

TRANSLANGUAGING AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE IDENTITY, BILINGUALISM, PEDAGOGY, AND ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

Traditional conceptions of language learning and teaching are mutating now to a much more linguistically wide and encompassing perspective on what languages are and how they should be appropriately taught, assessed, included, utilized, and preserved in and outside the classroom. Accordingly, this study aimed at analyzing the implications translanguaging had over language learning and teaching. Based on a critical literature review lens (Mora, 2020), five analysis categories were used to delimit and navigate it: translanguaging and its repercussions on language identity, bilingualism, pedagogy, and assessment practices. It was then concluded that purposefully integrating language users' multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic histories mediated by translanguaging significantly enhanced their meaning-making conventions, fostered instruction engagement, and provided with a fair and encompassing teaching and assessment practices that regarded, celebrated, and utilized students' diverse backgrounds.

Key words: Translanguaging, Language education, Language identity, Bilingualism, Pedagogy, Assessment, First language(s) (*L1*).

Resumen

Las concepciones tradicionales sobre el aprendizaje y la enseñanza de lenguas están mutando ahora hacia una perspectiva lingüísticamente más amplia sobre lo que estas son y

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cómo deben ser enseñadas, evaluadas, incluidas, utilizadas y preservadas, dentro y fuera del aula. En este sentido, este estudio asumió como objetivo analizar las implicaciones que tiene el translenguaje en el aprendizaje y la enseñanza de lenguas. Con base en una perspectiva crítica de revisión de la literatura (Mora, 2020), se utilizaron cinco categorías de análisis para delimitarla y navegarla: el translenguaje y sus repercusiones en la identidad lingüística, el bilingüismo, la pedagogía y las prácticas de evaluación. Se concluyó que la integración intencionada de las historias multilingües, multiculturales y multiétnicas de los usuarios de lenguas mediadas por el translenguaje mejoró significativamente sus convenciones de construcción de significado, fomentó la participación en la instrucción de clase y proporcionó prácticas de enseñanza y evaluación justas e incluyentes que reconocieron, celebraron y utilizaron los diversos contextos de los estudiantes.

Key words: Translenguaje, Educación en lenguas, Identidad lingüística, Bilingüismo, Pedagogía, Evaluación, Primera Lengua (*LI*).

Introduction

Grounded on the fact that second and foreign learning and teaching practices have been constantly trying to avoid, disregard, and often prohibit the inclusion of learners' first language(s) (*LI*) since its contribution to the target language development seemed not that beneficial, the realm of possibilities when it comes to including and embracing learners' overall linguistic repertoire for them to succeed when going through their language acquisition journey is unexplored (García, 2009). As a result, emerging-alternative pedagogical approaches that tackle language education minding students' languages, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and identities were imminent to take place (García & Lin, 2017). Overall, traditional conceptions of learning and teaching languages is mutating now to a much more linguistically wide and encompassing perspective on what languages are and how they should be appropriately taught, assessed, included, utilized, and preserved in and outside the classroom (García & Li, 2014).

Consequently, first, Williams (1994) introduced the term “trawsieithu” in the Welsh language to address the usage of English, and Welsh interchangeably for a variety of purposes in bilingual classrooms (p. 263). Later, Baker (2001) translated the term into English as

“translanguaging” (p. 280), and other authors since then (Canagarajah, 2011; Li, 2010; Li, 2017), especially García (2009), has helped conceptualize it. Hence, it can be defined as the conscious and purposeful unification of students’ languages into one unified linguistic system that allows them to engage, meaning-making wise, with the world around them by using their full linguistic repertoire, not just the target language or their *L1*. Then, Li & Zhu (2013) contributed to said conceptualization by drawing on the prefix *trans*: first, translanguaging is a *trans*-system as it goes beyond linguistics and traditional social structures; second, it is also *trans*-formative, given that it represents users’ diverse “linguistic”, “social”, and “cognitive” abilities to engage with the world (p. 5); third, it is *trans*-disciplinary, since translanguaging practices are unique and mutable enough to be deployed in a multimodal fashion (Kress, 2009).

Also, it tries to revoke the mythical battle of mother tongue vs. target language(s), as it proposes a dual-pedagogical approach that will foster language learning, and not place certain languages on top of others (García, 2009). This transcendental concept challenges the bilingual classroom for it propitiates new conceptions on what language is, how it can be measured, and inclusive teaching practices that consider it as such. In addition, translanguaging is born out of the concept of languaging, “a process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language” (Swain, 2006, p. 98). From this lens, language is conceived as a process, rather than as a static object. Moreover, it also transcends a fixed of grammar rules and vocabulary and emphasizes the flexible context-dependent nature of communication. So, considered altogether, it is composition and history, translanguaging is now being intersected in language education scenarios by trying to dismantle traditional, dominant, and hegemonic discourses to better intervene language learners, while, at the same time, validating who they are and where they come from.

