

Translanguaging and Embodied Teaching With a Picturebook Approach: A Study for Non-Chinese Speaking Children in a Hong Kong Kindergarten

Karen Cheung Ching Ching

(Early childhood and elementary education, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong)

Abstract: Hong Kong is a predominantly Chinese speaking community but has a multilingual and multicultural environment, and developing an appropriate curriculum and effective teaching strategies for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children is a pressing issue in Hong Kong education.

Translanguaging become a hotly discussed topic in the field of bi/multilingual education in recent years, and has been adopted by many frontline teachers as one of the pedagogical approaches in multilingual classrooms, particularly for teaching students who speak non-mainstream languages. However, it has been studied insufficiently in the context of Chinese as a second language, where it is practiced to facilitate knowledge co-constructed by Chinese teachers and non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students.

This study uses theoretically-informed and empirically-grounded evidence to investigate the practices of Translanguaging in learning Chinese as a second language. The research was conducted by the researcher who was also the class teacher and participant in the research, which makes the data collection were not only feasible and convenient, but also more authentic and in-depth. The processes and patterning of translanguaging are examined in a multilingual context. Classroom interaction data were collected to analyze the processes of meaning making among non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children and their teachers in a Hong Kong kindergarten.

The participants comprised 20 NCS learners in their third year (K3) in a Hong Kong kindergarten. The student focus group came from Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines. Data included interviews, field notes and classroom interaction videos in the kindergarten. Discourse analysis on classroom data shows that translanguaging emerge in the dynamic of meaning making. This study looks critically at the traditional concept of the monolingual language classroom and explores the translanguaging practices in complementary multilingual kindergarten classrooms for NCS children learning Chinese characters in Hong Kong. Both the pedagogical and theoretical implications for teaching Chinese characters using translanguaging are discussed.

Key words: translanguaging, teaching Chinese as a second language, picturebook, embodied teaching, ethnic minority, multilingual education

1. Introduction

According to the 2021 census (HKSAR, 2021), for people aged five and over in Hong Kong, 93.4% usually use Chinese (including Cantonese and other Chinese dialects) while 6.6% speak no Chinese. Although 87.1% can

write Chinese and 66% can write English, others speak and write in languages such as Filipino, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Hindi, Nepali, French and Spanish. Thus, there is an urgent need to find more efficient ways to teach and learn Chinese. In Hong Kong, it is normal for young Chinese children to start to learn basic Chinese characters when they are about 32 months old in their first year of kindergarten. However, learning content through Chinese is very challenging to both teachers and NCS students in Hong Kong kindergartens due to the lack of teaching training and learning materials. Due to the multilingual and multicultural backgrounds of NCS learners, especially kindergarten learners who are emerging bilinguals, it is difficult to help young NCS learners acquire Chinese in Hong Kong in such a multilingual context.

Chinese teachers in Hong Kong have been exploring innovative pedagogies to facilitate NCS students learning Chinese. One such exploration involves using translanguaging, which refers to the use of the student's home or usual language (English in this study) alongside Chinese, the target language, to help understanding and communicate in class. This teaching strategy is being tried more and more by Hong Kong Chinese teachers. What exactly is the effect of this approach? In particular, how do students use this approach and have they benefitted? Many researchers, educational practitioners and policy makers are concerned with these challenges. Therefore, this study based in part on the experiences of the researcher who was a front-line teacher who used the translanguaging method as a teaching strategy. By exploring personal experiences, this study provides insight into the potential benefits of translanguaging for Chinese learning in a multilingual context and draws attention to the theory of translanguaging to accommodate NCS children's entire repertoire in a multilingual early childhood classroom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Translanguaging and Language Education

As a notion, translanguaging arose from bilingual education; in particular, it was the result of minority language education in the case of Cen William's (1994) original work, and the education of minority learners that influenced this idea (Garcia. O, 2009). Baker (1996) coined the term by adding *trans* to *language*, a concept that had been in existence for some time and associated with a different group of researchers in the sociocultural theories of second language acquisition. It was Swain (2006) who used the term *language* to describe the cognitive process of negotiating and producing meaningful, comprehensible output as part of language learning as a 'means to mediate cognition, that is a process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language (p. 97).

During the past decade, the field of translanguaging has shifted from the static view of language as a reified object with sealed boundaries to separate speakers of one language from another. Recently, the concept of translanguaging has emerged to disrupt the naturalisation of languages as codes or entities, especially of the language of schooling, which has served to control material rewards (Garcia. O, 2019). It is noteworthy that the field of translanguaging still remains contested due to the duality of what it represents: (1) recognising the socially-named languages, and (2) simultaneously extending students' learning beyond them. The most recent issue of the translanguaging debate relates to what can be described as the unitary (Otheguy, Garcia. O, & Reid, 2018) versus the differentiated systems of translanguaging (MacSwan, 2017).

Otheguy, Garcia. O and Reid (2015, 2018) posit that translanguaging does not represent a psychological duality even though its social duality is recognised. Based on empirical data collected among Spanish-English

bilinguals, they present that the speaker's internal language system; idiolect is a unitary system through which multilingual speakers strategically assemble discursive resources to make sense. MacSwan (2017), on the other hand, criticises this position, claiming that there is a dual correspondence between the speakers' internal language (I-language) and the externalised language (E-language), which supports what he refers to as the 'integrated view of multilingualism'. From this point of view, social construction of named languages is based on a psycholinguistic reality of languages that cognitively exist separately from one another.

