



Review of developing translanguaging repertoires in critical teacher education

 IBRAHIM HALIL TOPAL^a  

Gazi University, Türkiye

Developing Translanguaging Repertoires in Critical Teacher Education by Zhongfeng Tian and Nicole King, De Gruyter Mouton, 2023, 176pp, €114.95 (Paperback) €114.95 (eBook). ISBN 978-3-11-073918-3

Developing Translanguaging Repertoires in Critical Teacher Education is a compelling exploration of the evolving process of building translanguaging skills among teacher educators, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers in diverse U.S. education settings. This book, while primarily aimed at “teachers, teacher educators, and language scholars in the fields of TESOL, bilingual education, and world language” (p. vii), also holds a significant value for language and content teachers interested in translanguaging and critical language learning. Given the predominance of bilingualism and bilingual education in European and North American contexts (Wei, 2023), the need for more research on pre-service teachers’ views on translanguaging (King et al., 2024) and context-specific translanguaging practices (Mendoza et al., 2023), the significance of language learning experiences, challenges, identities from teachers’ perspectives (Burton et al., 2024), and the fact that translanguaging can encourage pre-service teachers to spontaneously reflect on their own language experiences, leading them to critically reassess the role of English in education and communication to promote social justice (Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023), this book might offer valuable insights for its readership.

Initially termed “trowsieithu” by Cen William in the 1980s, rooted in Welsh bilingual education and later translated into English as “translanguaging,” translanguaging emerged as a deliberate cross-curricular strategy for utilizing “two languages within the same lesson for teaching and learning purposes” (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 3). Research on translanguaging has focused on three areas: classroom translanguaging, universal translanguaging, and neurolinguistic translanguaging (Lewis et al., 2012). Xin et al.’s (2024) bibliometric analysis revealed that “multimodality, literacy, English, biliteracy, ethnography, science, discourse analysis, and ESL” (p. 226) were the current research trends in the field, concentrating on applied linguistics and foreign language pedagogy.

Edited by Zhongfeng Tian and Nicole King, both renowned for their research on translingual and transmodal practices of multilingual students and teachers, this book is a response to García et al.’s (2021) call to critically examine the impact of specific languages on multilingual individuals from different racial backgrounds. It encourages educators to view multilingual individuals as empowered and creative language architects.

The book includes seven chapters that explore different methods for supporting the growth of translanguaging abilities, using various qualitative research approaches to examine the possibilities, obstacles, and future paths for reshaping critical teacher education through research-informed studies. Chapter 1 delves into the author's experiences as a teacher educator, emphasizing the importance of embracing a translanguaging approach with bilingual teacher candidates. The work aims to develop a clear understanding of linguistic injustice in education among bilingual teacher candidates and considers translanguaging pedagogy a political act. The author also shows how she incorporates different teaching methods to demonstrate the core practices of bilingual educators. In Chapter 2, a pre-service teacher and her professor use Pansori, a culturally rooted translingual approach, to effectively teach bilingual students. They emphasize the students' unique voices and integrate Pansori teaching methods into their multilingual communication skills through collaborative learning and understanding. This approach allows them to see and comprehend the students differently while valuing diverse ways of knowing as translingual and transcultural educators.

The perspectives of Latinx pre-service teachers regarding their language skills are presented in Chapter 3, highlighting the significance of using a translanguaging approach in teaching and supporting the creation of inclusive classroom environments that champion social justice. The authors delve into how pre-service teachers perceive the social construction of language and utilize their linguistic skills to challenge opposing views, revealing the diverse linguistic portraits and identities of Latinx pre-service teachers. Despite the varied nature of their language repertoires, the authors note that the pre-service teachers did not fully embrace the identity of bilingualism, suggesting a need for more classroom initiatives that celebrate bilingual identities. Chapter 4 surmounts how graduate-level TESOL students at a Southeastern university perceive translanguaging as a form of social justice in a bilingualism course. They analyze tensions surrounding translanguaging and emphasize its transformative and inclusive nature. Using an ecological framework, they identify central tensions in their perspective and call for incremental progress in TESOL teacher education to challenge existing power structures in language. Chapter 5 discusses efforts to enhance in-service teachers' translanguaging skills. This initiative focuses on justice and represents a significant shift from traditional approaches influenced by monolingual ideologies. The author provides practical examples and discusses the potential resistance to this shift. Chapter 6 presents a case study of Purdue University's bilingual education teachers. The study aims to enhance teachers' translanguaging abilities and change their language ideologies to support their students better. Their analysis revealed that all educators adopted a more favorable approach to translanguaging but encountered difficulties implementing it effectively because of district-mandated guidelines and curriculum. The researchers recommend providing additional assistance to help teachers establish a fairer learning atmosphere for English Language Learners.

Ultimately, the last chapter concerns the evolution of the author's approach to translanguaging as a former teacher with 13 years of experience teaching English learners from Mexico and Central America. The author emphasizes the importance of a teacher's translanguaging stance in creating a classroom that embraces translanguaging and explores power dynamics in teacher-student interactions. The chapters primarily zero in on teacher training in the United States and highlight the opportunity for educational stakeholders to work together to cultivate translanguaging abilities considering diverse linguistic and cultural dynamics in the classroom. These studies offer a critical analysis of the connection between language and authority in teacher training settings to advance critical applied linguistics and a more comprehensive teacher education framework that prioritizes social justice.

This book, authored by scholars from diverse U.S. backgrounds, offers practical insights into integrating translanguaging in teacher education. It is invaluable for training culturally and linguistically competent teachers with anti-oppressive perspectives in TESOL, bilingual, dual language, and world language education.

We can raise a few concerns about the book. First, it primarily focuses on the U.S. context and thus excludes a broader global diversity. In addition to its concentration on the American context, the presented case studies included participants from similar backgrounds (e.g., Mexican and Central American). In this regard, it fails to consider inclusivity. Another issue might be regarding the proliferation of case studies. More precisely, these narratives the authors have cited in their chapters are context-specific examples. Other contexts may yield different outcomes regarding bilingual education or translanguaging practices. Furthermore, the language and content of chapters need to be more field-specific and ignore general readership. In parallel to this, the book's target audience might not be "teachers, teacher educators, and language scholars in the fields of TESOL, bilingual education, and world language" (Tiang & King, 2023, p. vii), as the editors claim, but a select of critical teacher education enthusiasts with a particular interest in translanguaging practices among minority groups.

Despite the concerns above, it is crucial to recognize the book's potential impact on translanguaging practices in critical teacher education in the U.S. The ethnographic and phenomenological perspectives it offers, as the editors expressly state, could significantly "develop teachers' translanguaging repertoires in teacher education" (Tian & King, 2023, p.1). This contribution to the field is to be noticed and will surely provide valuable insights for those interested in this area of study.

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