



**LLRC Seminar Wednesday, April 17, 2019 (12-13:30).
Location: LLRC-room (Reuvenplaats 3-4, 1.22)**

Supporting heritage language education through translanguaging: Creative approaches and ethnographic reflections

In the US, as in the Netherlands, the home languages of minority students are often undervalued in educational contexts. Educators seeking to support heritage language maintenance have developed programs and strategies to build on the home language resources of minority students. Drawing on their ethnographic research in the US context and their training in educational linguistics, Dr. Wu and Dr. Deák describe two such specific programs, exploring the implications for translanguaging pedagogies for including and encouraging speakers of less commonly taught language varieties.

Translanguaging refers to the use of one's full linguistic repertoire in a way that challenges norms of monoglossia and separation of named languages (García & Leiva, 2014). When instructors allow or encourage students to use language in any way that is comfortable to them, they encourage development of positive feelings, self-efficacy, and willingness to engage in further instruction and assignments. Whether the goal is to teach students a lingua franca or train them to be professional interpreters, a translanguaging stance and pedagogy can play an important role.

Discussant: Cynthia Groff, Leiden University

**Ming-Hsuan Wu
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Translanguaging in a “Chinese” Heritage Language Classroom: Challenges, Opportunities, and Reflections from the Field

Translanguaging theory re-conceptualizes the linguistic systems and practices of multilinguals as well as multilingual classroom pedagogies. Teachers who embrace translanguaging as a pedagogical stance encourage students to draw on their full range of communicative resources to engage with academic material (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). Researchers have demonstrated that translanguaging as a multilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning provides educators with a

tool and framework to create more equitable classrooms (García, & Leiva, 2014). While many studies have documented translanguaging in bilingual classrooms, there is still very little discussion about how translanguaging can advance the field of heritage language education. This paper shares findings from a qualitative investigation of a Mandarin heritage program at a public school that enrolled ethnic Chinese students from various Chinese language backgrounds, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Fujianese, Taishanese, Hakka, or a combination of all these languages. Drawing on ethnographic fieldnotes, interviews, and documents, I argue that the teacher's flexible use of linguistic resources provided the basis for productive classroom exercises among heritage students who struggled with Mandarin as an imposed identity. I analyzed various ways in which the teacher drew on students' linguistic repertoires and students drew on personal and community resources in response to the translanguaging tasks. Through activities that enabled students to use multiple Chinese languages, students critically examined the diversity of Chinese languages within the U.S. context. This, in turn, facilitated their Mandarin learning in the classroom, even as they actively engaged in disrupting and dismantling conventional notions of "Chinese." The teacher also reflected on her translanguaging practices and the challenges she faced in class. While Mandarin is currently heavily emphasized in the language teaching arenas, translanguaging as a pedagogical heuristic helps create space to liberate the voices of these language minority students who are often left out under the generic category of heritage "Chinese" speakers.

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Translanguaging in a Program for Young Interpreters

Even when a school district recognizes the importance of supporting students' bilingual development in a heritage language as well as the mainstream language, teachers' negative attitudes towards students' mixed or non-standard varieties can inhibit young people's engagement and progress. Encouraging or structuring a program to allow students to draw freely on the full range of their communicative resources, a practice called translanguaging (e.g. García & Klein, 2016), has been shown to have many benefits, including increasing academic persistence (Bartlett & García, 2011; Allard 2017; Hornberger & Link 2012). This result is supported by ethnographic data in the present case study of an unusual program that requires translanguaging: a translation and interpreting program in a career and technical secondary school. Over its 15-year history, this program has confirmed that didactic instructors with low tolerance for "mistakes" or variety in language use achieved less success than the opposite extreme case: an instructor who cannot possibly correct students' home language use. Because the present teacher is a sign language interpreter and speaks neither Spanish nor Somali, Arabic, Russian or any of the other students' home languages, the students are compelled to take ownership of their own language learning. Students are taught strategies and ethics of professional interpreting but are not given direct language instruction. In order to complete bilingual glossaries, translate documents and learn polite and professional ways of using their home language, they must draw on reference materials, classmates, family members and internships. Students who succeed in completing assignments in this self-reliant manner report affective benefits that lead to positive outcomes in their general academic achievement and beyond.