Li and Lin (2019) propose that translanguaging focuses on the first order of language, the here and now or the real-time activity. At the same time, they acknowledge that there is a second order of language that has to do with cultural processes that occur on a longer timescale. This process can be seen as an echo of Garcia. O and Li (2014) and Otheguy, Garcia. O, and Reid (2015, 2018) in which language as code is a socio-political construct that has little to do with the language of speakers; but rather, it is an activity that is personal, momentary and newly constructed in every single interaction.

This study refers to the view of translanguaging in support of a unitary system of languages used by multilingual students; however, a paucity of models for classroom practices exists. It is against this backdrop that the current study seeks to analyse classroom discourses to shed light on the theoretical debate and practical applications of tested prototypes. This study looks beyond single exchanges and learning activities in the CSL classroom to the broader pattern of interaction over time. In addition, it looks at the implications of programmatic design with translanguaging, which should be immensely valuable.

2.2 Translanguaging and Embodied Repertoires

The translanguaging approach to human social interaction as intersection of multiple linguistic and semiotic systems enables us to look more closely at the role of embodied repertoires (Zhu Hua, Li Wei & Daria Jankowicz-Pytel, 2019). Similar to objects, senses, materials, etc., embodied repertoires constitute an important dimension of semiotic practices, contributing to meaning making and at the same time, intersecting with other semiotic repertoires. Nevertheless, research in applied linguistics and language teaching and learning tends to privilege language in the form of speech and writing to the so-called non-linguistic cues including body idioms in their call for "an embodied sociolinguistics" (Zhu Hua, Li Wei & Daria Jankowicz-Pytel, 2019). Studies on gestures (e.g., Kendon, 2004; McNeill, 2015) have championed the centrality of gestural communication as opposed to viewing gestures as an 'add-on' to speech. These studies have argued that gesture and speech are bound and integrated to the extent that gestures orchestrate speech (McNeill, 2015, p. 3).

From a translanguaging perspective, integration and coordination are the key, and they take place in what Li (2011) calls the translanguaging space, space created by and for translanguaging practices. In the translanguaging space, language users integrate social spaces that have been formerly separated through different practices in different places, as well as multiple modes and a wide range of complexities of everyday interaction. It is a space not only where different (linguistic) repertoires, activities, histories, experiences and identities come into contact, but also where various semiotic repertoires (not just linguistic, but multisensory and multimodal) are integrated into coordinated and meaningful performance and social action.

Considering the above theory, this study investigates the role of embodied repertoires with translanguaging in multilingual classrooms. It also answers the question: "How do these repertoires work together in learning Chinese as a second language?"

2.3 Translanguaging and Scaffolding

Recently, the concepts of scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) have gained paramount attention in L2 learning studies. Scaffolding and its relationship to L2 or foreign language learning have been studied from different aspects of interaction, such as teacher-student or student-student interactions, called peer scaffolding. This is one of the most active strands of sociocultural learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In a number of studies on scaffolding in collaborative ESL writing,

Translanguaging is a pedagogical practice that encourages the use of a student's entire linguistic repertoire in and outside the classroom (Garcia. O, Ibarra Johnson & Seltzer, 2017). As such, some recent studies have demonstrated that using translanguaging in this way can contribute to reducing language learners' negative emotions and facilitating their engagement in learning tasks (Adamson & Coulson, 2015; Ahn, Shin Kang, 2018), making it an effective emotional scaffolding in the second language classroom.

Despite the fact that translanguaging in the classroom is gaining traction as a viable interactional option, there is still a lack of research on how teachers can use this strategy as a scaffold for NCS students' emotional support and cognitive development. This is one of the aims investigated in this study.

The current study is based on the hypothesis that students' L1 could be effectively deployed to provide scaffolding assistance in a CSL writing classroom; furthermore, more studies that focus on classroom practice should be implemented. However, there are very few studies regarding the role of translanguaging as scaffolding on the writing performance of CSL learners. This study aims to examine the use of translanguaging as both emotional and cognitive scaffolding by investigating its role in leading co-construction of knowledge by the students in a CSL writing classroom.

2.4 Translanguaging and Second Language Acquisition

Translanguaging pedagogy is aligned with a holistic vision of the writing process because of its focus on the learner's agency within his or her context (Garcia. O & Sylvan, 2011). Translanguaging practices in writing have been used to support and scaffold learning, expand understanding, enhance knowledge, problem solve and develop metalinguistic awareness (Garcia. O & Kano, 2014). Garcia. O and Li Wei (2014) assert that "translanguaging is the web that supports the students' literacy development" (p. 86).

In multilingual pedagogy, the students' L1 is the greatest asset any human being brings to the task of L2 learning (Garcia. O & Otheguy, 2019); the use of L1 is "instrument[al] to the emotional and academic well-being of the students" (Swain, 2006, p. 101). It has become a theoretical grounding for translanguaging as a multilingual pedagogy. Translanguaging pedagogy views multilingual learners' language as complete at every stage of their learning and focusses on "building the agency of the learner to language in order to act and mean" (García & Otheguy, 2019, p. 12). As Garcia. O (2019) indicates, translanguaging has precisely emerged to disrupt the idea of bilingualism as simply being the addition of two codes giving space to the dynamic practices of multilingual people worldwide who had previously been overlooked in scholarship.

