

Book Review

New Perspectives on Translanguaging and Education, by
BethAnne Paulsrud, Jenny Rosén, Boglárka Straszer and Åsa
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Translanguaging has been a central focus of discussion in the field of applied linguistics, serving to challenge deficit language ideologies, motivate teachers' use of translanguaging practices, and prevent the marginalization of multilingual learners in diverse educational settings. As translanguaging continues to be widely discussed in the field, there is a need to lay a strong conceptual foundation to explain its significance in reshaping conventional views of monolingualism and bilingualism. Furthermore, it is essential to critically examine translanguaging as concept, theory and pedagogy. Although published in 2017, eight years prior to this review, *New Perspectives on Translanguaging and Education* remains timely in its explanation of how translanguaging is conceptualized. This book plays a vital role in demonstrating how translanguaging has been implemented in applied linguistics research, teaching and learning, both in formal and informal educational contexts. This book engages with concepts in applied linguistics, including *language monitoring* and *language* from sociocultural theory, alongside fresh perspectives that explore the creativity and criticality that *translanguaging space* (Li, 2011) has created in education. In this fourteen-chapter book, the authors delve into the central argument of how translanguaging provides a level playing field for students and teachers to work around monolingual policies, and to overcome monoglossic language ideologies that shape everyday communicative practices in diverse settings. The twelve studies in this book employ a range of multimodal methodological approaches such as linguistic ethnography, conversation analysis, personal narratives, and visual ethnography with photographs and classroom artefacts.

Connecting with the *Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* series, this book touches upon emerging language education issues, such as multilingualism, multiculturalism, bilingual education and Indigenous language policy through the lens of translanguaging. The authors, who mostly situate their research in Nordic countries, work with a vast array of research populations ranging from foreign language learners, migrants, multilingual youth to people from the Deaf communities. By working with users of diverse languages such as Dari, Persian (both in Chapter 5), Swedish Sign Language

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(Chapter 7), Turkish in French pre-school (Chapter 8) and French-Dutch in Flemish classroom (Chapter 10), the authors have attempted to move away from English-dominant settings in order to reveal “histories and understandings that had been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation-states” (p. 8). Although this might not be the original intention, this book’s approach to multilingualism resonates with Heugh and Stroud (2019)’s southern ecologies of multilingualism, with an emphasis on the heterogenous multilingual experiences and the interconnectedness among the people and communities who are mobile.

Speaking of theory development, the authors have incorporated sociocultural theory into the theoretical foundation for translanguaging. While sociocultural theory emphasizes the dialectical nature of language learning, translanguaging in this book “puts the relational before the linguistic” (p. 8); and this relational aspect connects the process of meaning-making through language with identities. A sociocultural understanding of scaffolding, agency and affordance (in Chapters 10 and 12) illuminates how multilingual students’ home languages interact with the dominant language as a medium of instruction through translanguaging. In terms of interaction, translanguaging practices have created affordances to scaffold students’ content learning, and to support them in exploring their language choices for different purposes during lessons. However, the degree of affordances created by translanguaging may be constrained by teachers’ attitudes toward multiple language use in classrooms, shaped by both explicitly stated (e.g., the change of wordings in Swedish’s national curriculum in Chapter 4) and implicitly stated national education policies. In Chapter 4, the chapter author notices there is a hierarchy in the languages in the Swedish national curriculum, where English, Swedish and a foreign language are seen as skills in written and spoken communication, while the Nordic languages and languages of national minorities are merely linked to the learning of culture, history and heritage. By categorizing and positioning majority and minority languages as having completely different statuses, it is likely that Swedish teachers’ and learners’ language ideologies and identities would be shaped and regulated by this implicit hierarchy of languages present in the national curriculum.

