

Code-switching and Translanguaging: Potential Functions in Multilingual Classrooms

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The rise of multilingualism has drawn the attention of language researchers and instructors to various phenomena that have been observed in multilingual speakers, who develop knowledge on how and when to use their languages depending on, for instance, the interlocutors involved in the conversation, the topic of the conversation, and the social context (Reyes, 2004). The present paper aims to focus on two representative multilingual phenomena, namely *code-switching* and *translanguaging*. Each phenomenon will be defined based on existing literature and their potential functions in multilingual classroom research will be highlighted and discussed.

Code-switching is a bilingual-mode activity in which more than one language, typically speakers' native language and second language (L2), are used intrasententially or intersententially (Cook, 2001). Code-switching has not been welcomed in traditional L2 classrooms where the students' target language and native language are clearly divided, and the target language has to be the 'official' language in the classroom. Such a tendency may have been due to the general belief that switching to an alternate language is the result of having incomplete knowledge of the language in which the utterance was initiated (e.g. Reyes, 2004).

Many researchers now admit that code-switching commonly takes place in multilingual contexts, not simply due to lack of knowledge in a particular language, but for different communicative functions. For example, multilingual speakers seem to manipulate their linguistic codes in order to establish multilingual/multicultural identities among themselves (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007), carry out cognitively demanding tasks (Reyes, 2004), or convey the meaning of the intended idea more accurately (Zentella, 1997). Code-switching also has an interpersonal, social function; multilingual speakers consistently monitor and attempt to accommodate to the interlocutors' language use. As the abovementioned functions imply, recent research in multilingualism has examined the positive effects of code-switching in language curricula (e.g. Zentella, 1997). Thus, in current multilingual contexts, code-switching is occasionally employed by language curriculum developers and instructors to assist language practices that multilingual speakers are engaged in (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

The term *translanguaging* is a relatively recent one used in line with code-switching in the literature. Translanguaging is similar to code-switching in that it refers to multilingual speakers' shuttling between languages in a natural manner. However, it started as a pedagogical practice, where the language mode of input and output in Welsh bilingual classrooms was deliberately switched (Williams, 2002). Through strategic classroom language planning that combines two or more languages in a systematic way within the same learning activity, translanguaging seeks to assist multilingual speakers in making meaning, shaping experiences, and gaining deeper understandings and knowledge of the languages in use and even of the content that is being taught (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012; Williams, 2002). García (2009) extended the scope of *translanguaging* to refer to processes that involve

multiple discursive practices, where students incorporate the language practices of school into their own linguistic repertoire freely and flexibly. The act of translanguaging is expected to create a social space for multilingual speakers “by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitudes, beliefs and performance” (Wei, 2011, p. 1223). The languages are, thus, utilized flexibly and strategically so that classroom participants can experience and benefit from the permeability of learning across languages. This allows the participants to be free from undergoing language separation or coping with sociolinguistic matters, such as language power and identity, which frequently affect the performance of speakers of minoritized languages in typical monolingual classrooms (García, 2009).

The abovementioned multilingual practices (i.e. code-switching and translanguaging), are still understood broadly and practiced limitedly. There is no concrete set of teaching strategies that are generalizable across all classroom settings (Canagarajah, 2011; Hornberger & Link, 2012). In addition, to what extent these practices facilitate multilingual students' language learning as well as academic achievement has not yet been determined. Nonetheless, the implementation of multilingual practices remains an appealing task for language educators and researchers, and it may allow multilingual individuals to acknowledge and use a fuller range of linguistic practices and develop rich and varied communicative repertoires (García, 2009; Hornberger & Link, 2012).

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