1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Language is central to all complex human learning – before we begin school, during formal education and after it. As Halliday (1993) observes, 'when children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many; rather, they are learning the foundation of learning itself' (p. 93).

As language teachers, our beliefs about language and how we use it in the classroom are key, both to the learning that we facilitate and to the people that our learners eventually become. And in a world where one language – English – continues to gain influence and importance, some might even say that, as English language teachers, we hold the key to our learners' futures.

This book is about **translanguaging**,[1] both the theory and the practice, as well as the implications of these for our role as English language teachers. It has the following aims:

- to help English language teachers to understand translanguaging theory
- to raise teachers' awareness of how they and their learners may benefit from translanguaging in the English language classroom
- to introduce teachers to a range of strategies, practices and ideas that involve translanguaging in different ways
- to empower teachers, wherever possible, to explore these ideas in their own classrooms
- to help teachers to improve the efficacy and impact of their teaching as a result.

We will investigate what translanguaging is and how it is a common, natural part of language use across so many societies around the world. We will ask: how can we bring translanguaging into our classrooms to enable our learners not only to learn English – our primary goal – but also to support our learners' wellbeing, identity development and wider learning? We will also offer suggestions for how you, as an English teacher, can conduct research in your classroom to identify the most appropriate, inclusive and equitable translanguaging pedagogies for your teaching context(s).

[1] Terminology that may be unfamiliar to non-academic readers is explained in the Glossary; such terms appear in **bold** when first mentioned in the text.

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Some readers of this book may already be familiar with translanguaging for other educational contexts (e.g., bilingual programmes); this book will help them to understand the implications of translanguaging theory and practice specifically for English language teaching (ELT). Other readers may be aware of the writing on using the '**first language**' (**L1**) in the language classroom (e.g., Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Deller & Rinvolucri, 2002; Kerr, 2014; Turnbull & Dailey O'Cain, 2009); some of these authors were among the first to question the 'English-only' teaching methods of recent times. This book builds on their valuable contributions, sometimes offering similar recommendations, but also going beyond them. We will aim to move these 'L1 use' practices from what we call the **monolingual mindset** – a view about teaching and learning that can hinder us from seeing all the possibilities of **multilingualism** – to the **translingual mindset**, in which we value and bring together all the languages, dialects and ways of communicating that we each possess – that is, our full **repertoires** as language users.

1.2 What Is Translanguaging?

Chapter 2 presents definitions, terminology and understandings of translanguaging by different writers on the topic. Implications for practice are then explored throughout the rest of the book. Here, in the introduction, we provide our understanding of the term.

The term 'translanguaging' is used to refer, firstly, to a theory of what language is and how we use it, and, secondly, to an approach to teaching that builds on this theory of language. In other words, translanguaging is both a philosophy and a pedagogy. Let's look at these separately.

1.2.1 Translanguaging Theory

There are important differences between language as we use it in our lives and how it is often characterised in books, policy documents and official curricula. In nearly all countries, we are taught from an early age to recognise and respect the borders between named, standardised languages that we refer to as 'Arabic', 'English', 'Hindi', 'Kiswahili', 'Spanish', et cetera. These play such a dominant role, particularly in education, that we may often overlook the fact that, on a daily basis, the way that many of us use language doesn't actually fit into the 'boxes' of these **named languages** very well, if at all. In fact, in bilingual and **multilingual**[2] communities and families, we often use words, grammar elements and other language features (let's call these **resources**) from different named languages together. Sometimes we move between languages and sometimes we blend resources from them so closely that our ways of using language (our **languaging practices**) transcend the idea of named languages completely. Figure 1.1, from a chat group for Malaysian teachers, shows this well. Members of the group combine English

[2] We will use 'multilingual' from here on to include 'bilingual' – see Section 1.3.

