



## Glossary of basic theoretical concepts for teaching and learning in multilingual contexts

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Recently arrived academics, in this case teachers from other countries, need fast access to the academic environment in order to supplement their previous education along with the development of the (often) new language. Even if the language of this participants is not yet at a fully academic level (when it comes to their skills in the language of the receiving country), recently migrated teachers should not be hindered in their supplementary education. HEIs need to improve when meeting the participants of such programmes. In part, this can be achieved through adopting a pedagogical approach of multilingualism. A Multilingual approach means that second/third etc. language learners use all their linguistic resources to think, understand and jointly create meaning. It is defined as "the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximise communicative potential" (García 2009, 140).

The following glossary gives information on central topics as well as recommendations for further literature on learning and teaching in multilingual contexts in Higher Education. Since not all partners use the same language

concept, the theoretical principles are presented in the form of a glossary. In this form of presentation, it becomes clear that there is not a shared concept, but a collection of theoretical principles and approaches that can be helpful in developing a concept at a university that aims to implement a programme for recently immigrated and refugee teachers.

### Bilingualism and Multilingualism

The term "multilingualism" does not only represent a superordinate term for very different phenomena of linguistic diversity, but leads - used as a collective term - to uncertainty, what exactly is meant by it. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1981), all definitions of bilingualism can in principle be applied to the determination of multilingualism. However, no generally accepted definition can be found for bilingualism either.

In extreme cases, definitions of bilingualism and multilingualism are either formulated so narrowly that they hardly apply to anyone, since very good linguistic abilities are required in both or several languages (cf. the problematic concept of balanced bilingualism Bloomfield 1935). If the definition of bilingualism and multilingualism is too broad, persons who may only have a few words in another language are also included (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas 1981, 81).

An orientation towards monolingualism as a benchmark for the evaluation of bilingualism and multilingualism has often been criticised, as this cannot provide any information about the linguistic competences of bilingual and multilingual people (cf. Beatens Beardsmore 1982; on criticism e.g. Dirim 2005; Fürstenau & Niedrig 2010). The central finding is that bilingual or multilingual adolescents use their languages in a context-dependent manner and gain different experiences with and in their languages during the acquisition process.

In this context, Gogolin (1988) introduced the term "bilingualism in everyday life", which makes it clear that the linguistic abilities of bilingual and multilingual people do not have to be balanced. Languages have different functions due to different employment circumstances, usage situations and related intentions: A person is bilingual or multilingual if he or she can use these languages in everyday life.

- Beatens Beardsmore, H. (1982): Bilingualism: Basic Principles. Clevedon: Tieto.
- Dirim, İ. (2005): Notwendig ist die Schaffung einer Wissensbasis für den Umgang mit Mehrsprachigkeit. In Gogolin, I., Neumann, U. & Roth, H.-J. (Hrsg.), Sprachdiagnostik bei Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund. Münster: Waxmann, 81-86.
- Fürstenau, S. & Niedrig, H. (2010): Bilder und Begriffe von Mehrsprachigkeit. In Krüger-Potratz, M., Neumann, U. & Reich, H. H. (Hrsg.), Bei Vielfalt Chancengleichheit. Interkulturelle Pädagogik und durchgängige Sprachbildung. Münster: Waxmann, 269-288.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1981): Bilingualism or not. The Education of Minorities. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

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## Second language and foreign language acquisition

In addition to multilingualism caused by migration (within the family), a person can also be multilingual by learning foreign languages (e.g. at school, in the language course at the adult education centre) or by growing up in a multilingual area (e.g. Belgium, Switzerland). Depending on the context of language acquisition, a distinction can be made between second language and foreign language acquisition: "One speaks of second language and second language acquisition if the acquisition takes place within the target culture, of foreign language and foreign language acquisition if the acquisition takes place in the context of the source culture" (Henrici & Vollmer 2001, 8 cited after Kniffka & Siebert-Ott 2012, 15).

- Kniffka, G. & Siebert-Ott, G. (2012): Deutsch als Zweitsprache. Lehren und Lernen. 3. aktual. Aufl. Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag.

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## Plurilingualism

The capacity and competence to learn more than one language, as well as the value of linguistic tolerance within individuals and countries. It is associated with intercultural competence and democratic citizenship. This term is often used to talk about language education and policy. „Education for plurilingualism will refer to plurilingual education (for example, teaching national, foreign, regional languages), in which the purpose is to develop plurilingualism as a competence“ (Council of Europe 2007, 18).

- Council of Europe (2007): From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe. Retrieved from: <https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1c4>

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## Translanguaging

Translanguaging takes a new perspective on bilingualism and multilingualism. It is based on the assumption that there are no clear boundaries between the individual languages at the mental level of individual speakers and that these are therefore not separate language systems. Rather, bilingualism or multilingualism presents itself as a linguistic continuum. Translanguaging is embedded in the concept of the heteroglossia according to the Russian philosopher Michail Bakhtin (1979). Following Bakhtin's concept, the linguistic reality of all speakers is complex and dynamic. Speaking always takes place in "a dialogue of languages" [as a] "bundle of varieties, registers or jargons" (Busch 2015, 51) within the respective language.

From this perspective, in communication situations, bilingual and multilingual persons select certain characteristics from a common linguistic repertoire in the sense of an overall linguistic quality in order to negotiate and establish meaning and communicative contexts (cf. García 2009). The flexible use of several languages is a communicative competence to which "to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (Council of Europe 2001, 4).

