

Translanguaging Practices and Perspectives of Four Multilingual Teens

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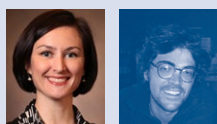
In English-only environments, multilingual students productively use languages other than English to support their learning.

Aung (all student and school names are pseudonyms) is a resettled refugee who, until 2011 when she and her family moved to the United States, spent most of her life in Thai refugee camps because of civil unrest in Myanmar. Because she uses four languages, Aung often draws on these languages to accomplish her academic and personal goals. Yet, in a school system in which English is dominant, only her achievements in English are recognized. The following conversation reveals the ever-present tensions in a multilingual, transnational teen's life:

Shannon: Since you moved to the U.S., do any of your teachers encourage you to use your other languages?

Aung: I don't remember.

Shannon: Do they ever say anything about Karenni or Burmese or Thai?



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Aung: Oh, no. I did one time in English 1. Mr. Anderson, he is the English teacher, and he asked us to write an essay, and I had no idea what to write. And he's like, "You have to turn this in by today!" And he's like, "Write the essay!" So, I don't know. I write all, I write with the Burmese language. And then when I turn it in, he's like, "Can you translate?" So, I did translate, but it's kinda wrong, 'cause I don't really know how to translate at that time.

Aung's experience sheds light on how multilingual teens agentively choose to use languages other than English (LOTEs) to make sense of schoolwork even though these languages are often ignored or discouraged. Yet, how could Mr. Anderson recognize and build on Aung's language use, and what other ways does she use and benefit from her knowledge of four languages throughout the school day?

We explore these questions by examining four teens' perspectives of using LOTEs to make sense of the world in and out of school. First, we frame students' strategic use of multiple languages as translanguaging, or the practices associated with moving across languages and registers of speech to make meaning (O. García, 2009). Next, we explore these practices through elicited firsthand accounts of how teens use language and how their dispositions toward language,

or language ideologies (Martínez, Hikida, & Durán, 2015), might influence this use. We then make pedagogical recommendations that build on students' strategic translanguaging to achieve goals. Ultimately, we seek to support teachers of multilingual students in building on students' language practices, especially teachers who are unfamiliar with translanguaging pedagogies and do not share students' knowledge of LOTEs.

Translanguaging: Practices and Ideologies in the Classroom

Language is a resource for making meaning. O. García's (2009) concept of translanguaging suggests that linguistic resources (i.e., knowledge of multiple languages and dialects) are part of a single language system that an individual uses to create meaning and accomplish goals. As students and educators translanguaging, or flexibly move across languages and registers of speech, students can develop their proficiencies in multiple languages (Cummins, 2007), deepen their metalinguistic awareness (Martin-Beltrán, 2014), and strengthen important components of their reading comprehension tool kits, such as summarizing and understanding vocabulary (Jiménez et al., 2015).

However, language is not something that a student simply "has" but a repeated and expansive practice in which he or she continuously engages. Translanguaging practices include code-switching, translating, and language brokering, or interpreting between culturally and linguistically diverse individuals (Tse, 1996). Because multilingual youths translanguaging daily (Martínez, Orellana, Pacheco, & Carbone, 2008), teachers can and should leverage these practices by identifying connections between activities valued in classrooms and students' actual language practices. Understanding how a student translates for a parent at the doctor, for example, could be productive in helping that student attend to text features when summarizing (Borrero, 2011).

Translanguaging pedagogies must begin from the bottom up, or build on the actual language practices of multilingual students (O. García, 2009). To do this, educators can attend to how practices relate to language ideologies, or student and teacher "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 498). These ideologies can include perceptions about which languages hold power or prestige in academic and social spheres, are useful for jobs, and should be incorporated into instruction. Ideologies vary across populations, are fluid, and can even conflict

within the individual. Ideologies can be articulated by an individual or embodied in that individual's activities, and there is an important relationship between the two (Martínez et al., 2015). For teachers, knowing why students use language is critical for informing how that language can be leveraged in instruction.