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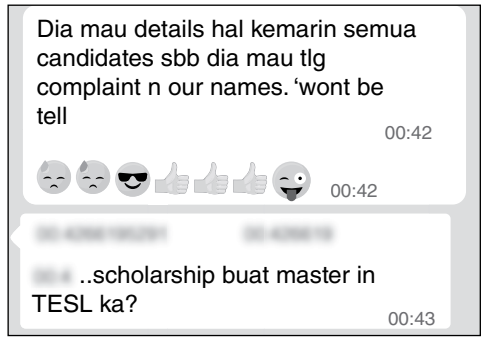


Figure 1.1 A translingual WhatsApp communication (from Anderson, 2018, p. 27).

(both standard and non-standard), Malay, local dialects and emojis to maximise communication – what García (2009) calls 'dynamic bilingualism'. Such practices aren't just present in multilingual contexts – many 'monolinguals' also often make flexible use of resources from different dialects and registers in complex ways in their lives. Even when we seem to be using languages separately, these languages may be helping each other to support our thinking and expression (e.g., Boksay Pap, 2015; Cao et al., 2013). For example, in a meeting at work we might be referring to documents written in one language while discussing them in another, or our children may be listening to a song written in English while simultaneously commenting on it in a different language, either face to face or online. Importantly, we are able to make sense of all the information involved without needing to separate the resources into the formal boxes of named languages. It can be seen from this brief analysis (more follows in Chapter 2) that using these resources together helps us to understand and to communicate, yet we are often criticised for doing so, both in education and wider society!

Researchers emphasise that such practices are normal and widespread across society, and have been so since before records began (Canagarajah, 2013). Some scholars argue that named languages are social inventions (e.g., Makoni & Pennycook, 2005), often promoted by governments and organisations to control or limit our language practices and, as a result, our identities. Translanguaging theory, therefore, offers us both a very old (it's been with us for thousands of years) yet also a new (because it is innovative) way of understanding of language, as summarised in the following six points:

1. Each of us has an integrated language system, called a repertoire.
2. A person's repertoire includes all the resources (words, grammatical features, expressions, symbols and even body language) that they use to communicate.
3. These resources are closely linked to the ideas, emotions and knowledge that they represent.
4. We draw upon these resources flexibly, depending on who we are communicating with, the context, our relationship and our intentions.
5. Sometimes our language use conforms tightly to the traditions of named language use (e.g., in official documents).

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6. At other times we break, or transcend, the boundaries of these named languages, making use of all the resources we share to communicate effectively (e.g., when chatting with friends as in Figure 1.1, or when teaching something to someone).

Particularly in the twentieth century, the terms '**codeswitching**' and '**codemixing**' were often used to refer to what many of us now call translanguaging. However, in this book we will avoid using these terms, because they give the impression that the 'codes' (i.e., named languages) came first and that multilinguals move between them to communicate (Anderson, 2024d). Our concern with this view of language use is that it contributes to the belief that using languages separately is normal, and that translanguaging is unusual or even wrong, because it 'mixes' things that should be kept apart (see Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021) – terms such as 'Spanglish', 'Chinglish' or 'Hinglish', which are often used negatively, can be seen to result from this view. In contrast, translanguaging theory embraces our diversity, both in how we use language and in who we are – our identities are often as varied as our languaging practices. We adopt multiple, overlapping roles in our daily lives and use language freely as part of these roles. See Chapter 2 for more on codeswitching theory.

1.2.2 Translanguaging Pedagogy

When it comes to teaching, translanguaging theory has important implications for what we, and our learners, do in the classroom. Firstly, as a teaching approach, translanguaging recognises that the most appropriate way to learn new language is to build on the language repertoires that we already have – adding and integrating new English resources to our ways of communicating. Secondly, translanguaging also recognises that our full multilingual repertoires, as part of our identities as learners and teachers, have a right to be heard and included in our classrooms (UNESCO, 2002). In this sense, there is an important **social justice** element to translanguaging pedagogy that takes it beyond viewing one language (sometimes called the 'L1') simply as a resource for learning another (the 'L2'). So, teachers who use translanguaging pedagogy recognise and value all the resources and repertoires in a classroom, including the official language(s) of the school or community, unofficial languages and dialects, signs that students may use, the languages that only one or two learners know and even the different accents that we all have. In this sense, translanguaging is an **inclusive pedagogy**. And because translanguaging theory does not see it as necessary or appropriate to keep these different communicative resources apart, it actively encourages learners to bring them together in creative ways to maximise learning. In our ELT classrooms, this may include translanguaging for the following purposes:

- to understand new words, sentences or texts
- to compare and link vocabulary and grammar in different languages
- to scaffold and support our **oracy** and literacy in English
- to build a stronger understanding of the world, culture and language through the use of bilingual or multilingual perspectives

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- to evaluate and reflect on our learning critically
- to demonstrate our knowledge and learning of content and language (i.e., assessment)
- to explore, build and affirm our identities as language users
- to build an effective learning and living community in the classroom.

In this sense, translanguaging is a **constructivist** pedagogy – it helps learners to construct their own understandings of the world and themselves as they build their language repertoires (García & Li, 2014), what Heugh (2021) calls **transknowledging**.

Some readers may now be thinking, 'These things already happen in my classroom.' If so, it sounds like you are already a **translanguaging teacher** and this book is about how you teach! We hope it will offer you further ideas, strategies, activities, reflective tasks and a framework to help you describe and justify what you do (e.g., if you need to justify translanguaging to your school leader or a school inspector) – a framework that recognises and emphasises the importance of your approach to maximising learning and wellbeing in your classroom.

Other readers may be thinking, 'These things can't/shouldn't happen in my classroom.' This is also a common response to translanguaging pedagogy, especially in ELT. And, of course, it is true that, in some English classrooms around the world today, teachers follow a policy of speaking only (or mainly) English for varying reasons. Even if you are one of these teachers, this book will be useful. It will help you, firstly, to clarify what boundaries exist to language use in your classroom and where they come from:

- Are they your personal boundaries, or do they come from above?
- What exactly do and don't they allow or recommend?
- What impact are they having on communication and learning?
- And to what extent do you have the choice, or the right, to question them?

It will then help you to investigate and understand how translanguaging is already happening in your classroom, despite such policies, and how you can balance between what is expected of you and the needs of your learners. For example, even if we, as teachers, are expected to speak only English, our learners may still *think* **translingually**, they may *write* translingually (e.g., notetaking) and certain *conversations* between them may also be **translingual** – such conversations may be key to their learning. So, even if you work in an English-mainly or English-only classroom, this book can help you to find the best way to make use of your own, and your learners', multilingual abilities to maximise learning and well-being.

In Chapter 2 we will look in more detail at the theory and terminology of translanguaging, with examples from classrooms and wider society. We will also explore different approaches and opinions within the translanguaging community. In Chapters 3 and 4 we will explore important differences in our contexts, roles and goals as teachers, such as differences between the primary and secondary

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stages in education, differences between class types and differences between those of us whose focus is on teaching English and those of us for whom English is a medium of instruction, such as in EMI and CLIL classrooms.

1.3 Note on Terminology

In this book we will use the words multilingual and multilingualism to refer to both people and communities that possess and use resources from more than one (i.e., multiple) named languages or dialects in their lives, regardless of proficiency levels in each of these languages. In this sense, our definition includes bilingualism and is similar to definitions of **plurilingualism** (e.g., Cenoz & Gorter, 2013), aiming to be inclusive of people who draw upon repertoires including two, three or even more languages and dialects. Any terminology that is likely to be unfamiliar to non-academic readers, particularly terms relating to translanguaging and multilingualism, is covered in the Glossary; such terms appear in **bold** when first mentioned in the text.