Although it might seem appropriate, and straightforward to include translanguaging practices in the language classroom due to the logical benefits it supposes to students’ language learning journey, the *romanticization* of this approach could deprive educational stakeholders of seeing the actual efficacy and efficiency of the current-incipient state of translanguaging-based teaching, learning, and assessing practices researchers are working on. As of now, there are not clear theoretical tenets or enough fieldwork to utterly accept

translanguaging practices as valid or more suitable than others in the realm of second/foreign/additional language education (Canagarajah, 2011). It is then necessary to be cautious about its implementation, given the lack of research and stated as a premise status. Overall, upcoming deepening on the translanguaging foundational basis, as well as structured and defined pedagogical approaches based on it are to be conceptualized, so that informed decisions could be enacted by educational stakeholders that favor students' language development.

Now, how could this integration be portrayed in a context such as the Colombian one, in which English is taught throughout the whole educational system? English teachers effectuate translanguaged classroom practices, at least, some of them, given that often it is a mere switch between languages aiming at scaffolding certain explanations or subject matter, considered code-switching without them knowing so (Makulloluwa, 2013). English instruction is usually a mixture between the *L1* and the target language in most elementary, middle, and high school scenarios; instructional materials are rarely translated or presented in the *L1* given that such actions might be detrimental to students' language learning journey; the usage of the *L1* in higher education concerning English testing and assessment is normally absent or penalized (Shin *et al.*, 2019).

Despite the national government's efforts to promote bilingual education in the country, a lack of conceptualization and attention when designing and implementing language policies has been given to the impact the *L1* has on the development of the English language proficiency (Peláez & Usma, 2017). That is, students' full linguistic resources seem to be absent from language education contexts in the country as well as language policy agendas. Is then the purpose of this text to revise and examine, grounded on a critical literature review stance (Mora, 2020), the implications translanguaging might have over language education, propitiate reflection upon those, as well as proposing upcoming venues of research inquiry that deal with translanguaging, possibly portrayed in local Colombian educational contexts.

Method

Language education scholars and researchers are vividly advocating for a bigger and relentless wave of translanguaging research to strengthen its theoretical foundation and systematization, therefore, its replication and implementation rate, especially in educational contexts (Canagarajah, 2011). However, it seems that time to reflect upon what translanguaging is implicating to language users' identities, rooted and traditional language conceptions, socially oppressed and minoritarian languages, flexible and emerging bilingualism, among many other influenced social domains, is capital to ask the right questions, and find appropriate answers. Based on the previous premise, this critical literature review is born from, as it intends to gain a “deeper understanding” by analyzing existing literature about a certain topic (Mora, 2020, p. 1), translanguaging in this case.

Consequently, the main question that guided the present critical literature review study was: rooted on a critical literature review lens, how has translanguaging evolved and what are its implications to language learning and teaching? Now, considering the vastness of said scope, four purposeful chosen categories that served as research compasses to delimit the literature search and review were translanguaging and its repercussions on bilingualism, language identity, pedagogy, and assessment; all of them under the realm of language education. However, the first two categories entailed more than findings related to educational scenarios, since bilingualism and language identity are playing a major role in bilingual people's lives when engaging socially, politically, and cognitively with the world around them (García, 2009).

In addition, a terminology caveat for the reader is to be stated. Given the incipient literature there is about translanguaging, there was not a distinction between foreign, second, or additional language education-based studies selection (although translanguaging proposes an alternative and encompassing terminology elaborated later in the text). Nonetheless, the Colombian educational context will be further analyzed considering the literature review so that plausible implementations of research findings can be adapted in local language classrooms.

Four examining questions were used to tackle the literature (Griffee, 2014):

1. *What is the gist of this paper? What aspects have not been addressed, tackled, or explored?*
2. *In what historical context does this paper place itself within the realm of language education and translanguaging?*
3. *What are the main methodologies and research approaches underpinning the claims made?*
4. *What theoretical and practical implications does the research on translanguaging hold?*

Moreover, to try to ensure reproducibility and systematic text search and selection, the following databases were used: *EBSCO, Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC*. Also, the leading search term was translanguaging, followed by second language, foreign language, additional language, bilingualism, language identity, pedagogy, or assessment. The articles, books, book chapters, research reports, and master's or doctoral theses that had the previous terms whether in their abstracts or titles were selected, examined, and (if appropriate) read. As a result, sixty-one research papers composed the review of the search. Another caveat to be mindful of is that this study is a descriptive, and almost exploratory one. Since translanguaging was born 30 years ago (Williams, 1994), its conceptualization and tenets' reinforcement are a work in progress led by top scholars and researchers in the field of language education. So, although there are going to be introduced powerful, encompassing, claims about deep-seeded language education traditions, these are suggested to be analyzed with discretion until theoretical maturity ultimately permeates translanguaging.