For purposes of this research, I drew on the conceptualizations of translanguaging as pedagogical strategies for building the agency of the learner to language in order to act and mean (Garcia. O & Otheguy, 2019) in a CSL classroom.

2.5 Translanguaging in Multilingual Classrooms

In multilingual pedagogy, the students' L1 is the greatest asset any human being brings to the task of L2 learning (Garcia. O & Otheguy, 2019); the use of L1 is "instrument[al] to the emotional and academic well-being'

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Multilingual learners are encouraged to use all available linguistic resources and repertoires in their conversation with peers depending on the events and topics and depending on with whom they are communicating (Poza, 2018). As Garcia. O (2019) argued, language classrooms in the 21st century are moving from monolingualism towards translanguaging and are encouraging flexible concurrent language use rather than continuing to keep students’ linguistic knowledge separate or treating prior languages as non-existent or purely negative influences. Garcia. O and Li Wei (2014) explain that pedagogical translanguaging can help teachers accomplish seven goals in their classrooms:

- 1) To differentiate and adapt instruction to meet the needs of diverse students in the classroom (such as through translation);
- 2) To build background knowledge so that students can derive meaning from the lesson content (such as through collaborative dialogue, collaborative grouping, reading multilingual texts, and multilingual listening/visual resources);
- 3) To deepen understanding, extend knowledge, and develop critical thinking and socio-political engagement (such as through multilingual writing and inner speech);
- 4) To enable cross-linguistic transfer and metalinguistic awareness to help students fulfil their communicative needs (such as through word walls, sentence starters, multilingual vocabulary inquiry, and comparison of multilingual texts);
- 5) To build cross-linguistic flexibility so that students can use language practices competently (such as through alternating languages and media and translanguaging in writing and speaking);
- 6) To engage students through identity investment and positionality (such as through multilingual writing)
- 7) To interrogate linguistic inequality and disrupt existing linguistic hierarchies and social structures (such as through project learning, thematic units, and research) (p. 120–121).

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3. Methodology

The present case study is part of the two-year ethnographic project (2018–2020, funded by Research & Development Grant, Standing Committee on Language Education and Research) Using a focus group in one kindergarten, 20 hours of lessons were observed and recorded. To develop a holistic approach to examining the function of translanguaging, this study collected descriptive data through classroom observations of language use patterns and explanatory data through semi-structured interviews. The findings generated from the video-recordings and triangulated with the interviews.

Classroom-based investigation was conducted to identify teachers' and students' interaction patterns. Following the methodological principles of ethnographic research, the study used a qualitative-interpretative methodology with a conversation analysis approach (Auer, 1984, 1998, 2013). The first step in conversation analysis was to examine the language practices and patterns in classroom interactions. After an instance was identified as belonging to a specific functional category, it was analyzed further. The closer analysis explained what occurred in the situation and how. Furthermore, the occurrences of translanguaging were interpreted with respect to what the participants said, the way they said it, and what they accomplished by employing translanguaging. The preceding and following parts of the interactions that surrounded the translanguaging occurrence were also analyzed, as they could provide information on the specific functions in the given situation. For each transcription, the related episodes in the discussion are presented in a table that included the original excerpt. English translations are in boldface, and code switching is in italics and provided as shown in the transcription conventions. The teacher and students are represented as T and S respectively (see Appendix 1).

4. Research Questions

This research examines the function of translanguaging as an emerging pedagogy for NCS students in CSL classrooms. Specifically, we will mainly answer the following two questions:

- 1) What is the function of translanguaging in NCS children's character learning using picturebook approach?
- 2) How can Chinese teachers incorporate translanguaging into classroom teaching practices?

5. Discussion

5.1 Patterns of Translanguaging Practice in a CSL Classroom

With respect to the first research question — What is the function of translanguaging in NCS children's character learning using a picture book approach? — the following sections provide the findings regarding the pattern of translanguaging practice in the CSL classroom.

1) Explanation

Table 1

Turn		Transcription	English translation
1	S1	春天，呢個呢，來，有無人識讀啊？	Spring, this one, Come, Anyone can read it?
2	S2	來	Come
3	S3	來了	Coming
4	S1,2,3	來了	Coming
5	S1	咩叫做來了啊？（...）	What is the meaning of "coming"?
6	T	咩叫來了啊？來了點解啊？	What is coming? What is the meaning of coming
7	T	<i>Which is mean coming?</i>	Which is mean coming?
8	T	來了	Coming
9	S1&S2	來了	Coming
10	T	來了即係話 <i>Spring is coming</i> , 春天嚟緊, 春天嚟緊啦	Coming means spring is coming. Spring is coming. Spring is coming.

According to the data, one common practice is explanation; that is, the teacher repeats the main points of a description with translanguaging if the student is unsure of the meaning of a specific term in the target language. Consequently, such scaffolding helps them clearly understand the meaning of the target lexis. Table 1 provides such an excerpt:



Figure 1 Teacher Was Leading the NCS Children Reading the Sentence: “春天來了”

In Excerpt 1, we see that the teacher was guiding the student reading a Chinese picturebook named “春天來了”. There is a target word “來了”, for which the student for which the student does not understand the meaning. All of the students are able to read this word in Chinese without understanding it. In order to teach them the meaning, the teacher explains the definition by translanguaging in Turn 7, and due to her explanation, Students 1 and 2 grasped the meaning in Turn 9. It is noteworthy that in order to confirm their understanding about the theme of the picturebook, she explained the whole sentence with translanguaging once again in Turn 10.