Ideologies concerning students' heritage languages can pose significant challenges to incorporating LOTEs into instruction. Although scholarship on language learning and bilingualism suggests that an individual's first language can support the acquisition of a second (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Cummins, 2007), and students' heritage languages can be productively integrated into English as a second language and content area classrooms (Lucas & Katz, 1994), English-only instruction continues to be the norm in most U.S. schools. For this reason, even prominent models of English-dominant sheltered instruction include some attention to integrating students' first languages (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). We contend that greater attention to students' actual translanguaging practices and ideologies will lead to more effective pedagogical planning that leverages teens' LOTEs.

Furthermore, students, teachers, and families can hold conflicting and complex attitudes toward heritage languages that might equate only English with legitimate school participation (Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Valdés, 2005). Educators must be aware of ideological constraints on translanguaging, such as attitudes toward language use in schools, and practical constraints, such as how to include multiple languages in instruction when the teacher might not speak these languages.

To address these challenges, we take a two-pronged approach in our study. We attempt to understand how multilingual students draw from linguistic resources to make sense of their worlds and how they perceive their language use across contexts. With the goal of informing translanguaging pedagogies, we asked these two questions:

1. How do multilingual students use LOTEs to support meaning making?
2. How do students perceive their language use and language abilities in and out of school?

The Study

Multiple Languages in English-Only Schools

Our study takes place in the larger context of public education in the United States, where English-dominant

schooling is the norm. Because English-dominant educational settings and policies are often “subtractive in nature, ignoring the linguistic resources...students bring to the classroom” (E.E. García, 2005, p. 89), most scholars argue for dual-language programs. Nevertheless, English-only educational policies continue to prevail, and the four students in this study attend school in a state where classrooms are English only by law. The students attend school in a Southeastern U.S. city where the percentage of English learners exceeds the national average. As a new immigrant gateway city, over 70 languages are represented among students from over 130 countries.

Methods

Our findings derive from interview data across two qualitative studies with multilingual learners in secondary school settings (see Table 1). Shannon’s five-month ethnographic study takes place in an after-school, refugee youth services program that is held 2:00–5:00 p.m. daily in the students’ high school. Data collection on the two teens from Shannon’s study included 20 days of observation with field notes and videotaping, two interviews, and two focus group interviews with both participants out of a larger sample of 13 students. Mark’s study takes place over four weeks in an eighth-grade English language arts classroom. Data collection on the two teens entailed 12 days of observation with field notes and videotaping and two interviews with each participant out

of a larger sample of 20 students. Participants were selected through criterion-based purposive sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to include a range of linguistic proficiencies, ages, lengths of time in the United States, and aspirations.

With assumptions that teens participate in multiple Discourses and their participation is responsive to their environments (Gee, 1996), we conducted semistructured interviews using Seidman’s (2006) three-part structure that focuses on participants’ histories, details of experiences, and meaning making. Interviews and observations reveal teens’ perceptions on language use across contexts. We described and theorized the data with open and axial coding of field notes and interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and included codes such as “using strategies for success,” “reflecting on language knowledge and value,” and “translanguaging for school” using HyperResearch. To establish trustworthiness, we served as peer debriefers for each other’s data analysis, triangulated interview data with observations, and corroborated findings through consultation with participants’ program directors or teachers.

Four Transnational Teens and Their Translanguaging Practices

Across four teens with varied language knowledge, histories, goals, and school contexts, patterns emerged. First, all students indicated that their LOTEs were not useful, or gave the impression that

TABLE 1 Student Participants				
Name	Age and grade level	Languages spoken	Time in the United States	School context
Mah-nin	18, grade 12	Chin (NL), Burmese, and English	Approximately 4 years (started school in March 2011)	Oak High: 1,791 students: - Approximately 35% white, 28% Hispanic, 22% black, and 14% Asian 25% of students labeled English learners 74% of students receive free or reduced-price meals.
Aung	19, grade 12	Karenni (NL), Burmese, Thai, and English	Approximately 4 years (started school in October 2011)	
Rachel	15, grade 8	Spanish (NL) and English	Approximately 2 years (started grade 7 in 2010)	West Middle: 872 students: - Approximately 48% Hispanic, 23% black, 21% white, and 7% Asian 27% of students labeled English learners 92% of students receive free or reduced-price meals.
Mertal	14, grade 8	Bahdini (NL), Sorani, and English	14 years (born in the United States)	

Note. NL = student’s native language.

their languages were undervalued in school. Only with additional questioning did we uncover how teens use their multiple languages. Second, interviews revealed that teens actively use LOTE to make sense of school. Third, all four teens envisioned a multilingual future for themselves, implying that making translanguaging a norm in U.S. schools would support student learning. Next, we give a snapshot of each of the four learners and their perspectives on translanguaging.