Critical literature review

Translanguaging and language identity

Grounded on an identity conception stated by Møller *et al.* (2014), identities are constantly configured and reconfigured through language users' tools to convey meaning. These are socially constructed, shaped, and transformed when interacting with other individuals. A correlation between language users' identity formation and translanguaging practices, inside and outside educational settings, will be presented. Hence, issues in terms of multilingual

and multiethnic backgrounds, oppression by standardized-normalized societal norms, as well as creative displays of language usage, among others, will be discussed throughout this section.

Implicit-social agreements are constantly negotiated among individuals, as demonstrated in Poza (2019) ethnographic study which was trying to unveil how students' translanguaging practices influenced their identities and social relationships. Consequently, students were naturally using translanguaging to participate in social interactions with their peers inside and outside the classroom. It was evident that American sociocultural norms were appropriated and effectively evidenced in discourse. Also, ethnocentrism myths were debunked when students from multiple and diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds effectively communicated, played, and coexisted through the lens of translanguaging. In the end, translanguaging could assist students in forging social alliances inside and outside the classroom, expressing their preferences and emotions, as well as their perceived identities.

In contrast, Li (2010) explored how the constructed discursive identity permeated by Chinese university students' multiethnic and multilingual backgrounds could transcend the classroom. He named "translanguaging spaces" the social space in which language users can intentionally deploy all their linguistic and social resources to negotiate meaning and their purposeful shaped identities (p. 13); as multilingualism was allowing students to have a mutable and adjustable representation of themselves depending on shifting communicative circumstances. Thus, translanguaging enabled the co-creation of an interactive communication channel by providing them with a sense of "connectedness" that directly affected how they behaved and responded to one another (Li, 2010, p. 14). Later, Li & Zhu (2013) in a parallel ethnographic study with Chinese university youths, found out that participants' translanguaging use was more than merely blending linguistic features on cue, rather, it evoked a mutual-constant identity configuration among language users. All in all, through the lens of social interaction, translanguaging may be transformative in the sense that flexible and multilingual rapport amid individuals might integrate enriching, and diverse rhetorical semiotic features compared to the normalized monolingual type of interaction.

In addition, translanguaging-based pedagogies might directly impact the intricate relationship between identity, translanguaging conventions, and educational environments. Creese & Blackledge (2015) discussed it in their research that tried to illustrate the triad through a classroom example. Students were then required to use their full linguistic resources in engaging activities while researchers were taking notes, and actively participating in classroom procedures. It was evident that students' languages were not distant linguistic codes nor should have been regarded as individual systems. Instead, diverse linguistic conventions were mobilized as communication took place. That is, the involvement of translanguaging-based pedagogies in educational settings provided a much more encompassing and respectful teaching approach to multilingual-multiethnic learners' personal histories.

García-Mateus & Palmer (2017) also addressed the school setting, learners' identity, and translanguaging based-pedagogies; but also included the development of critical metalinguistic awareness so that positive identities could be formed in an elementary Two-way dual bilingual education school. Communication between students entailed two main aspects. First, information was delivered and conveyed. Second, the co-construction and shaping of their identities, and stances were also simultaneously flourishing. On the other hand, critical metalinguistic awareness instruction through the lens of translanguaging could empower and give voice to the voiceless in classroom scenarios. Since students' minoritarian languages were constantly oppressed in a monolingual-standard society, inequality and linguistic dominance were addressed as well. In summary, the inclusion of translanguaging-based pedagogies not only fostered inclusive language learning, but also social justice might emerge to confront how languages are being socially configured and oppressed.

Schreiber (2015) extended the lens through which translanguaging had usually been observed with, as it showed how ICT tools could empower the natural usage of full linguistic capacity so that digital identities had a place to be. The paper presents a qualitative case study of a university Serbian student and rapper. It was discussed that online environments permitted creativity and free deployment of identity and linguistic resources by the language learner. On the contrary, university language classrooms were strict, standard, and rigid in their monolingual tone as means of instruction and communication, these were limiting the

learner's creativity and linguistic spontaneity as a result. So, by implementing multimodal registers into language tasks, language users could project their identities and cultural baggage, in other words, language classes that transcend merely academic endeavors and incorporate students' realities and interests were to be proposed.