2) Recapping

Table 2

Turn		Transcription	English translation
1	T	姐姐	Sister
2	S1	水,水	Water, water
3	T	水? 姐姐做緊咩啊	Water, what is she doing?
4	T	<i>What is she doing?</i> 女孩子做緊乜啊?	What did she do? <i>What is she doing?</i>
5	S2	She is gardening (...)	She is gardening
6	S3	She is watering flower	She is watering flower
7	T	Yes [thumbs up]	Yes
8	S2	Gardening	Gardening
9	T	<i>Gardening is</i> 淋花, 跟我講一次啊, 淋花	<i>Gardening is gardening. Read it with me, gardening</i>
10	S1 & S2	淋花	Gardening
11	T	Oma 跟我讀一次啊, <i>gardening</i> 淋花	Come read with me once, gardening, gardening
12	S3	<i>Gardening</i> 淋花	Gardening, gardening
13	T	淋花	Gardening
14	S1	淋花	Gardening
15	T	Oma 嗰女仔做緊乜嘢啊? 淋, 淋咩嘢?	Oma, what is the girl doing? Watering. Watering what?
16	S3	淋花	Gardening
17	T	係啦, 淋花, 淋花 ok?	Yes, Gardening, gardening, ok?



Figure 2 Teacher Was Teaching the NCS Children the Target Word “淋花”

In Excerpt 2 the teacher is leading the student in reading the same story, which shows a girl gardening the flower. In Turn 2, we can see that S1 speaks the Chinese character “水”. In Turn 3, when the teacher recaps the question by translanguaging, it is interesting that Students 2 and 3 are eager to answer the question in English and elaborate on it with more detail, from Turn 4 to Turn 5. In order to confirm the target word in Chinese, the teacher uses recapping and asks the student to read it again. It is significant that due to the teacher’s recapping in Turn 9, both Students 1 and 2 can get the target word “淋花” in Turn 10. And in order to make sure S3, the lower Chinese proficiency student, understood, she guided S3 to use the strategy of recapping once again. It is observable that Student 3 had learnt this target word and read it aloud in Turn 6.

3) Back Translation

According to the lesson observations in the classroom, translanguaging entails teachers’ deliberate action to solve the problem of reading the picturebook at the word, sentence, and whole-text levels. One of the examples is back translation, which refers to translating words and phrases that used in one language into another language. Students who were eager to verify the intended meaning often used this strategy. Excerpt 3 below illustrates this point in more detail.

Table 3

Turn		Transcription	English translation
1	S1	蜜蜂	Bee
2	T	蜜蜂做緊乜嘢啊?	What is the bee doing?
3	S1	蜜蜂, <i>honey</i>	Bee, honey
4	T	句號, 做緊咩啊?	Full stop. What is doing?
5	S2	<i>Eat honey</i>	Eat honey
6	T	採蜜	Gather honey
7	S3	採蜜	Gather honey
8	T	蜜就係 <i>honey</i>	Honey is honey
9	S2	蜜, 採蜜	Honey, gather honey
10	T	係啦, 採蜜	Yes, gather honey



Figure 3 The Teacher Is Asking the Students, “What is the Bee Doing?”

In the excerpt above, Student 2 is using translation to verify the meanings of the target word “採蜜” in the picturebook in Turn 5. This prompted the teacher to translate it into target language appropriately in Turn 6. Owing to the teacher’s translation, it was found that students can learn the target word successfully.

4) Meaning Making

In addition to translation, there was much greater richness in meaning making with embodied entire repertoires. This is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

Table 4

Turn		Transcription	English translation
1	T	What is the meaning of 開咗啊?	What is the meaning of blooming?
2	T	開咗點解啊?	What is the meaning of blooming?
3	S1	<i>Come?</i>	Come?
4	T	Come 係來了	Come means coming
5	T	<i>Spring (...)</i>	Spring
6	T	咁花點啊?	How are the flowers?
7	T	<i>Flower</i>	Flower
8	S1	<i>(...)</i>	
9	T	開點解啊?開 [teacher using the gesture to demonstrate the meaning of open]	What is the meaning of open? open
10	S2	<i>(...) Flower</i>	Flower
11	S3	開 <i>is like open</i> [student demonstrates how the flower blossomed by gesture]	Blossom is like open
12	T	Yes! Open. Good, very good. Open!	Yes! Open. Good, very good. Open!
13	T	開即係 <i>open</i> , ok	Blossom means open, ok



Figure 4 The Teacher is Demonstrating the Meaning of “Open” by Gesture.

