

Translanguaging as teaching and learning strategy in higher education

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Translanguaging

Drawing on different languages in one's language practice

oral or written

receptive or productive

“The deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages” (García et al. 2017)

“The practice of MAKING MEANING using different SEMIOTIC SIGNS as ONE INTEGRATED SYSTEM” (Bonacina-Pugh et al. 2021)



Weak and strong versions of translanguaging

“To put it briefly, translanguaging is said to be ‘weak’ when speakers are inclined to soften the barriers between languages whilst still acknowledging the existence of these languages as separate entities. Translanguaging is said to be ‘strong’ when speakers acknowledge that they use one single repertoire made up of a variety of semiotic resources” (Bonacina-Pugh et al. 2021)

Echoes the distinction between seeing languages as fixed or fluid (e.g., Jaspers & Madsen 2019)

Important conclusion that fluidity builds on fixity

Pedagogical translanguaging

“teaching approaches that involve the intentional and planned use of student multilingual resources in language and content subjects”

“positions students’ pre-existing knowledge, such as their prior linguistic and multisemiotic repertoires, as resources” (Juvonen & Källkvist, 2021)

Many other terms:

crosslinguistic pedagogy, teaching through a multilingual lens, heteroglossic instructional practice, bilingual instructional strategies, dual language education, teaching for transfer

Teaching and learning: two perspectives?

Pedagogical translanguaging: intentional and planned language use for teaching purposes

Spontaneous translanguaging: drawing on one's repertoire when communicating (including students' "underground translanguaging learning practices", Darling & Dervin 2023)

García et al. (2017): 3 translanguaging dimensions of teaching STANCE, DESIGN & SHIFTS

Canagarajah (2011): teachers learning from students' translanguaging strategies while developing their teaching through a dialogical pedagogy – allowing "shuttling between languages"

Four purposes for translanguaging in schools

- Supporting students as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts
 - Providing opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts
 - Making space for students' bilingualism and ways of knowing
 - Supporting students' bilingual identities and socioemotional development
- (García et al. 2017)

Language use in higher education

- Lecturing with Q&A and/or student-centered learning activities – focus on listening/note-taking and/or dialogue
- Often text based – focus on reading strategies, text-based and semantic
- Communicating to develop subject specific academic language – terminology, genres, line of argumentation
- Communicating to build knowledge, practical skills and critical skills, including recontextualization and decentering
- Taking part in oral and written exams

Universities as “sites of multilingualism” (Preece 2011)

With widening opportunities for learning and career?

- Student proposal

”We are about 50.000 students at UCPH. At LAW there are 700 per year, and there are certainly some who speak other languages than Danish. There are quite a number who speak Arabic. Why do they not offer classes in something with Arabic? Now I am not responsible for the University’s diversity profile, but it becomes so single-minded that we are offered classes in only Danish and English. Our lecturers come from countries around Europe, but their teaching is in English. Why doesn’t one of them teach in his mother tongue? Or we might have some seminars. It need not be credit bearing classes. It could be offered as an invitation to a French evening.”

Mediation within and across languages – a key concept in HE?

- Activities:
 - Mediating a text (passing on the content, interpret and explain data, graphs etc.)
 - Mediating concepts (building terminology, construct and elaborate meaning)
 - Mediating communication (pair and group work, plenary discussions)
- Strategies to explain a new concept or to simplify a text:
 - Linking to previous knowledge
 - Adapting language (paraphrasing/explain terminology)
 - Breaking down complicated information, amplifying a dense text, streamlining a text

(CEFR 2020, 91-123).

Language in traditional study programs in DK

- Non-language programs:

Full immersion Danish ... parallel code use ... full immersion English

Simultaneous parallel code use: textual input to students in English, but medium of instruction and assignments in the local language, and in which a recurrent teaching focus is translating and contextualizing terminology (Arnbjörnsdóttir & Ingvarsdóttir 2018)

Language in traditional study programs in DK

Language (including literature, culture, media etc.) programs:

Disciplines in Danish/Englishdisciplines in the target language

Area studies with language proficiency as adjunct

No/very little integration of language and content as CLIL

Willingness to communicate in the target language is taken for granted, but often hampered by anxiety or a competitive atmosphere

Translanguaging in higher education: Input processing

Reading texts and seeking information. Linking to previous knowledge. Providing a wider theoretical perspective

- Yamauchi (2018): First year university students – strategic use of L1 (Japanese) increased student interest in topics. From lecturing to engaging students (in content and with each other).
- Bojsen et al. (2023): Student testimonies from the Language Profile at Roskilde University. A wider theoretical and semantic perspective. Access to sources in German or French.
- Kirilova et al. (2023): Access to texts in their original language and with discipline specific translation practice in Theology, Law, Literary Science, Philosophy, Art History etc. at UCPH.