A comparable landscape was also portrayed by Ng & Lee (2019) in their ethnographic study by presenting how multilingual learners made sense of their world via translanguaging in corporate communicative environments. The focus group was five multilingual young adults in Malaysia that graduated college and then were working in their respective jobs. It was uncovered that corporate environments' language policies were sometimes detrimental to multilingual employees. Since display of full linguistic resources might be mistaken for a lack of professionalism or proficiency in the usual business language, English. So, digital-informal communication channels outside of the workforce scenarios were spaces for language users to negotiate their multilingual and multiethnic identities through diverse semiotic and creative correspondence. Considering all of this, corporate environments in some parts of Malaysia seemed to be unsure to identify the benefits of having multilingual employees, and holistically regard their users' language identities deployed in the labor environment.

On the other hand, Kalan (2022) ethnographic study analyzed language identity and translanguaging as well, with the distinctive trait of being mediated through professional and multilingual writers' written productions. Their writing identity was shaped and permeated by past experiences, beliefs, ideas, and languages. Several positive implications translanguaging triggered in writers were the usage of Non-Anglo-American words that portrayed better the intended meaning than the English version ones. Alliteration embedding to effectuate certain musicality and rhythm present in other languages. A wider range of vocabulary due to world literature exposure in multiple languages decorated writers' productions. And longer sentences compared to English standard writing were perceived as an immersive literary trait rather than a syntactic mistake. On the whole, it may be said that writers' multicultural and multilingual backgrounds helped them shape a unique writing identity that stood on their experiences, beliefs, and languages.

Translanguaging and bilingualism

Defining what “bilingualism” is has been a daunting task for scholars in the field of second and foreign language education. It was first argued that the term was referring to the mastery of two languages, then variations of that general description were brought into the discussion as researchers noticed that second language users were proficient in a given branch of the language, but rarely in all of them (grammar, vocabulary, fluency, etc.). Now, more recently, “bilingual competencies” are being addressed since assessing, and describing language users’ “bilingualism” features seems fairer by dividing into chunks or “competencies” language performance. In summary, a framework of reference that embraces and appropriately characterizes “bilingualism” in absolutely all case scenarios appears to be reckless minding the complexity of language usage (Maftoon & Shakibafar, 2011, p. 82). For this reason, as developed in the previous section, translanguaging will serve again as a candle in the dark, given its implications on traditionally established conceptions of language, bilingual and multilingual education.

Otheguy *et al.* (2015) took the leading role with their article that posed a conceptual shift of “named languages” (e.g., Spanish, English, French, and so forth) considering a linguistic lens that reinforced the appropriateness of the translanguaging theory (p. 286). It highlighted the distinction between two denotations of what a language is. One was the conception of the named language, which is socially and politically constructed, and another entails the user’s “linguistic features of the mental grammar,” which is individually and uniquely shaped, i.e., “idiolects” (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015, p. 288). Now, what people use to communicate was grammaticists’ field of study, idiolects, albeit their features might be coined as French, English, or Spanish belongings. Furthermore, it was also restated that language users did not possess multiple linguistic systems attached to named languages, one for each language a person knows. Instead, there was one idiolect, that is, a unified linguistic system that allows users to engage with semiotic practices in a diverse, unique, and functional manner breaking barriers of mandatory (and often imposed) monolingual and hegemonic language discourses.

As a response to such ambitious statements by the previous authors, scholars, especially, MacSwan (2017), rejected and did not agree with translanguaging conceptions and implications on language usage. A traditional view of multiple language registers that denotes different linguistic systems within individuals was upheld and advocated by her against translanguaging's modern unitary view of language. After such critique, Otheguy *et al.* (2019) again, refuted MacSwan's argument by saying that the notion of the unitary view of language translanguaging proposes did not negate the existence or the significance in the social-cultural realm of bilingualism and multilingualism entail. As opposed to that (they argued), the unitary view indicates that such categorizations, i.e., bilingualism and multilingualism, were valid social-political constructions.

Nonetheless, they did not depict, at the psycholinguistic level, what was happening in the mind of language users. Since they did not possess two separate linguistic systems, for example, one for Spanish and one for English, but a unitary one that comprises, incorporates, and validated both. Then they furthered elaborated that as translanguaging keeps progressing in terms of its theoretical foundations and repercussions to rooted language conceptions, bilingual and multilingual education, a set of criticisms may arise and challenge the shifts and social transformation (as its prefix indicates) translanguaging intends to reach.