In the excerpt above, the teacher is instructing the children on the meaning of the target word “開” in Chinese, which means “blossom”. In Turn 9, the teacher drew on her entire multilingual repertoire to explain her ideas in more detail by using a similar word “open” by gesture to ensure that all of them understand the meaning of blossom. It is interesting that due to the teacher’s embodied repertoire in Turn 9, Student 3 seems to have comprehended the meaning by suggesting another word, “open” which is the Chinese synonym of “開”. In addition to demonstration, translanguaging has definite communicative functions that cannot be produced if only one strategy is used, such as confirmation. For example, in Turn 13 we can see that the teacher had convinced the students about the meaning of “開” by her embodied repertoire. The following offers another example of this strategy:

Table 5

Turn		Transcription	English translation
1	S1&S2	樹木 [pointing to the tree]	Tree
2	T	呢個樹木 [thumb up]	This is tree
3	S3	綠色	Green color
4	T	綠色, 樹木點啊	Green color, how about the tree?
5	T	識唔識啊? 樹木係矮定高啊? 矮定高? [using gesture]	Do you know whether the tree is tall or short? Tall or short?
6	S2	高 (...)	Tall
7	S3	高 [student demonstrates the word by body movement]	Tall
9	T	高!係啦. 我地望呢邊先	Tall, right! Let’s look at this first
10	T	Reha, 知唔知咩叫高啊? 咁咩叫高?	Reha, do you know what is tall? What is tall?
11	S1	[Nodding] 高 <i>is tall</i>	Tall is tall



Figure 5 The Student 2 was demonstrating the word of “高” by Body Movement

The excerpt above illustrated that the teacher was instructing the class on the target character “高” in Chinese by gesture. It was determined that due to the teacher’s embodied repertoire, Student 2 learnt the target character and Student 3 even demonstrated his understanding of the target word through his body movement, which helped him achieve a deep understanding of the concepts in Turn 7. In Turn 11, Student 1 can provide further explanations of a point that had been mentioned previously in English. Students were able to negotiate the meaning for their mutual comprehension. This process definitely facilitated deeper understanding of the character.

5) Embodied Learning and Performance



Figure 6 Student 1 was Dancing Like the Butterfly.

Table 6

Turn		Transcription	English translation
1	T	蝴蝶做緊乜嘢啊?	What is it doing?
2	S1	<i>Flower</i>	Flower
3	T	Flower? 蝴蝶係度跳舞	Flower? The butterfly is dancing
4	T	<i>Dancing</i> , 跳舞係 dancing	Dancing, dancing is dancing
5	S1	The butterfly is dancing.	The butterfly is dancing
6	S1	[Student 1 is dancing like the butterfly]	
7	T	Yes, very good, 好似佢咁啦, dancing	Yes, very good. Like him, dancing
9	T	Reha 你做一次啊. Reha 你扮一次蝴蝶點樣 / <i>Dancing</i> , 你做一次啊, 跳舞.	Reha, you do it once again. Reha you pretend what is the butterfly doing? Dancing. You do it once, dancing.
10	S2& S3	[Students 2 and 3 were dancing like the butterfly]	
11	T	Good, 跳舞, <i>dancing</i>	Good, dancing
12	T	Ok, very good. 跳舞. 你地知咩叫跳舞啦	Ok, very good. Dancing. You know the meaning of dancing now.

The excerpt above describes the way multilingual and embodied repertoire work together and why translanguaging is a collaborative effort. In Turn 1, the teacher is asking the student what the butterfly was doing, and it was observed that student could not grasp the meaning at first, which resulted in the teacher using translanguaging to stimulate the student's imagination in Turn 5. It is noteworthy that, the metaphor dancing is important to the meaning and sense-making among the students. Owing to the demonstration of S1. In Turn 6 and Turn 10, all of the students can dance like the butterfly, in this “translanguaging space” NCS children, leveraging all of their embodied repertoire, contributed differently to the meaning making of body movement.



Figure 7 Student 2 and Student 3 were dancing like the butterfly.

It is obvious that translanguaging can be a scaffold facilitating NCS children's embodied repertoires to reciprocate each other's semiotic resource retrospectively and progressively in anticipation. Excerpt 8 will illustrate this point in more detail.

Table 7

Turn		Transcription	English translation
1	S1&S 2	鳥	Bird
2	S3	小鳥	Little bird
3	T	小鳥係啦，小鳥做緊咩	Little bird, right. What is the bird doing?
4	S1&S 2	唱歌	Singing
5	S3	唱歌	Singing
6	T	唱歌	Singing
7	S1	la la la la la	la la la la la
8	T	Rehan 你試下? [Teacher invited Student 1 to sing]	Can you try it Reha?
9	S2	la la la la la	la la la la la
10	T	Yes 唱歌就係咁啦，你試下 [invite A]	Yes, this is singing, Oma can you try it?
11	S3	la la la la la	la la la la la

