Multilingualisms, translanguaging and transknowledging: education for inclusion, cohesion and wellbeing

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Outline

Significant global diversities & movement of people
Changing foci in linguistics ⇒ theory & thinking about languages & literacy in learning

Implications for education systems

Diversification of student profiles in classrooms & schools in most countries

Curriculum, pedagogy, & assessment
120 years of relevant research data from Africa (Global South)
Professional learning / support of teachers

Policy and planning
Local, National, Transnational
Multi-stakeholder collaboration & responsibilities
Recognising contributions of development & aid agencies, VVOB

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Key Policy & Planning considerations & role of international aid / development agencies

Planning backwards from 2030 – UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals, UN Global Compact for Refugees 2018, etc.

Multi-stakeholder participation: bottom-up & top-down
  Local, National, Transnational – joint responsibilities
  Address minority & migrant student needs for inclusion & prevention of conflict
  Lessons from Africa & South / South East Asia; role of VVOB in S. Africa

Capacity development
  Education officials, teacher educators, teachers
  – for institutional memory & durability

Teacher education
  Biliteracy, bilingualism, multilingualism

Curriculum & assessment revision

Pedagogy

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Capacity building for durable & inclusive planning

What do the stakeholders need to know?

Education agencies
Education officials
Teacher educators
Teachers, Parents

120 years of research data on failure of subtractive/transition from L1/home language to dominant language

Value of systematic & sustained bi-/multilingual pedagogies in schooling - for all students

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Principle 1: Bi-/multilingual literacy for all

Gaps between early literacy and academic literacy:
language policy & curriculum weakness in most settings

Focus on teaching literacy only Reception – Grade/Year 3

Gap between early literacy
‘Learning to read and write ’stories

and the kind of literacy needed
across the curriculum

‘Reading and writing to learn’ science, mathematics, history, geography etc.
from Year 4 onwards.
This involves a cognitive jump for all children around the world

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Gaps between early literacy, biliteracy, academic biliteracy,

Most children change from local language(s) to a dominant /national language e.g. English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Arabic before or by the end of year 3 in post-colonial settings And now also in Europe, N America

Attempts to use L2 / L3 for teaching & learning
• when learners have ± 500-600 words, and
• simple sentence structures [simple syntax]

➔ for whole curriculum
• which needs ± 5000-7000 words and
• complex structures and sentences from year 4 ≠ workable.

It creates a double jump for students from a minority language community

The double jump ↑ is too great
For displaced or refugee students this is a ↑ triple jump
(see also Mohanty, 2019)

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Common findings in relation to most language learning & reading programs

Grade 1-3

Student achievement more or less similar across most reading programs

Grade 4-6

Gaps begin to widen depending upon program

Grade 6/7+

Students who are not at the national norm by Grade 6 – unlikely ever to catch up

Biliteracy & bi-/multilingualism necessary from the beginning

Students in dual language medium (bilingual) programs outperform other students


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Principle 2:  
Two plus languages & 
Two plus knowledge systems

How to:

- include students
  - from linguistic & knowledge backgrounds that differ from the mainstream, and

- value what they know

- develop co-dependent & reciprocal strategies
  - for mainstream and migrant background students to recognise & value co-dependent learning relationships

Core message:

- teachers and students
  - many from marginalised & displaced communities,

- need reciprocal opportunities to recognise, share and value
  - minority & mainstream repertoires of language & knowledge to enhance their sense of belonging, purpose and well-being.

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Implications – two sides of the same coin:
Dutch (French, English) medium education means that there are more languages present in the classroom
Teachers need to know how to see, hear and use

Multilingual Education

Principle 2: Two+ languages & Two+ knowledge systems

Home/local/community language + Community knowledge system

Dominant school language MOI + Dominant knowledge system +
‘International’ language + knowledge system
Translating knowledge from one language to another involves both language & knowledge. Knowledge developed in one language may not be known in another language. Two-way exchanges of knowledge between community and the school and between the school and the community involve transknowledging – ‘learning to read the world’.

Teachers who think about both translanguaging and transknowledging especially for students from Indigenous, minority, and refugee communities are likely to strengthen inclusion, social cohesion and the wellbeing of all students (both the migrant or minority students and the more settled mainstream students).
Multilingualism, Translanguaging & Transknowledging

L1/linguistic repertoire + L2/Language of the school (translanguaging) to increase metacognitive language learning between L1 & L2

Evidence-based principles

Indigenous and international knowledge & expertise
Access through students’ language & knowledge repertoires

Bi-/ multilingual translanguaging principles

Culturally sustaining & responsive CSP-CRP principles

Knowledges (epistemologies) exchange principles

Pedagogies

Multilingualism Translanguaging
Translation
Interpreting
Code-mixing
Code-switching

CSP-CRP

Two-way exchange of knowledge systems
Transknowledging

Policy

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Functional multilingualism = **systematic use** of translinguaging & transknowledging

Horizontal multilingualism
Informal translinguaging processes / use of language  

Vertical multilingualism
Purposive, systematic, formal use of code-switching / translinguaging

Using both horizontal and vertical translinguaging (functional multilingualism) **with** two-way exchange and translation of knowledge (transknowledging) to build cohesion & avoid conflict & xenophobia — Heugh, 2017
Functional multilingualism = systematic use of translanguaging & transknowledging

**Horizontal multilingualism**
- Co-operative, inclusive & bridging language practices – porous borders
- Fluid moving back & forth between languages
- Code-mixing, code-switching,
- Hybrid languages
- Texting, informal writing

**Informal translanguage processes / use of language**

**Vertical multilingualism**
- Exclusive, bounded & practices of differences between languages
- Multiple parallel monolingualisms: education, government, legal systems, literary works
  Formal translation & interpreting
- Bi-/multilingual literacy → high level

**Purposive, systematic, formal use of code-switching / translanguaging**

Using both horizontal and vertical translanguaging (functional multilingualism) with exchange and translation of knowledge (transknowledging) to reduce inequalities, maximise recognition and development of students’ language, literacy, linguistic, and knowledge resources – Heugh, 2017

Similar focus in ‘functional multilingual learning’ – Sierens & van Avermaet, 2014; van Avermaet et al., 2018

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Conclusion

Sustainable and durable solutions inclusion of refugees & migrant & mainstream students

Need to be embedded within holistic policy that addresses the needs of minority / marginalised students alongside needs for ‘host’ / mainstream students

To ensure best prospects for

• Social cohesion & avoid social disaffection or conflict
• Effective joint collaboration & responsibilities
• Effective sharing of resources & expertise
  • Local, regional collaborations
  • Cross-border collaborations
  • Transnational collaborations

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Resources for teachers & teacher education

Free online book resource with short introductory video

Resources for teachers and teacher educators

Engaging with Linguistic Diversity
A Study of Educational Inclusion in an Irish Primary School
David Little & Déirdre Kirwan 2019
Bloomsbury

This book analyses a highly successful and innovative approach to inclusive plurilingual education at primary level and demonstrates how it can be replicated without access to special funding or resources.