On the other hand, a descriptive and realistic study by Heugh (2015) was aiming at exposing mismatches between language policies, foreign hegemonic discourses adopted but not adapted, and current educational needs in the South African context. It was brought into discussion the fact that current educational paradigms, regarding language teaching, are mostly imitated from northern contrasting scenarios. Due to this, students' minoritarian languages were usually left aside from educational involvement and usage, given the deficit mentality such inclusion might negatively represent language learning, often internalized from traditional views of languages reiterated from global deities. As a result, translanguaging approaches become the mediators between restricted and exclusive language policies in a multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural context such as South Africa to validate, utilize, and preserve students' diverse backgrounds. In general, a variety, and not-aligned-conceptual stances education systems have about bilingualism, and language proficiency, directly affect clear, structural, and inclusive teaching and learning practices.

Although not only theoretical tenets or uncontextualized language policies have a role when conceiving bilingualism, and language learning and teaching, there is also influence on these matters by stakeholders' beliefs and assumptions on what a language is and how it manifests. As Pontier (2022) suggested in his 3-year study that took place at a university in the southeastern United States which sought to analyze 156 pre-service teachers' beliefs and assumptions about bilingual education before and after taking a teacher multilingualism training course, based on educators' *cosmovision* concerning language ideologies, they would perform accordingly in their classrooms. Furthermore, even though participants were exposed to an intentional, inclusive, and flexible bilingualism course, a substantial change in their rooted, traditional, and sometimes deficit-based perspective on students' linguistic repertoire was not the case. Nevertheless, it indeed revealed that constantly reinforced discourses by society, language policies, and the government, among others, were difficult to overcome and transform into new encompassing tenets that constitute teachers' belief systems, and as a result, students' education.

It is then suggested the term “emergent bilinguals” as a response, i.e., language learners that draw from their full linguistic capacity to make sense of their world through translanguaging practices (García, 2009, p. 52). Then, a dynamic assessment was also redefined as a flexible zone for learners to show what they knew by letting them access their language resources at will so that limiting, unfair, and monolingual assessments ceased labeling students as disabled, when, they were not introduced to inclusive testing practices. After the terminology was shifted, language ideology changed, therefore, teaching, learning, and assessing rituals permitted learners to deploy their true potential. Having a translanguaging-based perspective while conceiving bilingualism, named languages, English as a second or foreign language learners, and many other terms that polarize language scholars and researchers, means that a flexible lens should be worn by the beholder to holistically conceptualize said terms in a just and inclusive manner. Accordingly, what the unitary view of language translanguaging entails in language education is that users do not possess multiple linguistic systems for each of the languages they know, on the contrary, they have a unique idiolect, i.e., a unified linguistic system that enables them to engage meaning-making wise with the world around them.

Translanguaging and pedagogy

Translanguaging permeating pedagogical approaches intends to reconstruct the language classroom into a fairer and much more encompassing learning scenario that regards, celebrates, and uses multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic diversity to empower the powerless, voice the voiceless, and disrupt hegemonic and rooted discriminatory language discourses (Li & Lin, 2019). In consequence, this section intends to articulate on the significance translanguaging-based pedagogies have over language learning and teaching, as well as tackling the hidden discourses traditional language teaching methods implicitly or explicitly have normalized over time.

Some of the emancipatory attributes of translanguaging-based pedagogies were analyzed in Prada (2022) research paper. His study carried out and inspected a heritage/native's course final project in which eighteen bilingual Latinx students narrated their personal histories through digital translanguaging so that they could deploy their total linguistic resources while conveying meaningful information about them. Thus, flexible digital storytelling allowed students' diverse cultural, and linguistic backgrounds to merge into engaging pedagogical writing tasks. As their stories narrated with their personally chosen linguistic resources, and not the ones mandated by the *status quo*, empowered their meaning-making practices in creative and innovative forms. Thereby, social justice and awareness were enacted through this translanguaging-based approach since it gave room for students' native/heritage languages to be included in learning-teaching scenarios, therefore, acknowledgment, validation, and meaning-building on them reassured their marginalized / minoritized linguistic resources' usefulness in academic scenarios. Overall, pedagogical translanguaging not only served as an inclusive and fair approach to multilinguals' language learning, but also might promote social justice and awareness towards their marginalized, oppressed, and (often invalid) native / heritage languages.

Concerning this matter, Zavala (2019) also highlights in her descriptive-theoretical study the transformative, and empowering characteristics of translanguaging pedagogies. However, she introduced an important caveat on the contextual variations this approach suffers from a certain educational scenario to another given the influence monolingual-

dominated language settings had over language policy and teaching practices. That is, grounded on the notion that translanguaging might be a redeveloping pedagogical practice (García, 2009), it is suggested that said feature adjusts itself depending on the context in which it is carried out and the language regulations that govern it. As a result of this, translanguaging pedagogies can be conceived as a mere scaffold in a rigid traditional monolingual setting, as a simple communicative tool solely concerning the oral domain, or as an additional language system strategy that is occasionally appropriate to include but not fully integrate into the encompassing notion of classroom dynamics, bilingualism, teaching, learning, and assessment.

