Translanguaging for Biliteracy Development: Book Reading Practices in a Chinese Bilingual Family

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Translanguaging for Biliteracy Development

- Background
- Study
- Theoretical frame
- Methods
- Findings
- Implications & Future Research

Background

- The term "translanguaging" (TL) was first used and created by Cen Williams (1994).
- TL comes from the Welsh word "trawsieithu" *(*Lewis, et al. 2012)
  - students were encouraged to alternate languages for productive and receptive use.
- the Welsh term *trawsieithu* was translated into the English word *translanguaging* by Baker (2001), and developed by Garcia, (2009)

  "the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages in order to maximize communicative potential" Garcia, 2009, p, 140).

  "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system"
  (Canagarajah, 2011, p 401)

Translanguaging (TL) research

- TL research:
  - realization of TL pedagogy is a means to leverage the linguistic features of the language repertoires of bilingual students
  - to engage bilingual children in academic tasks, as well as to improve their outcomes and continuously develop their bilingualism and biliteracy (Wei & García 2016).

Translanguaging research

- Translanguaging in speaking and oral interactions in the classroom (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009; Kiramba, 2016)

- Translanguaging in writing (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013; Helot, 2014; Kiramba, 2017; Sebba et al., 2012; Velasco & García, 2014)

- TL in oral and written interaction (Canagarajah, 2011; Song, 2016: Kiramba, 2017)

Translanguaging in reading

- Martinez et al. (2011)
  - TL served as an intellectual resource that mediated students' reading comprehension
  - linguistic interactions among the participants (primary-grade bilingual Latino students) supported their meaning making process, as well as their social relationships.
  - participants of this study had the opportunity to read in English and to discuss the text in Spanish.
- Kabuto & Velasco (2016) explored with two bilingual learners (2nd grader and 6th grader) and their parents in reading practices in Spanish and English.
  - demonstrated how TL was used a tool in developing deeper levels of understanding in both Spanish and English readings in the aspects of graphophonic, grammatical and semantic knowledge.
  - TL was the key in helping bilingual learners, adults or children, use two languages with flexibility to improve comprehension.
  - Demonstrated how parents of low SES and immigrant families played the role of facilitators in biliteracy activities with the bilingual zone of proximal development.

Research questions

- What is the nature of interaction during book reading practices between bilingual parents and their emerging bilingual children?

Theoretical Frame

- Sociocultural theories

  - Bilingual zone of proximal development (Moll, 2014, Vygotsky, 2010)

Methods and materials:
Qualitative case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014),

Participants
- Cheng (59 months old)
- Cheng's mother
  - A stay home mum
  - Former teacher of Chinese in an elementary school in China

Data sources
- Audio recorded book reading practices
- Two audios a week between October 2017-Feb 2018 (11 audio recordings)
- English and Chinese books

Data analysis
Transcription
Thematic analysis (Spencer et al., 2014)
Five stages of thematic analysis:
- Familiarization
- Initial thematic framework
- Indexing and sorting
- Reviewing data extracts
- Data summary and display

Peanut Butter & Cupcake (Book)

Findings: Linguistic and cultural bridge

Excerpt I: Linguistic bridge

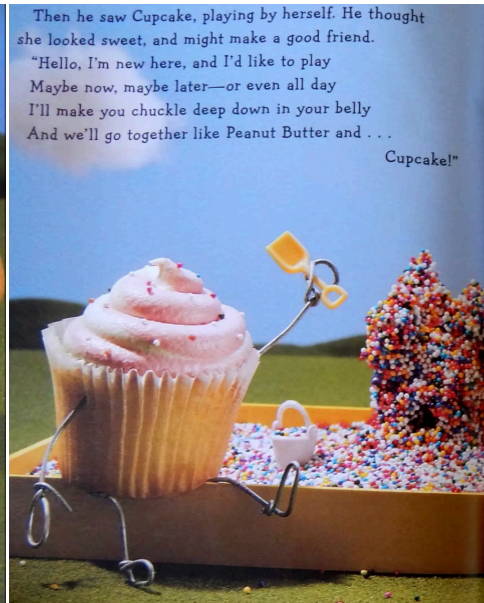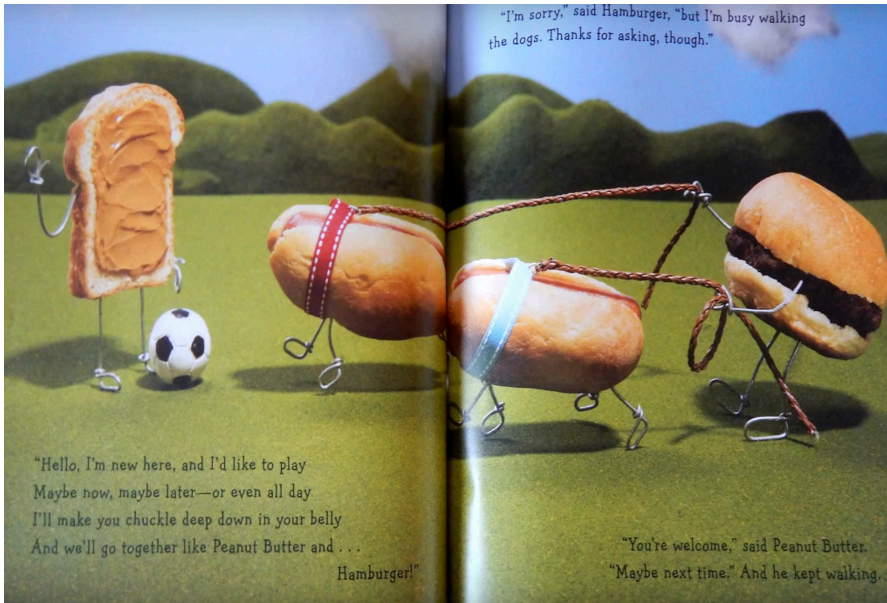Peanut Butter liked that idea very much, so off he went.