1.4 Who This Book Is for and Why

This book is for primary/elementary and secondary/high school teachers of English working in basic education (years 1 to 10 or 12) in countries where English is not the dominant language of the wider community; that is, the vast majority of **foreign language** teachers of English today (EFL), and even many who are sometimes considered to be **second language** teachers (e.g., ESL in India and Nigeria). If this includes you, then this book is about your work as an English teacher. It takes your realities, your challenges and your resources as the starting point for the pedagogy presented, not some idealised context or classroom. This contrasts with many other teaching guides in ELT which, for the past century or so, have tended to assume that the mixed-nationality classes often found in **anglophone** countries (e.g., ESL in the USA, the UK, Australia, etc.) are the default contexts for ELT.[3] It also differs somewhat from those that have attempted to provide guidance for teachers working in both these types of setting, despite the very different conditions and assumptions underpinning the curricula and goals involved (see Anderson, 2024a; Kramsch, 2002). The reasons for this choice are both ethical and pedagogic. Your needs have frequently been neglected by methodologies that have originated in anglophone countries ever since English emerged as a global language (Canagarajah, 1999; Holliday, 1994a; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992). As a result, so much of what you bring to our profession has also been neglected: your expertise, your awareness, your knowledge *and* your prior resources and

[3] This is essentially where communicative language teaching comes from (see Anderson, 2024a; Howatt, 1988).

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repertoires (Anderson, 2018) – all are key components of any pedagogy, *especially* a translanguaging pedagogy.

For teachers who work in the USA, the UK or other English-mainly countries teaching international English learners: this book is not written primarily for your needs or context, and we make no apologies for this. You may find the theory useful, the ideas transferrable and many of the activities adaptable to your classrooms, but not all; the reality is that, in such contexts, the needs and opportunities for translanguaging are different due to the specific makeup of the classroom and the learner profiles involved (this is explored more in Chapter 3). For teachers of **English as a Second Language (ESOL)**/immigrant learners (both adults and children) who live, learn and work in English-mainly countries: there are other practical guides on translanguaging that are written with your needs in mind. For example, *The Translanguaging Classroom* (García et al., 2017) was written for both bilingual and ESL teachers working in national contexts where English is a primary and/or official language of the wider community.

1.5 Writers, Readers and Critical Users of This Book

We have tried to write this book as a conversation, between two multilingual teachers of English (the authors) to another (you, the reader). You may be curious to know a little more about us, so here are our stories:

JASON'S STORY

I was born and raised as an English speaker in the UK, but I have spent much of my adult life teaching English and supporting English teachers in different countries where I have worked over the last thirty years, thanks to my privilege. This includes countries across the Global South and North. I have had opportunities to study and use a number of additional languages (e.g., French, Hindi, Kinyarwanda, Italian, Malaysian, Russian, Tigrinya and Ukrainian), both in classrooms and privately. I have also been able to observe and learn from the many teachers I have worked with. When I began working alongside primary and secondary school teachers of English in the 1990s, I noticed how their classes were often much more multilingual than those delivered in 'English-mainly' private school environments, for which I had initially been trained. Back then, multilingual teaching was often frowned upon, both in the methodology books on ELT and in many teacher communities. Yet I noticed that these teachers were often facilitating useful learning and often achieving much more than I was. This caused me to take interest in multilingual approaches to language and literacy learning, prompting questions such as: What is happening here? Why? and so on. While many early theories underpinning these approaches were useful to

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me, such as Vivian Cook's notion of **multicompetence** (e.g., 1995) or Jim Cummins' writings on bilingual education (e.g., 1993), it was only when I started reading about translanguaging theory that I recognised what I had observed in the classrooms of the most effective teachers that I had worked with and learnt so much from. Since then, I have conducted research into the translanguaging needs of English language learners (Anderson, 2018), attitudes towards translanguaging among English teachers (Anderson & Lightfoot, 2021) and the translanguaging of expert teachers in India (Anderson, 2023a, 2024c). As a methodologist, I have given many talks and produced a number of resources for teachers and teacher educators on translanguaging theory and practice (see www.jasonanderson.org.uk). This book is the next step in my personal journey with translanguaging.