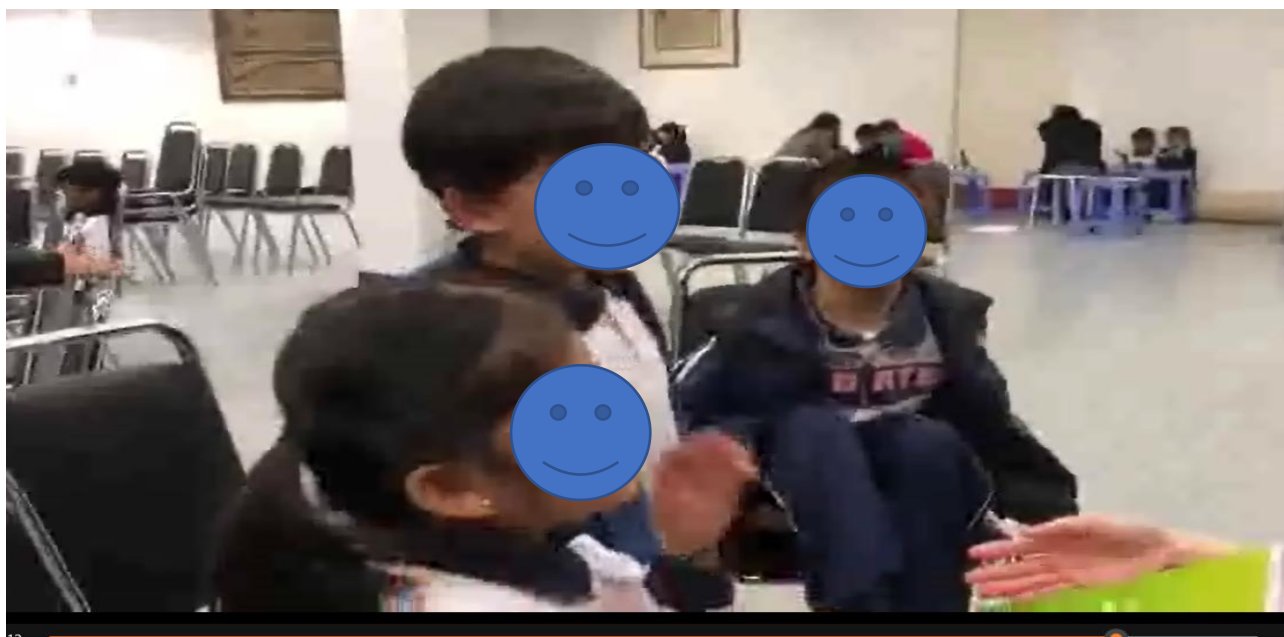


Figure 8 Students were Singing Together Like the Bird in Picture Book.

Excerpt 8 illustrates the way translanguaging not only leverages students' embodied repertoire but also the multimodal semiotic system. When the teacher asks students what the bird is doing in Turn 3, it is interesting that students are not only able to read the target word “唱歌” in Chinese, but also eager to sing like the birds from Turn 7 to Turn 11. Students' verbal and embodied repertoire take place simultaneously. In such “translanguaging space”, both the song and body movement are part and parcel of targets of learning and performance; learning Chinese characters becomes embodied performance (Zhu Hua, Li Wei & Daria Jankowicz-Pytel 2020).

5.2 Findings From Lesson Observations and Teacher Interviews

In terms of qualitative data, open-ended, post-hoc analyses were conducted in search of recurring patterns in the data, as well as important concepts that may explain the patterns. Protocols obtained from interviews were transcribed and the findings were closely scrutinised by the researcher in order to enrich and inform the understanding of the effectiveness of the picturebook approach. With reference to the lesson observations and the teachers' interviews, below are the main findings about the NCS children's cognitive mode and difficulties in learning Chinese characters:

5.2.1 Influence of Speaking and Listening Abilities on Learning Discrepancies

According to the interview with the two kindergarten teachers, NCS students' differences in Chinese proficiency depended on whether speaking and listening training was provided in their families. Hence, abilities in speaking and listening played a crucial role in Chinese character learning. The relevant comments are listed below:

I think the biggest difficulty for NCS kids in learning Chinese is that they don't understand the language used in the lessons. Maybe it's because they don't have the habit of using Cantonese at home, but they need to start listening to and speaking Cantonese at school. For example, in my class, there are two students with a pretty good level of Cantonese. They are Kripa and Yan. Their family members can speak Cantonese, and so they also learn to speak Cantonese under the influence of their families. In my opinion, the discrepancies in the students' Cantonese speaking abilities mainly lies in whether their family members have the habit of using Cantonese at home.

In other words, children's Cantonese output in their daily interaction is influenced by their family backgrounds and parents' habit of using Cantonese in everyday life.

5.2.2 Semantic Retrieval From Phonetic Coding

According to the teachers' interview and lesson observations, NCS children's oral ability developed more quickly than their literacy, and they were used to retrieving character meaning through phonetic coding. The relevant excerpts from the interview follow:

NCS students' development of speech is faster than that of reading. Our target students are kindergarten children and they need pictures to assist reading. So, we first focus on developing their oral ability...Actually, they learn Chinese through listening.

5.2.3 Decoding Through Pictures

It was found that NCS children benefitted greatly from the use of pictures to facilitate their comprehension of character meaning in the acquisition of Chinese characters. The pictures relevant contexts help them retrieve the character sound, so they can effectively master the meanings of words. One teacher commented:

Sometimes only when they saw their own drawings, like a hamburger, they would know it was a hamburger. So, they learn word meaning through pictures.

5.2.4 Combination of Orthographic Teaching and Pictures

Based on the teachers' opinions, pictures also play a pedagogical role in teaching Chinese character structures — which are difficult for NCS students — apart from assisting in semantic retrieval. One teacher commented:

They would rather write characters like drawing. I think that's acceptable for them to copy characters like drawings... Besides, they also draw pictures for their homework. For example, if I give them the word “深水埗” (*Sham Shui Po*, a place in the Kowloon peninsula of Hong Kong), they will be required to draw the place Sham Shui Po. It is to

ensure that they understand the word's meaning. If they are given the word “星星” (*star; celestial body*), they will need to draw a picture of stars. However, teachers need to provide assistance in the aspects of orthography and semantics, mainly through pictures and drawing.

In addition, the findings support the theory of translanguaging with a picturebook approach, which suggests that all characters are learnt in relational clusters, with similarities and variations among related characters in the clusters being used by teachers to highlight and emphasize crucial aspects of Chinese characters and words. This fact was mentioned by a kindergarten teacher as stated below:

I think it's quite difficult for the NCS students to learn characters with the guidance of a worksheet. They can handle simple components like the “three dots” for the water radical. However, in terms of character structure, they still consider Chinese characters as some pictures and signs. Hence, character structure is still the least comprehensible part to them at the current stage.

