

BOOK REVIEW

The Handbook of Translanguaging, by L. Wei, P. Phyak, J. W. Lee, and O. García.
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Almost twenty years ago, García (2009) leveraged the term translanguaging, originally coined by Cen Williams, to describe not only the flexible ways that multilingual children language to make sense of the word and world (Freire, 2000) but also as an expression of identity. Williams had originally used it to describe how Welsh children and their teachers flexibly languaged (Williams, 1994). Since that time, translanguaging scholars have put forth frameworks of translanguaging as a theory of language (García & Li, 2014; Li, 2018), a pedagogy (García et al., 2017), and a liberatory stance of social justice (García et al., 2021). Researchers have taken up translanguaging as a lens to look at pedagogy, applied linguistics, sense-making, and much more. The magnitude of impact on research and scholarship can be quantified by a keyword search of “translanguaging” on Google Scholar in 2026: 54,800 entries. In 2010, this number was 364. Thus, the need for *The Handbook of Translanguaging*, an edited volume by Li Wei, Prem Phyak, Jerry Won Lee, and Ofelia García, is evident. This volume, divided into three sections, delves deeply into the current and nuanced theorizing of translanguaging as decolonizing, fluid, embodied, and multimodal; translanguaging in education; and an exploration of the theoretical connections and future directions.

Part one of this edited volume begins the theoretical exploration of translanguaging with Thibault and Lin’s (Chapter 2) framing of translanguaging as a living process and calls upon us to reframe the mind and body as a “thinking body” (Ilyenkov, 2009). Maintaining the notion of fluidity and movement, Makoni and Pennycook (Chapter 3) resituate

translanguaging from the land to the water, a space where boundaries are more fluid. They argue that taking up this lens of linguistic fluidity creates opportunities for new epistemological questions on politics, power, and embodiment. Blackledge (Chapter 4) adds another layer to the connective assemblage in how we language through a performance at the Shetland Folk Festival as the rituals in music, gesture, and languaging that developed over time between and amongst the performers and audience.

Chapter authors also refine theoretical tensions in translanguaging and situate it as a decolonizing pedagogy. For example, Otheguy (Chapter 6) draws on psycholinguistic and code-switching studies to argue persuasively that bilinguals have a single grammar that they use flexibly depending on power dynamics and the interlocutors present; this argument remains persuasive, even in research premised on a duality of grammars. In Chapter 9, Dumrukic takes up the assumption that bilinguals have one grammar to review literature on the creativity, learning, and cultural sensitivity within the bilingual mind; she calls for more studies that look specifically at the moment-to-moment dynamic usage and decisions that bilinguals engage in when communicating. Flores (Chapter 7) expands the original conceptualization of raciolinguistic ideologies to that of a raciolinguistic perspective situated globally to shed light on the role of colonialism on the perceptions of race and language and how they evolve both locally and globally. He calls on translanguaging scholars taking up a raciolinguistic perspective to question “how languages come to exist” (p. 110) and explore the colonial history of the naming of languages and how they come to be seen as bounded. Building on this perspective, Phyak (Chapter 8) frames translanguaging as a theory and as a pedagogy reflective of the Global South, a coalitional space of resistance and belonging. Using examples like Makalela’s (2018) Ubuntu translanguaging (I am, you are; as you are, we are), that overtly resist monolingual Western ways of knowing, Phyak calls for the restoration of epistemic equity and justice, and even hope (Freire, 1994), through translanguaging.

Embedded throughout these theoretical discussions are methodological implications and new directions for translanguaging research. Canagarajah (Chapter 5) directs our attention to the ways in which embodied translanguaging could be represented through research data and decolonizing questions that leverage the potential of more expansive genres of representation to convey “unsayable” (p. 84) utterances of emotion not always possible through linguistically based transcription. Hawkins (Chapter 10) offers a related contribution to researching assemblages through her description of the transmodalities framework and

concludes with the importance of transnational research teams. Related to the need to transform how we transcribe and assemble our research teams, Lee (Chapter 11) brings the alignment between theory and methodology to the center by arguing for the field to translanguage research methodologies by critically examining the questions, methodologies, and ideologies being used. This alignment is reified by Ndhlovu (Chapter 12), who calls for a micro-ethical approach in translanguaging research utilizing epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009) and harnessing storytelling to center the voices, resistance, and collective pain experienced by communities. Each of these contributions focuses on methodological design through social justice as knowledge production.

The second section of the handbook opens with Tian and Lau (Chapter 13) reviewing the scholarship on translanguaging in bilingual education settings. They suggest sustainable translanguaging pedagogy (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017) to be implemented at the macro, meso, and micro levels of policy, planning, and instruction (de Jong et al., 2019), with additional research on translanguaging assessment for and as learning. Cervantes-Soon and colleagues (Chapter 14) suggest embodied translanguaging as a pedagogy and theory that deeply explores the identities and lived experiences of marginalized communities, particularly Indigenous communities, and they caution the prevalence of basic and commodified notions of biliteracy, e.g., the ‘science of reading,’ that often discount the lived experiences of marginalized communities. Turnbull (Chapter 16) uses Li’s (2011) translanguaging spaces as a productive framework for the foreign language classroom, as it centers the experiences and agency of the students in leveraging their full embodied repertoire in the learning process and in the context of situated language use. Schissel and Seltzer (Chapter 22) first summarize the research that takes up a “critical translanguaging lens on assessment” (p. 349) and confront the monolingual ideologies and abyssal thinking (de Sousa Santos, 2007) often held by stakeholders, educators, and even test takers. To disrupt these beliefs, the authors call for collaborations between researchers and teachers to challenge the pervasiveness of white supremacy and coloniality inherent in standardized assessment.