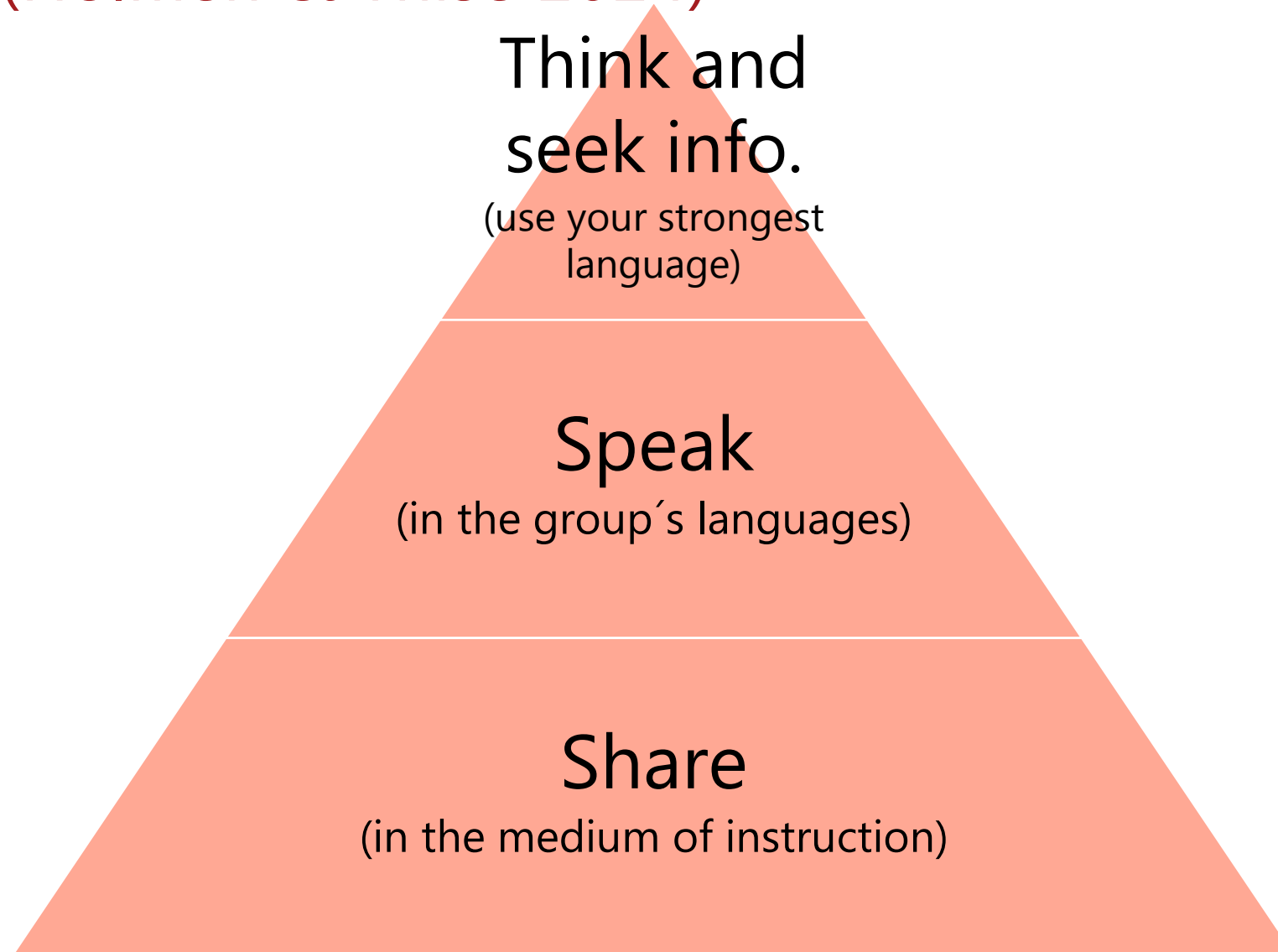
Translanguaging in higher education: Text production

- Written assignments, reports and notes
- Oral presentations

- Disciplinary content structured through multilingual mind maps and brainstorm. Seek information through diverse channels – develop a critical mindset

- Canagarajah (2011): The use of “codemeshing” supports students’ academic writing.

Three phases (Holmen & Thise 2024)



Revisiting the role of translation

Based on a study of mediation and translation strategies among Norwegian secondary school students writing in English, Ingrid Beiler & Joke Dewilde (2020) propose **teaching students translation strategies** to improve their written texts, but also to help them draw on translation tools efficiently and critically

In a study on university students of English in Lund, Marie Källkvist (2013) reports that a translation phase meant **a higher level of activity** among the students plus changed their focus from grammar to vocabulary. She concludes that translation created a forum for student-centred discussion about the English language and underscored their agency as learners

Translanguaging in higher education: Impetus to participate in classroom discourse

Voice and translanguaging (Holmen 2023)

Willingness to communicate is "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2 ... Their prior language learning has led to development of self-confidence, which is based on a lack of anxiety combined with a sufficient level of communicative competence, arising from a series of reasonably pleasant L2 experiences" (Macintyre et al. 1998)

Rabbidge (2019) finds that translanguaging may bring about an alternative to the teacher-fronted initiative-response-feedback sequence which through a focus on correctness may restrict the students' willingness to communicate and participate

Conclusion

Translanguaging may support student-centred learning activities by

- Helping students link to previous knowledge and to open up to new perspectives
- Bridging the gap between meaning making in different languages
- Underscoring receptive and productive language use
- Providing confidence for anxious and/or minoritised students

- Requires a critical mindset and a metacommunicative language

The question is: Do we leave it to the students (cf. underground translanguaging learning practices) or will we support them through teaching strategies?

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