6. Findings

This study determined that translanguaging as a scaffold with a picturebook approach in multilingual classroom has the following effects:

- 1) It can stimulate the learning motivation of NCS children so they become active and devoted to learning Chinese.
- 2) Students repeatedly read the texts, and learn the relevant vocabulary and linguistic knowledge.
- 3) Students develop a deeper understanding and feelings towards the texts by analysing the characters' behaviours, psychology and personalities. The knowledge they have learnt can internalise language ability.
- 4) Through collaborative learning with peers, students demonstrate creativity. As a result, students' reading and oral skills can be strengthened, and their interest in reading Chinese picture book can also be increased.

Nevertheless, this study also uncovered challenges encountered by the teachers while teaching picturebooks to NCS children. According to the interview of kindergarten teachers, the main challenges included: (1) large individual differences; (2) NCS children's inability to comprehend Chinese characters; and (3) NCS children are not accustomed to using Cantonese due to their family backgrounds.

7. Recommendation

7.1 Creating the “Translanguaging space” With Multimodality in CSL Classrooms

Referring to the finding, NCS students utilize translanguaging, in which they use their complex semiotic repertoire to learn Chinese with picturebooks. In response to the learning diversity of NCS children in multilingual classroom, teachers are advised to use other multisensory materials, such as videos, animations of historical characters, emojis, drama props and Cantonese audiobooks. These can serve as daily teaching materials, apart from adding visually oriented materials like comics and pictures while designing the semiotic resources for NCS children. The children will have comprehensible input before the reading, so they can grasp the relevant characters and concepts.

During the classroom observation, it was observed that children were eager to use the translanguaging (including the use of different languages, gestures and body movement) to deal with the meaning of characters.

Focusing on the students' interactions, teachers are advised to develop the NCS children's embodied repertoire and encourage them to express themselves with translanguaging based on the different topics of the picturebooks. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers can flexibly create a translanguaging space by mobilizing NCS students' embodied repertoire such as conducting drama pedagogy along with the picturebooks.

For reading, students need to imitate the expressions and body movements of the characters in the animations, and repeat their words. It also helps students make meanings for lexemes in the auditory and body-kinesthetic modes, and create imagination and mental representations beyond their visions. Students can then develop personal opinions in the learning mode that they are good at. It suggests that multimodality (including the contexts of language and body movements) is combined with picturebook in CSL lesson for NCS children. (See Figure 9 The teaching model of translanguaging with multimodality in CSL classrooms.)

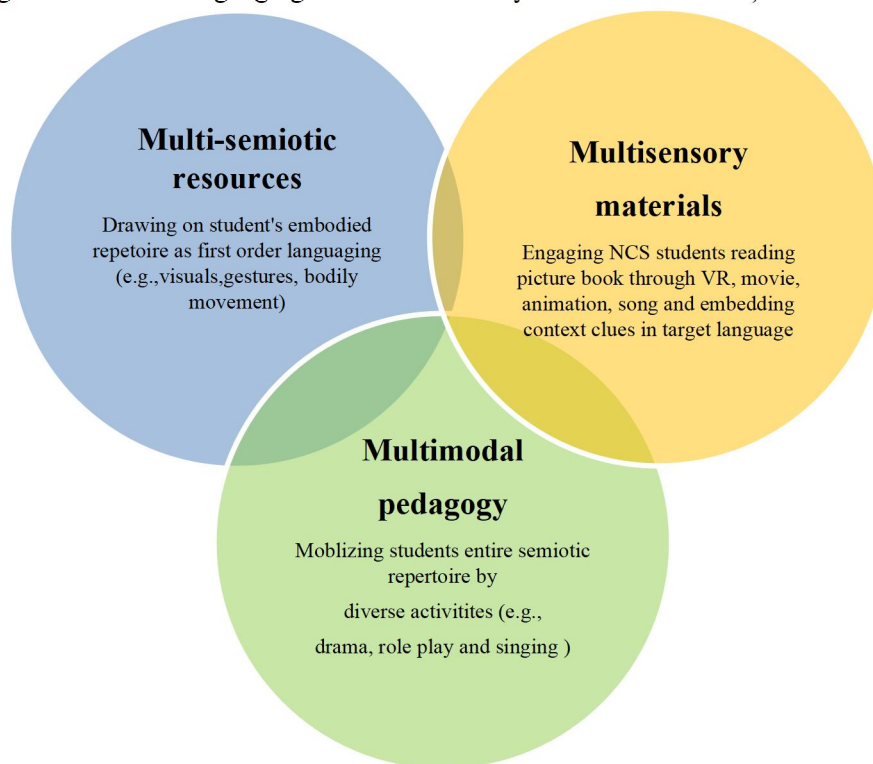


Figure 9 The Teaching Model of Translanguaging With Multimodality in CSL Classrooms.

Translanguaging as an inclusive pedagogy aims to promote learning and participation by drawing on the learners' entire semiotic repertoire. Translanguaging as CSL pedagogy refers to any instance in which the students' multiple repertoire are used to improve learning. As a CSL teacher, it is important for teacher to plan those translanguaging pedagogies in some cases purposefully and support them through specific teacher-led activities such as reading picture book. In other cases, I allow those spaces to occur moment-to-moment, as we engage NCS children in learning and the children themselves make choices about their language use by spontaneous translanguaging. Whether translanguaging as pedagogy is used as planned teaching practice, or as a spontaneous learning process, it is always used strategically, never randomly.