It wasn't long before he saw a someone.

Excerpt 1

1. C:它想吃饭? *Does it want to eat?* [asking a question in Chinese]
2. M: 它不用吃饭. *It doesn't need to eat.*
3. C: why?
4. M: 这是假的嘛! *This is not real*. Just a book. [answering the question in Chinese and English]
5. M: It wasn't long before he saw a someone. [reading the book]

Excerpt II: Linguistic bridge

"I'm sorry," said Hamburger, "but I'm busy walking the dogs. Thanks for asking, though."

"Hello, I'm new here, and I'd like to play
Maybe now, maybe later—or even all day
I'll make you chuckle deep down in your belly
And we'll go together like Peanut Butter and . . .
Hamburger!"

"You're welcome," said Peanut Butter.
"Maybe next time." And he kept walking.

Then he saw Cupcake, playing by herself. He thought she looked sweet, and might make a good friend.
"Hello, I'm new here, and I'd like to play
Maybe now, maybe later—or even all day
I'll make you chuckle deep down in your belly
And we'll go together like Peanut Butter and . . .
Cupcake!"

"I'm building sprinkle-castles," said Cupcake.
"You can stay and watch, but don't hit my castle with your ball or I'll be mad!"

Peanut Butter didn't want to make anyone mad. "That's okay," Peanut Butter said. And he kept walking.

Excerpt II: Refer to the transcript…

Transcript

Excerpt III: Linguistic bridge

He found *someone* jumping.
"Hello, I'm new here, and I'd like to play
Maybe now, maybe later—or even all day
I'll make you chuckle deep down in your belly
And we'll go together like Peanut Butter and . . .

Meatball!"

"32 . . . 33 . . . 34 . . . Shh! I'm counting my jumps!" said
Meatball. "35 . . . 36 . . . 37 . . . I'm trying to set a record!"
Peanut Butter whispered back, "But I have this ball,
and—"
"38 . . . 39 . . . 40 . . . Shhh!" said Meatball.

Peanut Butter kept walking.
Finding a friend was harder than
he thought it was going to be.

Excerpt II

1. M: Meatball 在数数！ *is counting!* 你会数数吗？ *Can you count?* [asking if the boy can count] meatball在数数*is counting!* [pointing to a number 32 asking the boy what is this in Chinese] 这是几？ *What is this number?* [turning to the right side of the book and explaining what's happening on the page]
2. C: ehhhhh! [thinking]
3. M: 三十二嘛！*Thirty-two!* [reminding him the number in Chinese]
4. C: Thirty-two! [repeats in English]
5. M: Thirty-two! [repeats in English and pointing to the following numbers, encouraging the boy to go on]
6. C: thirty-three, thirty-four, thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight, thirty-nine, forty. [keeps on counting in English]

Discussion

- Translanguaging for emerging biliteracy development
- Bilingual ZPD for comprehension purposes
- Consistent with other studies conducted in elementary elementary classrooms ()
- Fills the gap on translanguaging (research) at home specifically with Pre-K children reading practices

Implications

- better understanding of the role of heritage language(s) of emerging bilingual children in their literacy development

- practical knowledge on how teachers may utilize bilingual ZPD of emerging bilingual children

- How parents who are emerging bilinguals could support their children reading practices

Selected references

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