Mah-nin: “I’m Thinking Chin”

Even though Mah-nin is rarely encouraged to think about or use LOTE in school, she told us that Chin is ever present in her mind. Having grown up in Myanmar speaking Chin and Burmese, she thinks in Chin when listening to teachers speak in English and when studying for examinations. She also uses Burmese daily with friends in the after-school program.

Nevertheless, when Shannon asked Mah-nin about her language use, Mah-nin negated using LOTE:

Shannon: So, when you’re in school, when do you use Chin?

Mah-nin: You mean here or in my country?

Shannon: Here.

Mah-nin: I don’t use my language here.

Shannon: What about Burmese?

Mah-nin: Yeah, I use Burmese when I have a friend in class, the same, we have the same class. I speak with them Burmese.

Shannon: Let’s say you’re in government class, and I’m the government teacher, and I’m talking about legislation and executive branch and judicial branch and all that stuff. In your head, are you thinking in Chin or Burmese or English or—?

Mah-nin: I’m thinking Chin.

Shannon: Chin?

“On their own volition, these teens participate in effective translanguaging practices.”

Mah-nin: Yeah.

Shannon: Do you ever take notes in Chin?

Mah-nin: No, I don’t take notes in Chin. In Burmese.

Shannon: You take notes in Burmese?

Mah-nin: Yeah.

Shannon: In what classes?

Mah-nin: Mmm, no. When I didn’t know the thing, what it means, I wrote like Burmese language. Every class, I guess.

Here, Mah-nin articulated how multiple languages support her schoolwork and how she is almost always “thinking Chin” in classes.

While talking through academic content and taking notes in Burmese, Mah-nin constantly processes content in Chin, her mother tongue. These strategies suggest that her first language is always active (Cook, 2001):

Mah-nin: Like I’m study, when we take a test, we have to study, right? We have to write, like, put in our brain.

Shannon: So, when you study, do you write a lot or just read a lot?

Mah-nin: Yeah, I read and put in my mind.

Shannon: And repeat a lot in your mind?

Mah-nin: Yeah.

Shannon: In what language do you repeat a lot?

Mah-nin: In my language.

Shannon: In Chin?

Mah-nin: Yeah.

Each day, Mah-nin uses three languages to make sense of schoolwork, responsibilities, and leisure activities. Spending time with Mah-nin and Aung in an informal environment made clear how they move between LOTE and English with grace and ease. One afternoon, for instance, Mah-nin showed Aung the faux brochure she was making on Germany for her social studies class. The girls engaged in rapid Burmese dialogue. When checking their work against the teacher’s written directions, they switched to English, switched back to Burmese, and then sought the program director’s help in English. Interestingly,

Mah-nin thinks in Chin but takes notes in Burmese. Although our interviews did not reveal her perspectives on why she writes in Burmese instead of Chin, a possible reason for this choice might be that the Burmese notes helped her in talking with her friends who share the Burmese language, whereas the number of peers who speak Chin was much smaller.

What value, though, does she place on her use of LOTEs? Shannon asked Mah-nin which languages are important and why. Despite using Burmese and Chin to make sense of school, Mah-nin views English as most important for her future, whereas Chin is valued mainly to connect with her past.

In her words, Chin was important “because I have to know my cultural language.” English is valuable because “after high school, I have to work, so I have to speak better English and to write English.” Even though Mah-nin is “thinking Chin,” she does not seem to value this translanguaging as a resourceful practice, likely because the English-dominant school environment does not encourage her to do so. Furthermore, she said that she had no Burmese peers in her classes, which limited her abilities to translanguaging for academic meaning making during the school day.

Aung: “I Write It With Burmese”

The introduction to this article reveals how Aung strategically translanguages when writing for school, even though her teacher did not suggest, acknowledge, or extend this practice. Aung speaks multiple languages, including Burmese with her mom, Karenni with her dad, and Thai with her sister. The following excerpt further demonstrates how she takes notes in Burmese and uses translanguaging strategies:

Shannon: When you’re in science class, in your head, you’re trying to understand, what languages do you use in your head?