The introduction lays the groundwork for the book by emphasizing translanguaging as a process of using languages for communicative purposes. The relevant concepts from translanguaging are introduced: *translanguaging space* (discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 9), *language monitoring* (mentioned in Chapter 13); *linguistic landscape* (developed in Chapter 9); and *linguaging* (conceptualized in Chapter 3). The introductory chapter emphasizes that the application of translanguaging is not only challenging English monolingualism but is also relevant to countries where multiple languages are spoken. Being a concept and pedagogy, translanguaging needs to be introduced in countries with growing influx of immigrants, refugee and diaspora communities to allow for the co-existence of different languages without any hierarchization. Still, translanguaging has a long way to go in contesting a country’s dominant language(s) and elevating the status of minority languages.

The four editors set the tone for the book in Chapter 2 by presenting a rationale for using translanguaging as pedagogy in the multilingual classroom. Built on the collective and implicit effort from scholars, translanguaging is a notion that is slowly developed to challenge “a monolingual bias and deficit perspective in the research on bilingualism in school practices” (p. 12). Driven by linguistic inequality, pioneers such as Ofelia García in 2009 envisioned translanguaging as a useful tool to “visualize how individuals use their entire linguistic repertoire in uneven and unequal interactive terrains” (p. 13). The studies in this book illustrate how the concept of translanguaging has gradually evolved to examine the power relations and boundaries within multiple language practices. As researchers, we need to evaluate whether translanguaging scholarship in our field has taken notice of the uneven and unequal terrains in which language use occurs, and whether it is prepared to address the obstacles in these terrains. Given that this book was published in 2017, it is important to reflect on whether current research on translanguaging has been more responsive to navigating such uneven and unequal language terrains.

In 2024, Mendoza et al. (2024), who are seven early career researchers in translanguaging, drew on the Douglas Fir Group’s (2016) framework to propose a conceptual framework that situates translanguaging “in context” by studying translanguaging through micro-interactional, meso-institutional, and macro-political/ideological contexts. By rejecting apolitical approaches to researching translanguaging, the framework shows how significant adopting a firm political stance is in translanguaging research within multilingual education. This is essential because translanguaging reveals that not all languages share the same equal footing; some languages have been minoritized and suppressed due to the dominance of monoglossic and deficit language ideologies. The minoritization of these languages could be a result of the uneven terrains that makes putting translanguaging research “in context” difficult, often failing to “acknowledge the impact of macro-level ideologies in classrooms and schools” (Mendoza et al., 2024, p. 676). Mendoza et al. (2024) discussed recent translanguaging scholarship, like Rajendram’s and Sah’s respective studies in the 2020s that identified factors determining multilingual students’ unequal translanguaging use, such as institutional norms, students’ socioeconomic backgrounds, national and international political conflicts, and the influence of nationalism and neoliberalism. Likewise, *New Perspectives on Translanguaging and Education* has been a pioneer in promoting more translanguaging studies that examine personal factors (e.g., how gender, religion, language, ethnicity play a part in superdiverse classrooms in Belgium as discussed in Chapter 10), policy factors (e.g., Swedish education’s language policy discussed in Chapter 4) and environmental factors (e.g., the use of modalities in education for immigrants who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Sweden explored in Chapter 7).

Overall, this book presents nuanced arguments for translanguaging as a versatile concept, theory and pedagogy in multilingual education. The book includes several new research designs for identifying and analyzing translanguaging elements across different

educational and social settings. The rationale for collecting multimodal data in this book are context-specific, aimed at theorizing translanguaging and making it pedagogically suitable for learners and teachers who have more access to diverse linguistic resources amidst recent global migration trends. The publication of this book demonstrates how applied linguists can encourage translanguaging practices in response to the call to social justice in the field, such as the one in the introduction of *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, Volume 42 (Mackey et al., 2022). Furthermore, this book extends into the theme of this *JELI* Special Issue by exploring the role of teachers' language ideologies and identities in shaping translanguaging practices in multilingual classrooms. Many case studies on pedagogical translanguaging in this book have forged a path for current translanguaging scholarship to actively engage with teachers' language ideologies and identities in order to support them in welcoming heteroglossic language ideologies and creating accessible translanguaging classroom practices that enable multilingual learners to thrive in inclusive, just equitable classrooms and schools.