SUYOG'S STORY

I was born and raised in Maharashtra, (India) where Marathi was the language of my home and early years. Around me, I often heard Gujarati, Marwari and other languages my friends spoke. I did not know the term 'multilingualism', nor did I consider it something unique; it was simply how people around me communicated. I formally started learning Hindi in school from Grade 5, but I had already picked up a lot through TV, songs and Bollywood movies. English entered my life through textbooks around the same time. It felt unfamiliar, full of rules and distant, but I was curious about it. It seemed like a language that could take me beyond my surroundings. Over time, that curiosity turned into a professional path. I began working in education, engaging with teachers in tribal, rural and urban settings: first in Maharashtra, then in Rajasthan and more recently in Jharkhand. I got the chance to work in schools in very different settings, including tribal areas, small villages and crowded city classrooms. In every place, I saw children using more than one language to make sense of what they were learning. My colleagues, too, were moving across languages to explain and connect. They didn't always stick to one language. They did what worked.

Initially, I relied on ideas from textbooks, many of which assumed that English should be taught in isolation. But what I saw in real classrooms was different. Teachers moved between languages, students responded in mixes of Hindi, Marathi or Rajasthani, often with bits of English. It was not chaotic, but it was meaningful and effective. It was interesting to see how teachers in all these different contexts, many without formal training in English pedagogy, adapted lessons to suit their students. They translated, explained and used familiar languages to make English more accessible. That changed my perspective. I began to wonder, why is this discouraged?

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Later, I came across the idea of translanguaging. It gave a name to what I had been seeing and affirmed its value. During my Master's in TESOL at the University of Warwick, I explored how Indian teachers work in multilingual classrooms, and how their instinctive strategies connect with translanguaging theory. Now, as a teacher educator with the Azim Premji Foundation and a volunteer with the AINET Association of English Teachers, India, I continue to work with teachers across different contexts, listening to their experiences, learning from them and sharing what I have come to understand. Translanguaging is no longer just a concept to me, it's a way to look at classrooms, teaching and language itself.

Throughout the book, we will address you as a practising teacher, referring to 'your classroom' and 'your learners'. We will imagine that you have plenty of knowledge about classrooms, learners, textbooks and the curriculum in your current context of work (either as a teacher or learner). Nonetheless, we are aware that some readers will be teachers at the start of their careers (pre-service or novice). If this includes you, feel free to use your experience of learning English, or another, additional language, as a student yourself, alongside your expectations of future classes that you will teach. Imagine yourself teaching a class that you were once a student in and learners who you once sat alongside; we've all got lots of experience of learning to draw upon. Alternatively, you can consider lessons and teachers that you have observed or watched remotely (e.g., video observation) during your pre-service teacher training as your imagined context.

Because this book is written for practising teachers, we aim to keep it as simple and clear as possible, and to devote the majority of the book to the all-important practical ideas for teaching that we find useful in such guides. Yet teachers should not act without a clear understanding of what they are doing and why. And this is particularly true when we bring together the complex theory of translanguaging and a profession that requires us to teach a named language – English. So, we will also engage with the more complicated and controversial aspects of translanguaging theory in Chapters 2 and 3, and give voice to some of the counterarguments and concerns about translanguaging, both from writers (e.g., Macswan, 2017; Treffers-Daller, 2024) and practitioners who are sceptical towards some of the implications of translanguaging theory for their own classrooms.

However, while this book offers our personal understanding of translanguaging and its role in the classroom, it will not present *only* our voice. At regular points we will meet, and learn about, a number of educators from around the world to learn what translanguaging means to them, how it influences and reflects the ways that they teach and what impact they feel it has on their learners. These teachers offer useful alternative perspectives to ours and even feedback on the ideas presented here. You may find one or two who work in contexts similar to yours; if so, their opinions and suggestions may be particularly useful.