The term 'Translanguaging' is believed to be coined by the Welsh linguist Cennydd Williams who published comprehensive studies on bilingual teaching in

schools in Wales. Accordingly, Otheguy, García & Reid (2015) define translanguaging as „the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (ibid., 283). Concerning Translanguaging in Higher Education Mazak (2017, 1) point out: “It has become a rather trendy and at times controversial term as it has gained traction in academia over the last several years. However, the way in which it has been taken up by researchers, particularly in education, is evidence that it is filling a gap in our descriptions of language practices in educational settings.”

- Bachtin, M. (1979): Das Wort im Roman. In: Ders.: Ästhetik des Wortes. Hrsg. v. Rainer Grübel. Frankfurt am Main, 154-300.
- Busch, B. (2015): Zwischen Fremd- und Selbstwahrnehmung. Zum Konzept des Spracherlebens. In: Schnitzer, A. & Mörgen, R. (Hrsg.): Mehrsprachigkeit und (Un)Gesagtes: Sprache als soziale Praxis in der Migrationsgesellschaft. Weinheim, 49-66.
- Council of Europe (2001): Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Retrieved from: <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>
- García, O. (2009): Bilingual education in the 21st century. A global perspective. Malden, MA: Blackwell; John Wiley & Sons.
- Mazak, M. C. (2017): Introduction: Theorizing Translanguaging Practices in Higher Education. In: Mazak, M. C. & Carroll, C. S. (Eds.): Translanguaging in Higher Education: Beyond Monolingual Ideologies. Channel View Publications.
- Otheguy, R., García, O. & Reid, W. (2015): Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages. A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6 (3), 281-307.

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### Dynamic bilingualism

In her descriptions, García (2009) emphasises that translanguaging can be seen from several angles where one is about teaching and the other about dynamic bilingualism in the individual. The dynamic bilingualism of Individuals and dynamic language practices in bilingual communities are seen as opportunities for flexible learning processes. Contrary to the view that languages must be learned separately to avoid language confusion, dynamic language mixing and coexistence are seen as important for the development of metalinguistic awareness. From an educational perspective, teachers have the task of appreciating these language practices and connecting them with the language practices desired in formal school environments (Flores, Schissel 2014).

- García, O. (2009): Bilingual education in the 21st century. A global perspective. Malden, MA: Blackwell; John Wiley & Sons.
- Flores, N., & Schissel, J.L. (2014). Dynamic Bilingualism as the Norm: Envisioning a Heteroglossic Approach to Standards-Based Reform. TESOL Quarterly, 48(3), 454-479.

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### Translanguaging in Education

In the field of education, translanguaging represents an approach to language pedagogy/didactics that systematically takes up and supports the diverse and dynamic language practices of students in teaching and learning (cf. Otheguy, García & Reid 2015). García defines translanguaging in education as 'a process by which students and teachers engage in complex discursive practices that include ALL the language practices of ALL students in a class in order to develop new language practices and sustain old ones, communicate and appropriate knowledge, and give voice to new sociopolitical realities by interrogating linguistic inequality' (cf. Otheguy, García & Reid 2015).

Therefore, the use of languages with multilingual transitions in a translanguaging educational setting can be understood as a contribution to

social justice (cf. Otheguy, García & Reid 2015). For the practical work in the school all languages are used systematically and not just when it happens to fit or when a single teacher feels like it to include one other language. The inclusion of the languages in class is based on the interest and the acquisition of the linguistic competence of the students by the teacher(s) and goes beyond the translation of different languages.

So far the theoretical and methodical work on translanguaging in Education focuses mainly on children. For further information see:

- The website of the CUNY-NYSIEB Initiative in emerging bilinguals: <https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/>
- The Translanguaging CUNY-NYSIEB Guideline for educators: <https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Translanguaging-Guide-March-2013.pdf>
- Celic, C. & Seltzer, K. (2013): Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB guide for educators. Retrieved from: <https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Translanguaging-Guide-March-2013.pdf>
- Otheguy, R., García, O. & Reid, W. (2015): Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages. A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6 (3), 281-307.

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### Language sensitive teaching

Language sensitive teaching is a teaching that is characterised by linguistic responsiveness and openness to the various linguistic resources in a group. An important methodological-didactic element of language-sensitive teaching is the perception of the individual language level of the students, their abilities and potentials as well as the language competences still to be learned. The subject-specific language requirements to be fulfilled by the students are also to be identified. The teacher selects learning materials and support techniques that are adapted to the students' language level and help them to acquire further necessary language skills. In addition, it is

important to provide continuous and systematic training in the technical language skills necessary to understand the topics taught in a subject. In the German context, Leisen is a very important author talking about Language sensitive teaching. According to Leisen (2019) Language sensitive teaching is working with three main principles in various lessons:

1. Tasks can be presented in different layers and forms of visualisation. They differ in their degree of abstraction of language. From representational depiction to mathematical representation Leisen tries to include all these forms in lesson planning to support linguistic understanding and learning.
  2. Language requirements of tasks have to be just above each individual language ability. Aim is to produce language that is not error-free but successful. Successful in this case means that the specific language product meets the demands of the task.
  3. The learner obtains language support to handle language situations successfully that are just above the individual language ability. Language support can be in form of a tool box.
- Leisen, J. (2019): Sprachsensibler Fachunterricht. Retrieved from: <http://www.sprachsensiblerfachunterricht.de/prinzipien>

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