



2 Translanguaging Practices for Developing Biliteracy

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Bilingual students have been traditionally defined from a monolingual and static view of language, and teachers have treated them as monolinguals learning a second language. However, recent research has led to shifts about our understandings of bilingualism. Cummins (2007) challenges us to question three assumptions:

Assumptions to Question

1. The target language should be used exclusively for instructional purposes without recourse to student's home language.
2. Translation between the home and target language has no place in the language classroom.
3. In different types of bilingual programs, the two languages should be kept rigidly separate.

The core of these assumptions is deeply rooted in monolingualism and has dominated educational contexts that aim to serve emergent bilingual students. In the last decade, there has been a change in understanding how to better educate bilingual students to include *translanguaging*, a flexible, dynamic communicative practice of bilinguals (Mercuri & Musanti, 2021).

Both languages are always active in the mind of a bilingual person. Velasco and García (2014) describe *translanguaging* practices as the bilingual's ability to select features from their full linguistic repertoire to accomplish a task. From an instructional lens, *translanguaging* is the strategic use of students' home languages during instruction. For example, teachers can use students' home languages to scaffold instruction and to build metalinguistic awareness ensuring linguistic equity for all students. This practice embraces students' complete linguistic repertoire to make meaning, empowers them as they become biliterate, and connects them with their cultural and linguistic identities.

Translanguaging and Biliteracy

From a holistic view of bilinguals' language use, translanguaging is not simply moving from one language to another within oral interaction, but the strategic use of the linguistic practices of the

students who speak more than one language. Bilinguals' unique linguistic repertoire is made of features of both languages that are interdependent and work in unison to access knowledge and convey meaning (García et al., 2017).

Teachers working with bilingual learners need to strategically create instructional translanguaging spaces by intentionally designing mini-lessons that allow bilingual learners to flexibly use their full linguistic repertoire as they become bilingual and biliterate. Mercuri and Musanti (2021) define biliteracy as an ongoing, flexible, bidirectional, and dynamic process that bilinguals experience as they engage in using both languages to communicate. Teachers working with bilingual students in different types of dual language and bilingual contexts facilitate biliteracy development by connecting both languages of instruction through effective translanguaging pedagogies.

Translanguaging Pedagogies

Effective dual language teachers plan instruction grounded in key translanguaging practices. Two effective practices for use during small and whole group instruction are

1. **Crosslinguistic Connections (CLC)** to facilitate the development of students' metalinguistic awareness and
2. **Preview-View-Review (P-V-R)** to enhance reading skills across languages and provide access to content.

Crosslinguistic Connections

The implementation of CLC is a key element in a translanguaging pedagogy and in bilingual classrooms that intend to develop biliteracy. Cummins (2017) recognizes the dynamic nature of multilingual practices as using knowledge learned across different languages. Escamilla et al. (2014) refer to this idea as bidirectional language application, for example, from Spanish to English and from English to Spanish. Therefore, it is essential to promote the development of metalinguistic awareness by creating translanguaging spaces where students can analyze and identify similarities and differences between words, sentences, and paragraph structures.

This strategy requires students to connect what they know in one language and use it in the other and vice versa and teachers to plan explicit and contextualized teaching of these connections addressing morphology, phonology, grammar, pragmatics, and syntax (Mercuri & Musanti, 2021). In sum, CLC is the pedagogy used by teachers to guide students in noticing similarities and differences as they talk about both languages side by side through informal conversations and preplanned mini-lessons. This bidirectional process allows students to access knowledge and skills learned in one language and apply them to the other language.

To facilitate language transfer, teachers could use anchor charts with vocabulary students are learning in the content areas and/or paired texts. For example, connecting texts in English and Spanish engages and supports students in making meaning about the content of the text and also about the skills addressed in the CLC mini-lesson. As students engage in this pedagogy, they read, listen to, talk about, and write about the specific aspects of language that are the focus of

the lesson. CLC opportunities are aligned to the standards in the curriculum and are facilitated through a fluid, organic, student-centered process. This allows teachers to guide students in an exploration and discovery of language similarities and differences.

Implementing Crosslinguistic Connections in Whole and Small Group

- Select an English/home language paired text and explore them to find examples of the skill to compare.
- Introduce the lesson to the students. For example:
“Today we are going to learn about modal auxiliary verbs in English and Spanish. Modal auxiliary verbs affect or change other verbs in the sentence.”
- Guide students to find examples of the selected skill in both texts.
- Ask students what they notice about the use of the skill in both languages. For example,
“What do you notice about the use of modal auxiliary verbs in English and Spanish?”
- Provide linguistic support through sentence stems for partner talk.
- Guide students as they look for other examples in the texts.
- Cocreate with students an anchor chart to summarize how the languages are similar or different. For example:
“What have we learned about modal auxiliary verbs? What examples could you provide from the texts?”
- Students reflect and write by themselves in their journals using linguistic support as needed. For example:
“In English and Spanish (modal) auxiliary verbs are followed by a verb in (infinitive) form. These verbs show conditions such as (possibility), (desire) or (permission). For example, the modal auxiliary verb (____), it is followed by (____) and shows (____).” [The examples added by students will depend on the paired texts used.]

Preview-View-Review

P-V-R during small group reading instruction is based on the premise that second or target language literacy instruction for emerging bilinguals must build on the literacy skills and conceptual knowledge they have developed in the home language while helping them to acquire the language skills they need to successfully participate in grade-level second/target language literacy instruction. P-V-R is a three-step strategy that draws on the students’ home language to build background and vocabulary before engaging in new topics or reading a text in the target language (Freeman et al., 2018).

Small group reading or guided reading is an instructional practice where the teacher monitors and supports the students’ reading and language development in a small group setting. P-V-R during this practice means the following:

- **Preview:** Students preview vocabulary and concepts in the home language.
- **View:** Students read a related text in the target language.

- **Review:** Students review the reading in the home language.

Similarly to CLC, P-V-R could be done by using paired books (one in each language) with related concepts and vocabulary. In this case, the P-V-R strategy follows the small group reading instructional approach. As students move through this process, they read about, listen to, talk about, and write about the big ideas that connect the books across languages. In doing so, the students have opportunities to intentionally develop academic language at the word, sentence, and text levels.

Implementing Preview-View-Review in Small Group Reading

- **Select** a text to use during small group reading instruction (*view*) that matches the reader. For example, a Level D text in English titled *Where Is My Nest?*
- **Explore** the text for opportunities to connect literacy skills the student has under control in their home language.
- **Analyze** the text for challenges a language learner may encounter, such as specific language patterns.
- **Plan** the *view* (guided reading) lesson and include linguistic support for students to discuss the text. For example, using *Where Is My Nest?*, an English fiction text. *Note:* The *view* should be planned first to decide what will be an appropriate *preview* based on the difficulty of the text and the linguistic ability of the students in the small reading group.
- **Consider** and **plan** how to use the paired text in the home language through a *preview* using a nonfiction paired text (e.g., *Nidos de Hormigas*). This activates background knowledge and supports biliteracy. *Note:* For the *preview*, the level of the text is irrelevant; it is only relevant during the small group lesson in the target language (*view*).
- **Consider** and **plan** what and how to *review* in the home language to clarify, extend ideas, and support biliteracy.

Conclusion

By planning these translanguaging opportunities, CLC and P-V-R, you can guide your students to utilize concepts and skills from one language in the other language. Through this bidirectional process, bilingual learners are afforded the opportunity to improve their oral, reading, and writing performances in both languages.

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