By centering minority language speakers, immigrants who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and preschoolers, this book showcases consistent research from both emerging and established translanguaging scholars working toward social justice. This book concludes by emphasizing the need for more research to critically examine whether translanguaging can be fully actualized as pedagogical practice, as the authors of Chapter 13 argue “the simple presence of languages in a learning situation may not constitute translanguaging, but feel that the use of ‘pedagogical translanguaging’ needs to be reserved for explicit focus on access to content in these learning situations” (p. 228). If teachers misunderstand the essence of translanguaging and confuse it with general multilingual practices, they may unintentionally regulate students' access to linguistic resources and hence limit the development of pedagogical translanguaging in classrooms. With an increasing amount of work on pedagogical translanguaging in multilingual education and teacher education, it is important to reflect on how well current translanguaging scholarship has addressed the call-to-action for more research in this book.

Drawing on Hamman-Ortiz et al. (2025)'s systematic review on translanguaging research in US PK-12 classrooms, translanguaging pedagogies that leverage learners' linguistic resources are viewed positively in a number of recent studies, these studies affirm bi/ multilingual students' cultural and transnational identities while establishing their identities among cross-cultural learners. Translanguaging as pedagogy has been actualized, step by step, demonstrating its capacity “to reject externally imposed identities and ideologies, including stereotypes about their communities” (Hamman-Ortiz et al., 2025, p. 12). Additionally, there is growing research focused on teachers' effort to make pedagogical translanguaging more critical and asset-oriented in order to counter deficit language ideologies that dominate both students' and teachers' linguistic identities and classroom practices. To make pedagogical translanguaging more sustainable, Hamman-Ortiz et al. (2025)'s review identified a few recent studies that document the design of critically-oriented translanguaging pedagogies which cultivate

students' critical consciousness. Thus, since the publication of this book, it is evident that more teachers have clarified their misunderstanding of translanguageing and become more open to integrate translanguageing into classroom practices.

Despite being one of the first major works devoted to translanguageing, there are a few notable limitations pertaining to the book's presentation of translanguageing and multilingualism through the lens of the Global North. For example, the divide between the majority/ national languages (where English still dominates) and minority languages is prevalent in this book. The dichotomy between languages does not fully reflect the reality of heterogeneous linguistic environments and minoritized language communities within the research contexts. It is possible that the focus on European perspectives may have inadvertently overlooked the ones from the Global South. While the book presents a shifting view of multilingualism, it cannot entirely overcome the deep-seated influence from the Global North. Mainly situated in a European context, the scope of this book is still limited to exploring how a few minority language groups resist the monolingual policy and dominance by the homogenous language groups. A lack of detailed discussions about translanguageing practices among Southern diasporas represents a gap in this volume.

The book also offers limited discussion of the untapped translanguageing resources from multilingual pre- and in-service teachers in teacher education and professional development. At the end of their case studies on English-medium instruction in Swedish primary and upper secondary schools, the authors of Chapter 12 argue that “teachers and students may require explicit instruction in the value of translanguageing and how to exercise agency in their language use” (p. 205). More broadly, the book raises important questions about how translanguageing can be applied in practice but does not provide definitive answers. After eight years of publication, this book has nonetheless contributed to advancing translanguageing as a central concept in applied linguistics, with in-depth studies carried out across diverse educational contexts on actual language use in classrooms, explicit teaching on translanguageing pedagogies and reflection on one's identities, language ideologies and classroom language practices within multilingual education and teacher education.

In conclusion, I would recommend *New Perspectives on Translanguageing and Education* as an essential resource for pre- and in-service teachers, teacher educators, and policymakers, since it offers valuable insights into how translanguageing can be effectively implemented in multilingual classrooms for learners across different age groups. This book is also useful for assessing the gap between translanguageing as concept and as pedagogy, particularly in navigating real-world tensions between making space for translanguageing practices and adhering strictly to national and classroom-level monolingual policies and monoglossic language ideologies.

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