The chapter authors also examine nuanced language learning contexts. Rajendram and Mendoza (Chapter 15) review how translanguaging has been taken up, at times surreptitiously, in English Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts; they then present questions and directions for future research. Grillman and colleagues (Chapter 17) utilize three examples of community-based language education in the US to explore the monolingual ideologies that bound languaging practices in these contexts and tactfully discuss the

potential benefits of taking up translanguaging stances in the reframing of students as agentive and situated within a multilingual world. Madiba (Chapter 19) argues for the use of translanguaging pedagogy as a decolonizing language revitalization practice and utilizes two case studies situated in higher education math courses to showcase how translanguaging supported conceptual understanding and revitalized Sesotho and isiXhosa as academic linguistic resources. Te Huia and colleagues (Chapter 18) share two case studies of researchers and participants translanguaging te reo Māori as a healing communicative practice and as an expression of cultural and individual identity, and they note both the benefits of translanguaging within Indigenous language learning communities and cautions against tokenism in general education spaces not designed to promote healing and/or the sustaining of Indigenous language and culture. A similar caution is present in Holcomb and colleagues' (Chapter 20) discussion of the evolution of translanguaging research and the conceptual and methodological concerns in taking up a deaf translanguaging perspective. Cioè-Peña and colleagues (Chapter 21) describe the heart of translanguaging as “its capacity to interrupt dehumanization processes” (p. 343) in their discussion on translanguaging, disability, and special education; they offer intersectional frameworks including Crip Linguistics stance (Henner & Robinson, 2023), expansive communicative partnerships (Padía, 2023), and TrUDL (Cioè-Peña, 2022) as productive ways forward.

Part Three of the edited volume offers theoretical connections and new directions. García and Wong (Chapter 23) share their personal and professional paths to translanguaging and utilize vignettes to illuminate how speakers craft translanguaging spaces to signify themselves transgressively through embodied practices not always recognized by monolingual, monoglossic language users. Tupas and Garces-Bacsal (Chapter 24) elaborate on a related complexity of translanguaging as it is the “lived experience” (p. 385) through which people articulate meaning, process emotions, and generate hope in different, and even unequal, contexts. Wei (Chapter 25) elaborates on transpositioning, or the dynamic roles and positions one assumes across and throughout interactions (Hawkins, 2021); he concludes with emerging empirical research using interactive narrative analysis, sequential-categorical analysis (Dai et al., 2026), and personal stories as productive future directions. Lee (Chapter 26) first reviews conceptualizations of translingual orthographies in print and virtual spaces and then introduces a register to further explore semiotic landscapes – globalese, the visual and verbal dimensions of commercialized culture (Jaworski, 2015); he concludes by bringing the global-local lens to social media and calls for more expansive sensory exploration.

Bradley (Chapter 27) adds to this conversation by first reviewing scholarship on translanguaging and creativity within applied linguistics and then notes their similar performative and disruptive natures. Vogel and Dovchin (Chapter 28) review how translanguaging has been explored in digital spaces as identity construction, embodiment, and materiality of digital tools; they conclude with future directions that illuminate the full assemblage of digital technologies, including algorithms and latent ideologies, and situate needed research in the Global South.

Ehrlich and Milani (Chapter 30) draw on the framing of translanguaging as a decolonizing theory, practice, and perspective, and they argue the importance of centering trans language users and their identities in language education by dismantling the boundaries around grammatical gender systems. Hua (Chapter 31) proposes that translanguaging offers a path for critical interculturality studies through analysis of two public discourse samples, and she notes the needed decolonizing turn and suggests interculturalidad as a term more responsive and affirming of Indigenous communities. Tsai and colleagues (Chapter 32) describe theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications of transraciality (Alim, 2016). Essential to research and to pedagogy are radical listening (Kincheloe, 2008) and critical raciolinguistic awareness. sitholé and Gramling (Chapter 33) begin with the greeting “Hekani, warrior!” (p. 529) to introduce the thinking and mutualizing around the necessity of hard translanguaging to resist the guards set up around colonialism and monolingualism; by sharing their story towards this mutual greeting of courage and triumph, they offer commentary on sense of being, credibility, and dynamic dance (tamb) that occurs in interactions and in pedagogy through hard translanguaging. They conclude with the transformation possible through hard translanguaging, and the necessity of the academy to more robustly and authentically examine epistemic injustice in its research and pedagogy.

Essential across all thirty-three chapters is the notion that “translanguaging proper needs to be hard, leveraged for the becoming of a more just world” (p. 11). This edited volume is a remarkable curation of theory, pedagogy, reflection, and transformation, and an essential resource for all in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, semiotics, and language learning. Translanguaging research has experienced exponential growth and application over the past two decades, but there is no other single volume available that so robustly traces the path of this research and pedagogy from its origin as a social justice pedagogy to its next directions of impact. There is still much work to be done on translanguaging assessments, research methodologies, and academic epistemologies, but the groundwork for future epistemic

collaborations has been laid, and the call for mutualizing hard translanguaging through listening, patience, and care has been made. This seminal text is a must-read.

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Nicole King  is an assistant professor of TESOL and Bilingual Education at The University of Rhode Island and a co-founder of the URI Translanguaging Lab. Her experiences as a former teacher in the US and Italy drive her research interests in the translingual and transmodal practices of multilingual students, families, communities, and teachers. She seeks to bring these perspectives to teacher education to empower teachers to enact sustaining practices in their teaching and advocacy. Her work has been supported through a variety of grants, and she was a co-editor on the recent volume, *Developing Translanguaging Repertoires in Critical Teacher Education*.

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