Chapter 8

Translanguaging as a Pedagogy of Enacting Social Justice in a Multilingual Setting

Jagadish Paudel
The University of Texas at El Paso, USA

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the author discusses how translanguaging pedagogy serves as a socially just pedagogy to teach English as a compulsory subject and to implement English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Nepal, like other multilingual countries. To substantiate this argument, drawing ideas from several seminal theoretical works and reviewing some empirical studies on translanguaging, the author first presents his own experience of learning and teaching English in his home country, Nepal. Then, presenting a brief sociolinguistic milieu and some relevant educational studies of Nepal, the author discusses translanguaging and social justice, incorporating ideas from recent disciplinary literature. Lastly, he argues translanguaging pedagogy as a socially just pedagogy, for it maintains the linguistic identities of students, enhances students' participation in the classroom, makes sense of content, and fosters students' literacy.

INTRODUCTION

My Own Story of Learning and Teaching English

In Nepal, as an EFL student, I was guided by various language teaching methods and approaches from my elementary school experience to master's level education. When I was an elementary-level student, I was taught English through the grammar-translation method—teaching grammatical rules of the target language and then applying those rules by translating between the target language and the native language. But when I reached college, I continued to learn through various other teaching methods, including the audiolingual method, the direct method, the communicative method, and others. There was no consistency in the pedagogical approach: Some teachers were guided by the grammar-translation method, some by the direct method (i.e., "total immersion," which only uses target language for teaching target language), and some by a communicative approach (which focuses on interaction in target language teaching and developing communicative competence as the goal of study). The methods and activities that were embraced for teaching English did not do justice to us as they would not allow us dynamic use of our own mother tongue, nor were we able to leverage our previous linguistic repertoire and resources.

Upon completion of my master's degree, I started to teach English at the college level. I would often be confused as to what pedagogical method I should embrace for better facilitation. For a couple of years, by hook and by crook, I attempted to teach through an English-only, total-immersion approach. I did so, believing that if students are taught only in English they get more exposure to the language, and as a result, they end up learning English better. It is true that meaningful exposure plays a vital role in language learning. However, when the input is not comprehensible (Krashen, 1988), it does not enhance students' language learning. Now, I must confess that I did an injustice to the students as I neither used the students' home language (Nepali, in which I am fluent) nor allowed them to use their existing linguistics repertoire. When I would ask them some oral questions in English, they would usually not be able to reply. After a couple of years, I realized that these students did not understand teaching in English only, as their level of proficiency in English was very low. When I failed to make them understand by teaching only in English, I did occasionally start to use the Nepali language in class. What is true is that I could not make my students understand without embedding natural use of Nepali language in class, whether instructing students for assignments or discussing cultural practices, or other discussions related to students' socio-cultural issues. I found that the natural use of the Nepali language in class was useful for making the students understand what I taught, and I found this to be a more just to teaching English

Related Content

Sociocultural and Linguistic Assets of a High School Student Named Maria: Amigos y Anime

Michelle L. Ploetzand Kelly A. Hernandez (2023). *Handbook of Research on Socio-Cultural and Linguistic Perspectives on Language and Literacy Development (pp. 343-361).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/sociocultural-and-linguistic-assets-of-a-high-school-student-named-maria/313537

Using Language to Mobilize the Public in the Crisis: The Case of COVID-19 Public Notices on the Banners

Yang Jianxinand Qiang Feng (2022). *International Journal of Translation, Interpretation, and Applied Linguistics (pp. 1-12).*

www.irma-international.org/article/using-language-to-mobilize-the-public-in-the-crisis/304077

Creating Inclusive Learning Environments: Addressing Diversity in Bilingual and Plurilingual Programs

Surjit Singha (2024). *Inclusive Education in Bilingual and Plurilingual Programs (pp. 17-37).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/creating-inclusive-learning-environments/338450

Explicitness of Attribution in Academic Discourse

Hongwei Zhanand Xiangjun Shi (2022). *International Journal of Translation, Interpretation, and Applied Linguistics (pp. 1-13).*

www.irma-international.org/article/explicitness-of-attribution-in-academic-discourse/304075

The Role of Teachers and Their Beliefs in Implementing Technology-Mediated Language Learning: Implications for Teacher Development and Research

Geoff Lawrence (2019). *Computer-Assisted Language Learning: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1909-1926).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-role-of-teachers-and-their-beliefs-in-implementing-technology-mediated-language-learning/219756