Aung: In science class, I listen to what teachers say. If I don’t know, I go ask her again, and I ask her to speak slow.

Shannon: So, your thinking is mostly in English? Or in your head, you translate between English and Karenni?

Aung: Oh, sometime when they say and I cannot understand, I write it down with Burmese. So, when she done talking and she let us do the work, I go back and the one I write down and read all of it, and I understand what she want us to do.

Shannon: So, she’s speaking in English, and you write in Burmese? Later, you think about it and translate back to English?

Aung: Yep, yep. The first year when I come here, I use the dictionary. And then the second year, I can live without dictionary.

Shannon asked if using LOTEs is helpful, and Aung agreed. Nevertheless, Aung explained,

If you always use your language, it’s like you’re not really learning English. Just [use LOTEs] sometimes when it’s really needed....I mean, you should speak in English....If you speak in your language, it’s like you don’t really want to learn English.

This language ideology about which languages *should* be used conflicts with Aung’s visions for her future. Since age 9, she has dreamed of becoming a flight attendant, which was strengthened when she first experienced air travel on her way to the United States. Aung excitedly described her motivations:

Because you can serve people food and make people happy. And like, they feel sad on the plane, or if they scared, you can treat them good, take care of them. Especially people don’t know how to speak, like refugee to the U.S., they don’t know how to speak, and they want to eat or drink something, and they can’t say. That’s not good for them. At least, like, if I can speak Burmese or Karenni, and the refugee come from Thailand to the United States and they need something, I can help them. So, just translate on the plane.

Aung and Mah-nin share the experience of entering the United States during high school. We now turn to two eighth-grade students, Mertal and Rachel, to understand their perspectives on language. Like Aung, Mertal sees his translanguaging abilities as meaningful for his aspirations.

Mertal: “I Want to Stay Close to My Hometown, My Relatives, and Everybody”

Speaking in multiple languages and developing his abilities to do so is important to Mertal in his current communities and the communities he imagines in his future. Born in the United States to Kurdish refugees, he prides himself on his abilities to not only speak Bahdini, Sorani, and some Arabic but also to

say a few words in the languages of his Thai, Mexican, and Somali classmates. Having grown up in the United States, Mertal speaks Bahdini with his parents, the dialect of Kurdish that is most common in their prior home of Zaxo, Kurdistan, and English and Bahdini with his older brother.

Mertal wants to move back to Kurdistan after college. To facilitate this dream, his dad teaches him to read and write in Bahdini. Mertal is also learning to read and write in Arabic by participating in weekly religious studies at the mosque. Recently, he has begun learning Sorani, another Kurdish language, with his friends, and he watches television shows in Arabic, Bahdini, and English with his family.

Mertal perceives his multilingualism as a means to learn about different cultures, interact with more people, and connect with others to build community:

I didn't want to be racist, like American, like only learn one language....But I was happy to learn that language, too, because there's like mostly all them continents like know English, so I was happy for that and Kurdish. Kurdish, I was happy to know Kurdish, because, like, you go you can talk to a Kurdish person, mostly a lot of people know Kurdish in [this state]. You walk to Burger King and walk back, there was, like, one Kurdish guy and in like a Charger. He was like, "You're a Kurd," and he was like, "OK, I'll give you a ride back home."

For Mertal, being multilingual implies being able to participate in communities unavailable to his "American," or monolingual, classmates.

Furthermore, Mertal envisioned a multilingual future in an imagined community in Kurdistan:

Mark: How do you think your parents feel about English, you learning English?

Mertal: They're all on board. They're all about education. once you finish, you have to go to college so you can move back to Kurdistan. I want to move back to Kurdistan.

Mark: You do?

Mertal: I don't want to stay in America.

"Teachers can help teens recognize the great linguistic resources they have."

Mark: Tell me why.

Mertal: Because I want to stay close to my hometown, my relatives, and everybody. I feel like—it's like a good feeling when you go over there. You know everybody, you see, you feel protected.

