

Dialogue between Instructional Practice and Theory: Contrasting the Implications of 'Unitary' versus 'Crosslinguistic' Translanguaging Theory for Educating Multilingual Students

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During the past decade, the concept of *translanguaging* has come to dominate discussions of appropriate instructional practice in multilingual school contexts. This had had the positive effect of highlighting both the relevance of multilingual students' home languages for their academic development and the benefits for all students of building a focus on language awareness across the curriculum. However, a danger in the current academic discourse that centers on translanguaging is that this component gets foregrounded and other components, equally significant in reversing underachievement, fade into the background. These other components include scaffolding meaning, reinforcing knowledge of academic language across the curriculum, promoting sustained literacy engagement, connecting with students' lives, and affirming identities. The impact of translanguaging is also potentially undermined by 'extraneous conceptual baggage' that has become associated with *unitary translanguaging theory* (UTT). This conceptual baggage includes a variety of counterintuitive claims such as the following:

- Languages have no cognitive or linguistic reality – 'a language is not something that a person speaks' (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015: 256).
- 'Academic language is a raciolinguistic ideology that frames racialized students as linguistically deficient' (Flores (2020: 22).
- Additive bilingualism represents a 'retarding obstacle' (Otheguy *et al.*, 2019: 648) to bilingual students' educational success and reflects a 'dual correspondence theory of bilingualism that 'has had pernicious effects in educational practices' (Otheguy *et al.*, 2019: 625).

In contrast to UTT, *crosslinguistic translanguaging theory* (CTT) argues that bilinguals *do* speak languages which are experientially, instructionally, and socially real for students, teachers, policymakers, curriculum designers, politicians, and most researchers. CTT also affirms the legitimacy of constructs such as additive bilingualism, academic language, common underlying proficiency, and teaching for transfer across languages.

The presentation will examine the extent to which each of these versions of translanguaging theory satisfy criteria of empirical adequacy, logical coherence, and consequential validity, and also the extent to which there is any difference in instructional practice implied by these alternative understandings of translanguaging.