost the educational achievement of the local learners. The Grade 11 mathematics class participating in this revision camp forms the case discussed here. Reducing the participants' linguistic repertoires and practices to bare bones, the class can be described as consisting of 15 learners, all home language isiXhosa speakers, an English home language-speaking teacher and an isiXhosa-English bilingual learning facilitator. The novel role of the learning facilitator was created by Focus in response to what the director described as 'a gap between us, the teachers, and the kids; with language but also with relating' (interview 12 July 2011). The 'gap...with relating' is due to the differences between the rural, amaXhosa, teenage lifeworld of the learners, and the urban, South African, adult lifeworld of the teachers. The role of learning facilitator was loosely described at its initiation, and the individual learning facilitators and teachers worked together in different ways in each classroom, negotiating the floor spontaneously between them. In practice in the mathematics classroom, the teacher led the class, usually speaking English, and the learning facilitator supported her and the learners in various ways, usually speaking isiXhosa.

Like the STLC# literacy club, the Focus classroom operates as an established translanguaging space (García & Wei 2014) and thus as a third space (Flores & García 2013; Gutiérrez 2008). Some of the features of the established translanguaging space of this classroom are: the bilingual learning facilitator is present by design and takes the floor spontaneously at times, speaking isiXhosa. The teacher draws on isiXhosa, gesture and everyday English to develop the concepts of mathematics, often in a highly heteroglossic manner, which Gibbons calls 'register meshing' (Gibbons 2006), and the learners switch between their familiar isiXhosa registers in group work and formal mathematical English in whole class triadic discourse. However, the full establishment of translanguaging was also limited in ways which will be revealed through the discussion of the data.

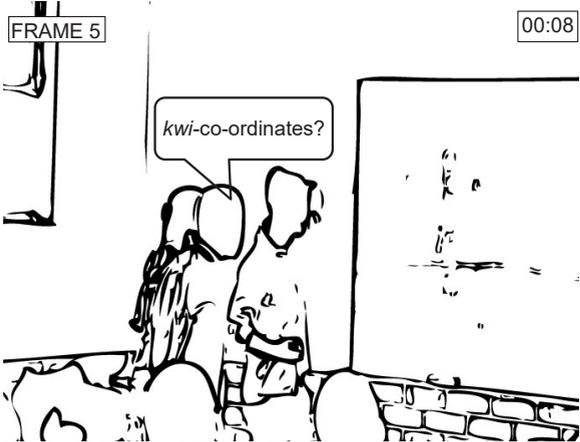
The purpose, therefore, of the analysis presented below is to demonstrate the effects of learners being positioned as resourceful and how this is achieved in a translanguaging space, as well as to show learners using their multimodal and multilingual meaning-making resources for working on understanding (Barnes 1992) in a content subject. Barnes' term 'exploratory talk' to describe the kind of spoken discourse learners use to work on their understanding (Barnes 1992; Setati et al. 2002) will be expanded here as 'exploratory discourse' to incorporate multimodal meaning-making.

The episode transcribed in Table 3 took place on the second day of the week-long camp. The class was working through geometry problems involving reflecting a point on the Cartesian Plane. A learner (Unathi) had written up her correct answer—a set of co-ordinates (3; 4)—on the Cartesian Plane which the teacher (Sue) had drawn on the blackboard. As Unathi approached the board, the teacher instructed the class to 'ask questions if you don't understand' (video transcript 12 July 2011). Once Unathi has returned to her seat, another learner (Luyanda) approaches the board. There follows a translanguaged negotiation of speaking rights between Luyanda, Sue and the learning facilitator (Athi). Sue is standing in close proximity to Luyanda; Athi further away. While Luyanda begins his questioning sequence, Athi approaches the board and stands next to the teacher. Thirty-six seconds into Luyanda's initiation, this eight-second episode begins.