Despite Mertal's recognition that his languages impact his sense of belonging in multiple communities, we see the same pattern as with Aung and Mahnin: None of the students identified using LOTE in school until pressed with more specific questions:

Mark: How do you feel about speaking Bahdini in school?

Mertal: I mean, I feel, it's OK. There's nothing really great or anything.

Mark: Do you get chances to speak in Bahdini in school?

Mertal: I mean, if I have to speak it, if I'm in trouble, or if I need something, then yeah, I speak it, but, there's not use to speaking it in school, because you don't need it.

Mark: OK. Um, would you want to use it?

Mertal: I would—I would like to, like, pick it up some more, like learn all the long words.

Mark: So, you want to learn more, but there's no chances?

Mertal: Yeah.

Mark: What about in your classes?

Mertal: No, it's all English.

Mark: Totally English?

Mertal: Yeah. Sometimes, like Ali, he says a couple words. He doesn't know a lot of Kurdish, just a little bit.

Mark: What about when you are reading in English? Do you ever use your Kurdish?

Mertal: Yeah, if there's, like, a similar word. Yeah, it sounds just like Kurdish, stuff like that.

Mark: So, you make comparisons?

Mertal: Yeah.

Mertal's comments show that he views LOTE to be used only if necessary. Instead of thinking through texts with Bahdini individually and with peers, he only

turns to these strategies in school as a supportive crutch if needed. His life goals to communicate with more people through multiple languages and his desire to live in Kurdistan require ongoing development of his translanguaging practices. Yet, school remains a place where English is the only legitimate means for participation.

Rachel: “Just so I Don’t Forget”

Rachel fears losing her first language. In her first year in the United States after moving from El Salvador, she lived in Long Island and attended a newcomer program full of Spanish-speaking peers and teachers from Central America and the Dominican Republic. In her first year in West Middle, however, she receives all instruction in English and rarely uses Spanish socially or academically. Rachel “loves languages” and reads Harry Potter in English and Spanish. She views herself as bilingual and uses Spanish with her mom and friends and English with her stepfather. She is also reading manga to learn Japanese.

In school, Rachel wants to use Spanish more but does so infrequently. Classroom observations showed that her teachers do not encourage her to use Spanish, and according to Rachel, few of her peers “speak good Spanish.” Even though she cannot regularly use Spanish in school, she uses it strategically to make sense of schoolwork and to deepen her Spanish-language knowledge. Mark asked her more about how she does so:

Mark: Do you ever write in Spanish?

Rachel: Yeah.

Mark: For what?

Rachel: Just so I don’t forget.

Mark: Really? That’s cool. Do you keep a journal?

Rachel: I take some notes. I’m trying to translate things, but it’s so hard. Like, my mom tells me to translate things. It’s hard.

Mark: What kinds of stuff does she have you translate?

Rachel: Like, letters,

Mark: The mail?

Rachel: Yeah.

Here, Rachel shares that she practices Spanish while reading independently and serving as her family’s language broker.

In school, Mark observed Rachel browsing Spanish-language websites about the Vietnam War for an English language arts assignment, as well as taking notes in Spanish from these electronic sources. She wants to use Spanish more in school but doesn’t feel that her desire is validated:

Mark: Do you want to speak Spanish in school?

Rachel: Yeah.

Mark: How?

Rachel: Like, normally, at home and stuff.

Mark: You want to do that in school?

Rachel: Yeah.

Mark: What do you mean?

Rachel: I don’t know how to say it in Spanish. Like, I could practice speaking it in class.

Mark: Would you want to use Spanish in Ms. Brown’s class?

Rachel: Yeah, but some people might be a little uncomfortable.

Mark: Why?

Rachel: Because they don’t know what I’m — what I’m saying.

Mark: Because your Spanish is really good?

Rachel: Yeah, like other people don’t know a lot of Spanish. Most of the people, just three of the people really, know Spanish. The other ones are, like, not good.

Rachel articulates that the classroom does not allow for much Spanish conversation, and this lack of a Spanish-speaking community makes her hesitant to use the language. Still, she translanguages in school by reading Spanish-language texts independently, researching content in Spanish, and conversing with classmates. She views herself as a competent bilingual and values her Spanish–English translanguaging abilities, but she fears that she will lose her Spanish-language abilities in her current classroom context.