7.2 Exploring Translanguaging in Picturebooks

Meanwhile, it was found that recent picturebooks that provide windows and mirrors and sliding doors for our

children. In response to the need of NCS children, it is important for authors' and illustrators' use of translanguaging in picturebooks. It suggests that authors' use of italics or bold print to highlight special words and phrases in the target language (Chinese) since they all provide context clues for NCS children's comprehension, such as using a key phrase repeatedly, or repeating the meaning of these words and phrases in Chinese, or showing the meaning through actions. Some picture books provide a glossary of terms which is very useful for children's comprehension.

7.3 Opening Our Classrooms to Translanguaging by Culturally Responsive Teaching

As Garcia claim that, supporting our students' linguistic and cultural flexibility will prepare them for success in the world (Garcia, 2009). It suggests that CSL teachers teaching NCS children to show cultural artifacts in illustrations, as their entire linguistic repertoire and encourage their use of translanguaging in reading picture books. For example, asking them where does translanguaging occur in the picture books they read. How might they apply translanguaging when they are telling the story? On the other hand, teacher can encourage NCS children express meaning across languages in writing after reading the picture book which may give them confidence. By this way, NCS children approach writing tasks with more flexibility, knowing that they can use a broader language repertoire that is much more congruent with their lives outside school. They are more careful readers, not only do they pay attention to instances of translanguaging in books they read, but also other instances of author's and illustrator's craft, such as deliberate use of fonts or layout or cultural symbols in the illustrations, or use of metaphors and cultural references in writing. They will become more joyful learners because of the bridges we are creating between home and school.

7.4 Translanguaging and Social Justice for Ethnic Minorities

The findings in this study support the argument that, as a learning strategy, translanguaging not only allows NCS children to share knowledge, but more importantly, provides a source of empowerment that allows them to affirm their identity of multilingual learners through mutual sharing and support against the background of the broader society in which their ethnic identity has often been marginalized (Lin, 2019). This is possible because translanguaging recognizes a formal equality among all language features and practices, and these features are situated within a complete system that each of the NCS children owns fully.

In addition, when practiced as pedagogy with NCS children, translanguaging even has the potential to advance social justice. Because translanguaging creates a learning space for NCS children that shifts the discourse away from that in a traditional Chinese classroom and monolingual model of children with diverse languages, it creates translanguaging spaces that NCS children experience as empowering and makes them adaptable so they can obtain their own life experiences in learning Chinese.

As observed, NCS students' bilingual identities were also reinforce through the daily translanguaging practice during CSL lessons. Through the recognition and support of linguistic variability, NCS children gained an increased level of independence, a greater level of confidence in their abilities, and a greater degree of competence, engagement, and productivity in the CSL classroom.

By and large, the findings of this study indicate that translanguaging is a natural discursive practice that it can also express the equal identities of NCS children and teachers with different cultural backgrounds, as it offers the teachers and students more resources to create greater equity in all students' access and achievement. NCS students who have limited Chinese proficiency may remain silent in a Chinese-only classroom and inadvertently show a lack of progress and comprehension simply because they lack the Chinese language skills needed to

express themselves. However, in a translanguaging space, those same students are able to use English as a lingua franca or their familiar language, to facilitate their learning and communicate understanding in a small group that incorporates them more fully as a member of the learning community rather than simply a silent observer. In translanguaging spaces, NCS children's linguistic resources are valued and brought to bear on the learning process in all contexts, and thus, CSL teachers can introduce interconnectedness, as well as exhibit an appreciation of NCS children's diversity. Hence, it helps CSL teachers shift the focus from the language to the language user, calling attention to their agency, intelligence, and creativity in communicative acts while questioning the social hierarchies that would undermine such traits.

Given that NCS children have been treated as proficient in English, and many of them enjoy this identity, this study drawing on NCS children's English repertoire, one of the most important symbolic resources in the CSL classroom, as well as attempting to frame them as sources of a positive and enriching diversity, is a strategy to develop their identity as successful learners in Hong Kong. Based on this fact, translanguaging can serve as an agent to increase their multiple linguistic resources and ultimately transform their identity from that of a minority to a majority in CSL classrooms.

8. Conclusion

This study extends the theory about translanguaging. It shows that it is a powerful means for facilitating NCS children's learning through a semiotic system. This was not only reflected by the students using their entire linguistic repertoire for knowledge construction, but also through their first order languaging in the classroom. Referring to the findings, using translanguaging with picturebooks enables NCS children to reading Chinese picture books by leveraging their embodied repertoire to infer meaning and building confidence. There is a dual connection between the children's internal language (I-language) and the externalised language (E-language), which supports the integrated view of multilingualism and develops NCS children's identity of learning Chinese in multilingual classrooms. And it is also essential to explore ways to practice culturally responsive teaching and bring translanguaging into the picturebook for NCS children.

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Appendix

Transcription Conventions

Italic	Code-switches
Bold	English translation
Cantonese pinyin	Transcribed by the author
...	Pauses or intervals
(.)	Pause of less than a second
[note]	Researcher's annotation/comment
(...)	Irrelevant words researcher omitted