Nonetheless, a constant willingness to redefine, reconceptualize and recontextualize language learning and teaching is still prevalent regardless of the barriers tradition and old language assumptions imply. As an example, Hurst & Mona (2017) discussed the implications of implementing translanguaging pedagogies into a university course curriculum in South Africa. Examination of teaching, learning, and students' interaction through this lens occurred; their educational context was quite limited, as most South African universities' language requirements and instruction of all undergraduates were English mediated. Therefore, students who came from impoverished and disadvantaged backgrounds were incapable of accessing higher education due to their limited English performance (despite knowing often more than one native/indigenous language). Then, the study concluded that involving students' languages in classroom instructions and procedures voiced their oppressed and socially invalid multilingual resources through translanguaging. In other words, translanguaging pedagogies were propitiating linguistic justice in their specific academic scenarios. Overall, socially just teaching approaches that preserve and celebrate students' diversity, i.e., their gender, languages, cultures, ethnicities, religions, and socio-economic status, among others, were to be purposefully enacted and embraced in elementary, middle, and higher education.

Moreover, an exploration of critical metalinguistic awareness and translanguaging pedagogies in an elementary Two-way dual bilingual education school was investigated by García-Mateus & Palmer (2017). The paper analyzed flexible teaching practices by observing, video recording, and interviewing seven students from an English-Spanish dual

class. Two students out of the seven initially intervened were the main data source of information. It was evident that not only the involvement of students' full linguistic and cultural resources to nurture inclusive language learning through a translanguaging teaching approach was taking place, but also explicit instruction on how languages were being configured, structured, and oppressed was discussed. Ultimately, critical metalinguistic awareness instruction with a translanguaged perspective could enlighten language users on the dynamics of power and its relation to language in classroom scenarios, therefore inequality and linguistic dominance could emerge visible and be confronted.

Similarly, Creese & Blackledge (2010), addressed a flexible bilingual teaching approach (translanguaging-based) in two community language schools in the UK. They implemented four intertwined case studies of Gujarati, Turkish, Cantonese Mandarin, and Bengali schools. Participants (students, teachers, and sometimes administrators) were observed, audio recorded, and interviewed using an ethnographic team approach. Yet only two of these case studies, the Gujarati, and Cantonese Mandarin ones, were reported. It can be drawn from it that meaning and language registers were negotiated and purposefully used when instructing students, some examples were: both languages (students' native and target language) served as scaffolds to elaborate on the tasks proposed; lexical translation or a combination of a term in both languages were assisting their vocabulary building; simultaneous usage of both languages when communicating was also taking place to engage with multiple levels of proficiency in the audience (assemblies or regular classes). In summary, a conception shift towards the integration of students' languages into the pedagogical realm, as in, moving on from accepting and tolerating their full linguistic resources in the classroom to cultivating their languages to foster meaningful and contextual teaching-learning procedures might significantly enhance their language learning experience.

Canagarajah (2011) reported on some implications of what adopting a translanguaging pedagogical approach entails, especially in the context of academic writing in higher education. His paper employed a case study research approach of a graduate writing course for second language learners. Also, a classroom ethnography on participants' identity construction and literacy awareness was administered. At first, translanguaging pedagogies implied a more encompassing, inclusive, and respectful approach to language teaching and

learning. However, its incipient theoretical basis was lacking the maturation necessary to guide teachers and educational stakeholders on what was appropriate, measurable, and nurturing linguistic practices by multilingual learners. Further research related to how students' diverse linguistic code inclusion may be appropriate, given the variety of languages, dialects, and variations of their repertoires seemed to be required to set the necessary theoretical tenets for translanguaging pedagogies to flourish.

Translanguaging and assessment

Monoglossic approaches to foreign/second language learning and teaching have dominated educational contexts for many years. Specifically, multilingual learners and communities used to be left aside from language learning dynamics given the drawbacks of complex linguistic repertoires, multicultural and multiethnic backgrounds represented to said traditional stances (García & Torres-Guevara, 2010). Furthermore, assessment and testing are no exception to the monolingual-standardized discourse they made language education stakeholders believe. Since most foreign/second language assessment constructs tend to measure only the target language proficiency, isolating any other linguistic interference that could negatively affect language development (Shohamy, 2011). It is then the intention of this section to bring into discussion the implications translanguaging principles have over traditional assessment and testing, as well as their relevance for learners' diverse personal histories.