**Table 3:** Learner languaging in the Focus Maths classroom

Cartoon screen shot of action (with time of capture and accompanying speech)	Speech (including gesture, gaze, body positioning)	English gloss
<p><b>FRAME 1</b> <span style="float: right;">00:00–00:04</span></p>  <p><i>ngula. la-3 lo akazujika mos then lo-4 la lo akazujika mos then ngo-4 la lo akazujika mos then nao-4 la</i></p> <p>Luyanda</p> <p>Athi</p> <p>Sue</p>	<p><i>ngula.</i> (Sue, Athi, Luyanda and learners gaze at the board and utter intermittent m-hms. Luyanda taps the board with the chalk)</p> <p><i>la-3 lo</i> (Luyanda points to the '3' written in the question elsewhere on the board)</p> <p><i>akazujika mos then lo-4 la</i></p>	<p>it's that.</p> <p>that 3 that</p> <p>it doesn't change, hey then that 4</p>
<p><b>FRAME 2</b> <span style="float: right;">00:05</span></p>  <p><i>yho! nd'bhidile ke ngoku</i></p>	<p><i>yho nd'bhidile ke ngoku</i> (learners laugh, Sue and Luyanda smile and gaze at learners, Athi does not smile, gazes at Luyanda, Luyanda turns to return to his seat)</p>	<p>wow it's confounded me now</p>
<p><b>FRAME 3</b> <span style="float: right;">00:06</span></p>  <p><i>yima, ubhideka phi?</i></p>	<p><i>yima ubhideka phi?</i> (Athi leans towards Luyanda, Luyanda turns back to the board as Athi finishes speech, Sue smiles and gazes at the board, Athi gazes at Luyanda, does not smile)</p>	<p>wait where do you get confused?</p>

**Table 3 (continued):** Learner languaging in the Focus Maths classroom

Cartoon screen shot of action (with time of capture and accompanying speech)	Speech (including gesture, gaze, body positioning)	English gloss
<p>FRAME 4</p> <p>00:07</p> 	<p><i>ndisuk' apha</i> (Luyanda points to the co-ordinates on the board)</p>	I get lost here
<p>FRAME 5</p> <p>00:08</p> 	<p><i>kwi-co-ordinates?</i>  (Luyanda smiles, scratches and shakes his head after Athi's speech)</p>	at the co-ordinates?

### **Learner positioning: Multimodal and multilingual floor negotiation**

Gaining and keeping the floor is a particularly important activity in this classroom. This is due to the tensions between the interests of the participants: the teacher wants to involve the learners, but also feels the pressure of limited time to cover the curriculum content; the learning facilitator wants to fulfil his responsibility of helping to make the curriculum accessible in isiXhosa, but also understands that he needs to defer to the teacher as the class leader; the learners want to work on their understanding, but they do this within the constraints of a classroom regime where the teacher is ultimately in control and is not proficient in their home language, while they struggle with their limits in English, the language of the curriculum, the teacher and the assessment.

The learner, Luyanda, has negotiated his turn at the blackboard with some difficulty and now has the floor. When this extract starts, Luyanda has been talking exclusively for 36 seconds—highly unusual for a learner in the teacher-dominated public space of any classroom (Edwards & Mercer 1987; Mercer 1995). Despite the teacher urging the learners to ask questions, she has been rather surprised that the intended audience for Luyanda's question is Unathi as seen in her response—'oh (.) good' (video transcript 12 July 2011). Her exclamation 'oh', followed by a brief pause, indicates

that this is an unusual activity structure for this classroom. Indeed, the full data set bore this out as this was the only instance of cross-discussion—where a learner engages in a discussion with another learner about the lesson content (Lemke 1990)—in all five mathematics lessons. Within this episode, we see Luyanda, Sue and Athi using action, body positioning, gaze and spoken language to negotiate control of the floor. In frame 1, both the teacher and the learning facilitator are standing in close proximity to Luyanda and gaze intently at him and the boardwork—this indicates both their support and desire to control the outcome of the activity which he leads. When Luyanda tries to relinquish the floor (frame 2), it is Athi who stops him in his tracks (frame 3) by remaining serious and saying ‘yima’ (stop). This is a gentle but determined action which reveals the learning facilitator’s commitment to learner-generated exploratory discourse in the lesson. Athi and Luyanda achieve the continuation of the cross-discussion through their shared linguistic resources and through body positioning, gaze and action. Sue participates in the light moment of humour with Luyanda and the learners (frame 2) by smiling, but she does not have the linguistic resources to comprehend the content of the cross-discussion as Athi can. In the extract from the lesson transcript below (Extract 1), we see how the cross-discussion ends.

#### Extract 3

Athi: Khawumcacisele Unathi (please explain to him Unathi)

Sue: Luyanda, so if we look here this is our point

Athi works hard to maintain Luyanda’s exploratory talk by interpreting his talk to Sue and by requesting that Unathi explains her thinking to him. Ultimately, the cross-discussion is foreshortened as Sue, not understanding Athi’s request to Unathi, takes back the floor and continues the lesson in triadic discourse.