Implications for Schools and Classrooms

To summarize, all four students productively translanguaged and do so despite the tensions between

their language practices and their perspectives on the values associated with LOTE. These practices were productive in supporting students' academic development, as in Aung's note-taking in Burmese, Rachel's independent reading in Spanish, and Mah-nin's clarification of content in Chin. These practices were also productive in connecting students to larger goals and communities that extend beyond the classroom, as in Mertal's use of Bahdini and Sorani to engage friends, family, and members of his community. However, all four teens also seem to have internalized dominant ideologies in the U.S. school system, where English is of primary importance, possibly confirming Martínez et al.'s (2008) argument:

Perhaps students do not see translating as useful or valuable in school precisely because it is not valued in school. Perhaps they have learned that schools value only a narrow range of language uses, and not their own larger linguistic skill sets. (p. 425)

Often, English as a second language classrooms or after-school programs are the only communal spaces in which multilingual students feel comfortable translanguage in schools. Changing

school norms can promote translanguage further. For instance, Mah-nin uses Burmese constantly in the after-school program with Burmese friends, but she has few classes with peers who speak her languages. To promote strategic translanguage among teens, schools with diverse populations can try placing students who share LOTE in the same content classes.

On their own volition, these teens participate in effective translanguage practices, including identifying cross-language connections, using bilingual dictionaries, and discussing texts in their heritage languages. Student practices show that even when LOTE are not valued in content area classrooms, students use multiple languages in their thoughts, writing, and speech. Although these four students represent diverse experiences, their comments reveal some important commonalities in their language use (see Table 2). Teachers can begin to recognize these practices as common across their multilingual students, help students value these practices, and leverage them in instruction.

We suggest that classrooms that emphasize the use of LOTE can help students feel more comfortable translanguage across linguistic proficiency levels. We envision environments where students

TABLE 2 Teens' Translanguage and Instructional Implications

Translanguage practices	Classroom implications
• Note-taking in LOTE while listening to or reading English texts • Repeating content in LOTE to study for tests • Drafting writing assignments in LOTE • Making cross-language comparisons when reading • Using bilingual dictionaries when learning new vocabulary • Talking with friends in LOTE to make sense of school assignments • Learning new languages with family and friends • Language brokering for family and classmates	• Prompt students to discuss challenging or new content in LOTE through think-pair-share activities. • Reinforce existing understandings of concepts by asking students to summarize or paraphrase information into their LOTE.^a • Develop students' metalinguistic awareness through activities that encourage cross-linguistic comparisons, such as translation and cognate instruction.^b • Include multilingual texts in your classroom library and encourage reading in LOTE. • Establish a constellation of literacy practices^c that makes multilingualism the norm, rather than the exception, in your classroom. • Have students interview classmates about their language practices, create a multilingual word wall, and share some of your own language-learning experiences. • Discuss with students the rewards and challenges of their emerging bilingualism.

Note. LOTE = languages other than English.

^aBorrero, N. (2011). Nurturing students' strengths: The impact of a school-based student interpreter program on Latino/a students' reading comprehension and English language development. *Urban Education*, 46(4), 663–688. ^bJiménez, R.T., García, G.E., & Pearson, P.D. (1996). The reading strategies of bilingual Latina/o students who are successful English readers: Opportunities and obstacles. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31(1), 90–112. ^cReyes, I. (2012). Bilingualism among children and youths. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 47(3), 307–327.

use and learn English while also translanguaging individually and collaboratively. To leverage the full potential of these practices, teachers must actively make space for students' translanguaging in the classroom. Through making cross-language connections when reading, describing new vocabulary in LOTEs, and encouraging discussions of content in multiple languages, teachers can help teens recognize the great linguistic resources they have and begin to leverage them for academic success.

To support reading comprehension, teachers can work alongside bilingual students to translate texts into their heritage languages (Jiménez et al., 2015). To strengthen metalinguistic awareness, teachers can facilitate students' discussions, compositions, and revisions of multilingual texts through student-led language exchange activities (Martin-Beltrán, 2014). Teachers can tap into teens' local knowledge of their communities by investigating community literacies (Jiménez, Smith, & Teague, 2009). For example, local multilingual newspapers can be leveraged to help teens see the purpose of text and graphic features (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). In social studies, discussions about what transnational citizenry might mean in contemporary, globalized societies can help students view their multilingual abilities as useful practices for school, work, and productive citizenry. These pedagogies have potential for enhancing students' academic and linguistic development and for challenging deficit ideologies about LOTEs.