A paradigm shift is essential to conceive multilingual education as an asset rather than as a deficit that needs solving and suitable intervention. As was shown in Lopez *et al.* (2017) study that posed a beginning basis for initial content assessments in newly arrived emergent bilinguals in the *USA*. Students could deploy their full content skills capacity if initial translanguaging-based assessment practices were mediating their performance, given that subject matter proficiency remained intact regardless of the linguistic system in which it is being evoked. In that sense, the notion that test accommodations were completely different than permitting students to use their full linguistic resources to perform in initial content assessments was also addressed. So, bilingualism was then seen as several action paths for

students to show what they know and were capable of when facing content in a certain language.

Although moving from a narrow-minded conception of bilingualism and assessment takes time, researchers such as Baker & Hope (2019) are constantly pushing forward the frontier of including more just testing practices. They were trying to uncover the incidence of implementing a translanguaging-based listening test (English French) in university professors to significantly check passive comprehension skills in academic French communicative scenarios. Such integration assisted participants when grasping what was asked of them, thus, lowered levels of anxiety were documented as a positive outcome of this implementation. Nonetheless, a deficit perspective was assumed towards translanguaging by some participants of this study, as they conceived the involvement of their full linguistic capacity as an indicator of poor mastery of the target language assessed (French). Therefore, the fact that translanguaging-based assessment practices were starting to be more accepted in higher educational institutions is proof that monolingual discourses were being reshaped and reconsidered.

Saputra & Akib (2018) analyzed another higher education case scenario. It was a qualitative-descriptive study of two English lecturers at an Indonesian University aiming at analyzing their students' formative assessment and lecturing procedures assisted by translanguaging. Professors' usage of translanguaging concerning formative-oral assessments was evidenced as (a) "intersentential translanguaging", which referred to the alternation of sentences between languages; (b) "insertion translanguaging" that was related to how lexical elements in the speech were utilized interchangeably among languages; and (c) entire translanguaging, which was coined to full translanguaged discourses intending to scaffold instructions, peer interactions, and overall participation in the lecture's dynamics (Saputra & Akib, 2018, p. 146). As a result, the involvement of students' full linguistic resources when lecturing and assessing them was making classrooms a safer, more dynamic, and meaningful multilingual learning environment.

Morales *et al.* (2020) on the other hand, examined how translanguaging approaches could affect English pre-service teachers' instruction and assessment. No content was being

taught or measured through English as in most translanguaging and assessment studies. Instead, students could draw from their entire language capacities to perform better on university-level language tests. Although researchers were testing the English language per se (formal bits of the language), the integration of Spanish in all the assessments students were exposed to increase their performance compared to monolingual-standard past assessments. On the whole, an encompassing approach to test takers' multicultural and multilingual backgrounds was also regarded when instructing and assessing them. As their “histories,” “ideologies,” and “inner policies” were somehow influenced by the languages they possessed, allowing them to retrieve from those resources acknowledged that diversity which oftentimes, “does not belong”, in the modern language classroom (Morales *et al.*, 2020, pp. 162-179).

Bauer *et al.* (2018), through their case study of six African American and Latinx students' literacy development in an immersed two-way-dual language program intervened by means of translanguaging also analyzed literacy assessments. Hence, translanguaging-based assessments provided a complex display of students' linguistic capacity to be later discussed. Their literacy development was dynamic and flexible, traits that monolingual-standardized testing often disregarded. Also, while conservative literacy assessment was used to penalize errors when reading, translanguaging permeated assessment, on the other hand, sought to understand multilinguals' usage of their linguistic repertoire to later materialize effective teaching that suited students' languaging processes. Thus, minoritized groups that were frequently excluded in many school dynamics could be equipped with diverse learning opportunities that celebrated and successfully included their diverse linguistic and cultural personal histories.

To continue expanding on literacy development and assessment through the lens of translanguaging, Steele *et al.* (2022) tackled traditional assessment and teaching discourses to propose an alternative paradigm to address learners' multilingual and multiethnic frameworks. That is, transmodality, a term that borrows tenets from multimodality (Kress, 2009) and translanguaging theories to provide learners with much more diverse and flexible channels of communication and meaning making. Transmodality then draws from the multiple modes of meaning students could access as well as from their full linguistic skills

to represent more accurately what their language identities tell them to. In addition, transmodal assessments emerged as a response to the traditional, monolingual, standardized type of assessments that excluded multiethnic and multilingual students' scenes. These allowed ideas to be depicted, examined, and tested with a wider lens that would let students freely dive into their linguistic, cultural, meaning modes, histories, and language identity resources.