### ***Translanguaging and trans-semiotising for working on understanding***

How do Luyanda, Athi and the learners work on understanding (Barnes 1992) in this episode? Primarily, they do so multimodally. This jointly constructed work (Mercer 1995) is achieved by Luyanda positioning himself as teacher-performer at the front of the classroom. He is in a position of relative power in that he occupies the teacher’s space at the blackboard, he holds the chalk and he is given the floor (frame 1). This position is his to give up in frame 2 when he has had enough. He does this with a venting of emotion and an abrupt departure (yho und’bhidle ke ngoku). This produces humour and a positive response from the learners and the teacher. While he is at the blackboard, Luyanda taps the chalk on different positions on the board to draw attention to elements of the calculation that he does, or does not, understand. All the while he makes eye contact with Sue, Athi and the learners and talks out his understanding using his most familiar register—a ‘Xhosa-for-mathematics’. This register in which he is fully proficient allows him to vent emotion (frame 2 – ‘yho’) and draw on elements of mathematical English and everyday Xhosa (for example, ‘ngula la-three’, frame 1) through register-meshing to express his thinking (Gibbons 2006). As audience members, Unathi, the learners and Athi participate enthusiastically in Luyanda’s multimodal work by gazing uninterruptedly at him (frames 1–5), through paralinguistic expressions of interest (‘m-hm’, frame 1); asking questions (frame 3) and requesting confirmation in the same familiar register (frame 5). The use of the familiar register by Athi in frame 5 also enables the practising of the academic register required for mathematics. This multimodal analysis allows us to show that while the class is involved in translanguaging (García & Wei 2014), their work can be described in a more nuanced way as trans-semiotising—a term coined by Lin (2015) which refers to the use of various semiotic resources to make meaning.

The participants engage in trans-semiotising to support Luyanda’s exploratory discourse. This kind of talk is under-valued in education (Barnes 1992), but has very important functions. As we have seen in the analysis above, it enables the release of emotions associated with the difficulty of learning new concepts; it allows the learner to exhibit prior knowledge which positions him as a knower; it allows the limits of the learner’s understanding to be explored and more fully understood by the learner and the educator; and it allows the learner to practise, in a non-threatening space, the language necessary for presentational discourse in the particular academic subject into which he

is being apprenticed. Exploratory discourse, if it is sanctioned in the classroom at all, usually takes place in private learner-to-learner or learner-to-teacher dialogue. The cross-discussion in this case is a powerful promoter of exploratory discourse because it is a public activity, condoned by the highest authority in the room, the teacher.

### Conclusion

Both the STLC# literacy club and the Focus Education mathematics case studies show learners being positioned as resourceful and being enabled to utilise their linguistic resources—manifest in the practices of translanguaging and multimodal meaning-making or trans-semiotising—for working on understanding. That this exploratory discourse is public in both cases enables the learners to be positioned as knowers. However, it is important to note that in the Focus Education case, this important work is limited by the teacher's lack of shared resources and the pressure of finishing the syllabus which cuts short cross-discussion and puts the teacher back in control of the discourse. More could be done when the teacher shares the linguistic resources of the learners and when exploratory discourse is explicitly sanctioned for its role in working on understanding and functioning as a building-block for presentational discourse in the powerful academic register of the discipline.

The case of STLC# literacy club indeed shows us how much can be achieved when the teacher and learners share linguistic repertoires. It provides us with examples of pedagogical strategies which teachers in primary school language and literacy classrooms can use to enhance the simultaneous bilingual and biliteracy development of their learners. It has shown that translanguaging can be used as an intellectual, social and linguistic resource, enhancing multilingual and multimodal meaning-making. Secondly, translanguaging is seen here as a tool for drawing on children's sociocultural resources, eliciting prior knowledge and ensuring deep understanding. Lastly, it is an intellectual and academic tool that teaches, reinforces and ensures understanding while also providing children with story writing resources. The acts of translation have the potential to enhance children's simultaneous development of language and literacy in both isiXhosa and English, while also disrupting the existing power and status gap that exists between the two languages, ultimately disrupting Anglonormativity. Through the case studies of language and literacy as well as of mathematics, we believe we have shown that there are powerful learning opportunities, as well as opportunities for meaningful, collaborative participation, when we are able to bridge the gap between heteroglossic conceptions of language and languaging in applied linguistics, and what is conceived as legitimate language practices in the classroom. We argue that the translanguaging and multimodal strategies in the two cases offer new pedagogical strategies for meaning-making that challenge the dominant monolingual orientation to children's languaging in many classrooms.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>'The Lion Hunt' draws on the rhyming text of Helen Oxenbury's well-known children's picture book 'We're going on a bear hunt'.

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