Each of these pedagogies also demands that educators base their instruction on students' actual language practices, or from the bottom up. To make these practices visible in the classroom, Norton (2000) suggested that students should keep reflective journals about challenging linguistic interactions in their daily lives or experiences when they switch between English and their heritage language. Martínez (2010) added that these examples from students' everyday interactions can serve as entry points into discussions about how language is used strategically within different contexts.

Conclusion

Students' direct experiences with language point to their complex relationships with their language use. A shared tension across students was their

desire to learn English while using, maintaining, and strengthening their heritage languages. Mah-nin, for example, said, "I have to speak better English, [but] I like...Burmese people are here." Aung knew she needed to "speak English," but she recognized the value of speaking Burmese and Karenni to "help them" (people in her community). Mertal said he "didn't need [Bahdini]" in school but recognized a need to deepen his understanding of the language if he wished to work in Kurdistan. Rachel said she needed to use Spanish "just so I don't forget" but that doing so in school "is so hard." All students wished to develop their English, but they feared losing their heritage languages and recognized challenges in using them productively in school.

Thus, to support students' translanguaging practices, teachers must begin to implement translanguaging pedagogies that encourage the development of the full range of students' linguistic resources (see Table 2 for suggestions) and must make the efforts necessary to get to know their students (see the Take Action sidebar). After years of English-only schooling, students might feel strange using LOTEs in class. Similarly, teachers accustomed to teaching only in English might feel uncertain when students discuss a concept in a language the teacher does not understand. We emphasize that a simple conversation with students can begin to reveal their linguistic practices, proficiencies, and perspectives, which in turn can lead to instructional shifts that responsively support them in achieving their lifelong goals.

Mah-nin, Aung, Rachel, and Mertal all show how they use their multilingual resources to make meaning of their multilingual worlds. To highlight this meaning-making process, O. García (2009) used the metaphor of an all-terrain vehicle that flexibly maneuvers in different types of terrain; individuals constantly adapt, adjust, and employ linguistic resources to make sense of the multiple communicative contexts that they encounter in their lives. Extending this metaphor, we worry about how this vehicle's abilities to travel across varied terrain will be limited to smaller spaces if classrooms continue to emphasize English only. We hope that the languaging experiences of these four teens will lead teachers and administrators to investigate, recognize, and leverage the rich language practices of multilingual teens in their schools.

Take Action

STEPS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

1. Interview students about their language use. When, where, and why do they use LOTE? Give specific scenarios to elicit authentic experiences. These interviews can potentially increase learners' metacognitive awareness of translanguageing.
2. Identify community and after-school programming that supports immigrants, refugees, and cultural diasporas in your vicinity. Volunteer and see how your students approach homework and interact with peers in informal environments.
3. Design multimodal, multilingual projects that relate to your class themes, and enable teens to share their stories, languages, and goals. See examples in the 18(3) issue of the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*.
4. After collecting information about how students use language, create a table that documents these practices and keep it in your classroom as a reminder.
5. Research on teens' out-of-school language use is growing. Reading articles that show multilingual teens' use of technology (e.g., Stewart, 2013)—in conjunction with gaining in-depth knowledge of your students—may help you develop relevant assignments.

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More to Explore

CONNECTED CONTENT-BASED RESOURCES

- ✓ Celic, C., & Seltzer, K. (2011). *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB guide for educators*. New York, NY: CUNY-NYSIEB, The Graduate Center, City University of New York. Retrieved from www.nysieb.ws.gc.cuny.edu/files/2012/06/FINAL-Translanguaging-Guide-With-Cover-1.pdf
- ✓ Rubinstein-Ávila, E. (2003). Conversing with Miguel: An adolescent English language learner struggling with later literacy development. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(4), 290–301.
- ✓ Identify your students' LOTEs and connect interdisciplinary themes to current events. Use BBC's Multilanguage webpage (www.bbc.co.uk/ws/languages) as a resource for families to read and discuss class themes at home.