Translating translanguaging theory into local classroom practice

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Background and context

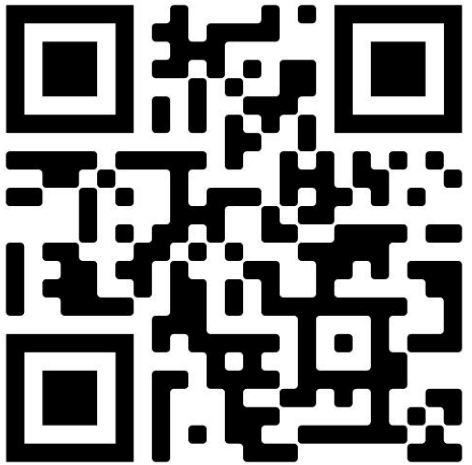
- Unique multilingual context in Australia
- Prevailing monolingual mindset
- Translanguaging as a pedagogical shift

Research about translanguaging in Australia

- Australian research about translanguaging
- Scoping review
- Research between 2000 – 2024
- Peer-reviewed articles, books and book chapters
- Research focussing on multilingual primary school students
- Resulting set of 52 papers

Themes from the research

- Culturally sustaining pedagogy
- Multiliteracies
- Linguistic framing



Wilks-Smith, N., Cox, R., Bury, L., & Rook, S. (2026). Countering deficit narratives with translanguaging: the Australian research context, *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* special issue *Countering Deficit Framings of Migrant, Refugee and Indigenous Students' Language and Literacy Practices*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44020-026-00110-7

Research gaps

- Limited empirical research with teachers in mainstream primary school contexts
- Lack of practice-based studies
- Scarce in the area of writing
- Absence of research that documents teachers' professional learning as they move from monolingual assumptions toward more linguistically responsive pedagogies

Project focus and research questions

Project focus on giving primary school students the opportunity to draw on their first/home/additional languages in their writing when they desire

Research questions:

1. How can translanguaging allow bilingual and multilingual students within a Melbourne primary school to incorporate their authentic language choices into their writing?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of incorporating translanguaging in students' writing?

Collaborative classroom practice with primary teachers

Aim for teachers to recognise, value, and intentionally incorporate students' full linguistic repertoires into classroom practice, particularly in the area of writing

VicTESOL grant funded project: *Writing in schools: Leveraging translanguaging strategies for primary years writing*

Work with 4 primary school teachers which includes:

- Professional learning,
- Co-designing translanguaging strategies,
- Teachers trial strategies over one school term,
- Mentoring from research team and support from project teacher-peers,
- Interviews with teachers to find out about their observations and learning from the new approaches, with a specific focus on student engagement and agency


Children's Day

Writer identity

- Quality linguistic learning experiences,
- Rich literature and creative pedagogies
- Students invited to write and create multimodal texts
- Share these texts with each other and their communities

(Dutton, J., D'warte, J., Rossbridge, J., & Rushton, K., 2018)

- Value and encourage students' cultural and linguistic 'funds of knowledge'

(D'warte, J., 2018)

- Embrace and integrate multilingual students' linguistic skills, experiences, and cultural knowledge

(Wilks-Smith, N., 2021)

Goals of our work

To connect literature review findings with lived classroom experiences

To contribute both theoretically and practically to current conversations about translanguaging, teacher learning, and equitable language education in Australian schools

Impacts on:

Research and researchers

Teachers

Students

Broader education community