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Nonetheless, because no two classrooms or teachers are the same, it is also important that, as you read this book, you take time to critically evaluate not only what we are proposing, but also how this relates to your context, learners, curriculum and goals. At times, you may decide to reject our suggestions, at other times to adapt them and at others still you may find ways to improve on them. So, there are regular 'Reflection Tasks' throughout the book – opportunities to consider your own beliefs, draw upon your experience and compare the ideas for practice presented here to what you do (or imagine you would do) in your classroom. You can do this alone, either thinking to yourself or making notes. Alternatively, if you have an opportunity to discuss these tasks with colleagues, please do so – sharing ideas and opinions can be a useful way to improve your awareness, criticality and creativity. You may want to use the book in a professional development discussion group, in which you read one chapter each week and then to come together to discuss it. Alternatively, you may be in a formal education programme (e.g., a Bachelor's in Education or a Master's in TESOL) or on a training course, in which cases such conversations will also be useful to compare understandings, share uncertainties and even note down a few questions to ask your course leaders. Let's do a reflection task now:

REFLECTION TASK 1.1

Reread Section 1.2 (titled 'What Is Translanguaging?'). Make notes on any questions that come to mind as you read. These may be questions about translanguaging theory, questions that emerge when you compare this theory to your own observations or questions about the implications of this theory for practice. Alternatively, you may think of questions related to translanguaging pedagogy – whether something is likely to be feasible or acceptable in your context or how it relates to things you already do in your classroom. Here are some example questions – please think of more:

1. If translanguaging theory rejects 'named' languages, what does this mean for us as 'English' language teachers?
2. Is there any difference in practice between 'translanguaging' and prior terms, such as 'codeswitching' or '**using the L1**', or are these only theoretical differences?
3. Are there any links between the activities that we used to call 'grammar translation' and 'translanguaging'? And does this mean that translation is back in fashion?
4. How can I involve translanguaging in my assessment if the exams my students have to take are only in English?

If possible, compare your ideas from this reflection task with peers who work in a similar context. You can do the same with other reflection tasks throughout the book.

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1.6 Transcription Notes and Conventions in This Book

This is a book designed for teachers in multiple contexts worldwide, including those who may have lower levels of English language proficiency and research literacy. Hence, the extracts included, both of real data (the vast majority) and invented examples, involve the simplest possible transcription conventions to ensure that they are clear, easy to read and understand. In Chapter 2, the extracts all have two columns to present often complex examples of real-world data as clearly as possible, with the left column representing the original multilingual practices and the right column presenting all texts/utterances in English only. For the remainder of the book, one column is used only for extracts. In such extracts, plain text (i.e., non-bold, non-italics) is used for English, and *italics* are used for the first additional language in the extract. In the event that a second additional language is also used, this is presented in **bold** text. Square brackets are used after sentences or phrases involving other languages to present English language equivalents/translations. Normal brackets (parentheses) are used to indicate actions and non-verbal text (e.g., writing on the board).

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Since 2010, translanguaging has become a key concept in both education and linguistics, so much so that those of us who work in these fields – such as teachers of English – need to understand the basic theory behind the term and the potential implications for practice. This chapter has presented an initial discussion of both, presenting translanguaging as a philosophy *and* a pedagogy. In this chapter, we have briefly explored the following:

- the theory of language and communication behind translanguaging
- why the standardised, named languages of society do not always reflect our authentic languaging practices and our identities
- how a translanguaging pedagogy welcomes these authentic practices into our classrooms and makes full use of our learners' complete repertoires to help them to learn the content and skills in our curricula
- who we are as readers and writers, including our identities and also the intended audience for the book; English language teachers working in basic education
- why you should adopt a critical perspective towards this book, and indeed any 'how to' guide.

It is, of course, your choice concerning the order in which you read the remainder of this book. But for those who are new to translanguaging, particularly pre-service and novice teachers, we recommend that you read the chapters in the order presented, to ensure you have the necessary foundation to understand

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the teaching ideas introduced in the second half of the book. Teachers who are already familiar with translanguaging, either because they've engaged with the theory before, or because they have always translanguaged in their own classrooms, may choose to jump forward to Chapter 5 to begin exploring how teachers can translanguage.

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