Discussion and conclusion

This study has detailed, based on a delimited critical literature review, what translanguaging is, and how it positively interrelates with notions of bilingualism, language identity construction, flexible-inclusive pedagogies, and assessment and testing practices grounded in the realm of language education. In that sense, it seems appropriate to take a reflexive stance and go beyond the findings so that meaningful and productive discussions on the advancements of translanguaging, as theory and practice might become an appealing subject of matter to upcoming researchers, and scholars whose research ideas and questions could be drawn from this section (Mora, 2020).

First, although language identities seem to be (re)configured while individuals translanguage and engage in meaning-making practices with the world around them, their communicative context is providing the learning opportunities to do so, in other words, all reviewed studies concerning language identity construction and translanguaging mediation were immersive settings providing with a constant (whether outside or inside the classroom) exposure to the aimed language to be developed. In consequence, is students' translanguaging phenomena regarding their social and identity construction only possible in sheltered-language-immersive conditions receiving continuous and natural exposure to the target language(s)? Or could the same levels of linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics appropriation be reproduced in a less intensive language-instructed educational setting, e.g., the Colombian context?

Additionally, discussions on identity, multilingual resources, and ownership of multicultural backgrounds are subjects often researched and tackled in children's education,

i.e., early, and elementary education. Middle, higher, and university education seems to be less considered when involving translanguaging and identity formation, the few studies that do face such circumstances, tend to remain in the descriptive domain. Probably since standardized, hegemonic, monolingual discourses inevitably permeate more those educational spheres, given the instrumentalization and positioning of languages globalization is making us believe (Usma, 2009) which is more relevant in higher education, therefore, there is no clear interest to nurture and leverage individual diverse languages and language identities.

Second, the asset-based perspective over the deficit one on students' multiple languages and backgrounds when assessing their language performance appears to be highly beneficial for them, linguistic, testing, and social justice-wise. However, teachers / test administrators might need to cope with multiple linguistic systems displayed in assessments if this is the case. Not only that, but also test grading should be done by multilinguals that possess the same languages as students to decrease biases and truly guarantee test administrators' validity (Maturana, 2014). As a result, practicality (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019) when conceiving assessment and testing practices mediated by translanguaging become a critical aspect to regard, as not all language teachers are multilinguals nor highly proficient in all language domains to assess learners' language performance seriously and responsibly.

Third, in light of the literature reviewed, the conception of a translanguaging-based assessment is merely used as a formative scaffold-oriented tool that supports students' language learning/acquisition process, but it is not proposed as a summative assessment procedure that enables teachers and educational stakeholders to make decisions on learners' academic lives, as it is already taking place but under monolingual, standardized and not language inclusive standards. Accordingly, summative assessment and translanguaging integration are still unexplored quicksand, potentially given the linguistic diversity issue educational stakeholders would face, as students sometimes possess more than one language that, in theory, should be included in assessing and teaching. This represents a practical and theoretical issue, as assessing parameters are difficult to systematize and carry out.

And finally, the linguistic basis that is trying to support and elevate translanguaging from a developing, modern take on language to a legitimate practice and accurate depiction of bilinguals' language use (García, 2009; García & Li, 2014; Otheguy *et al.*, 2015; Otheguy *et al.*, 2019) is to this day, causing theoretical opposition given its implications on current notions of bilingualism and named languages. Consequently, upcoming research that extends the view of the unitary conception of languages (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015) is paramount to continue spreading and systematizing the transformative effects translanguaging might provoke in language education. All things considered, the first step to propitiate change that could be of any benefit to language learners and users' multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic backgrounds is to reflect, assess, and shift (if convinced) the *cosmovision* to appropriately educate individuals while preserving and respecting the diversity they bring to the classroom.

Even though most of the reviewed research was carried out in immersive, dual-language, or highly input-exposed contexts, some implications of said findings could be transferrable to the Colombian educational context to propitiate local translanguaging-based transformation in the language classroom, these are:

1. The asset-based perspective on students' additional languages over the deficit one. Inclusion, usage, and preservation of students' home languages in the language classroom might provide learners with a wide range of linguistic and communicative base skills for them to participate and engage early on in classroom dynamics.
2. Flexible and dynamic assessment practices. Students' language performance deployment could be significantly enhanced if their full linguistic repertoire were included and used when assessing and testing take place. Given that there are plenty of skills (comprehending, synthesizing, categorizing, and so forth) they already know how to do, it would solely be a matter of transferring and mirroring existing abilities into the target language.
3. Language identity construction and advocacy. Although it is highly probable students lack exposition to the target language they are trying to learn, an advocacy stance might be held by teachers so that students become aware of what experiencing and perceiving

the world through the lens of other languages look, feel like, and means to their conception of reality.

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