Translanguaging in adult online modern language learning

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Introduction

Long-held beliefs about maintaining target language only spaces are gradually being replaced by recognition of the value of pedagogic translanguaging – the leveraging of an individual's full linguistic repertoire in learning.

Yet, to date, pedagogic translanguaging has largely been advocated, promoted and researched in CLIL second language face-to-face environments, primarily with younger learners.

Focus of study

- To identify and describe spontaneous instances of translanguaging within two adult online modern language learning spaces:

    - Synchronous group tutorials (oral interaction)

    - MOOCs (written posts)

- To consider how, as educators and module designers, we might facilitate learner translanguaging in these environments.

Findings

Synchronous group tutorials (oral interaction)

Teacher talk

High levels of codeswitching - as is common to language teacher talk, reflecting an intuitive intention to mediate target language understanding through paraphrasing etc.

Example

'Muy bien entonces éste es la cuadrícula. This is the um concept map, tenemos que arrastrar um el, los los cuadros, they're squares, cuadros so that's why it's called cuadrícula but in in English it's a concept map, so that's why you have to drag the boxes. Muy bien entonces um Robert tú eres um el recepcionista y yo soy la cliente. Muy bien entonces um can you find the next the next phrase?'

Learner talk

In contrast, there are almost no examples of learners drawing on all their linguistic resources, perhaps due to their deeply ingrained assumptions about the need to use the target language only in this highly instructional teacher-led space.

Example

Sophie   'I'm sorry, yes, sí'

Modern Languages MOOC (written posts)

Perhaps because this relatively new type of mass learning space is more akin to written social media use, more anonymous, more collaborative, more learner-led, spontaneous instances of learner translanguaging are relatively common. These may be associated with the following functions:

- **Being strategic**: drawing on all available resources
- **Being creative:** connecting with others, tapping into shared knowledge, exploring target language
- **Scaffolding:** facilitating understanding, modelling, prompting.

German post-beginners

Meet your fellow learners (DISCUSSION)

Instructions: Take a few minutes to contribute to the discussion at the bottom of this page and tell your fellow learners:

○ What's your main motivation for joining this course and learning German? You can write in English, German or your own first language.

Example learner responses

Being strategic

'Hallo Ich heisse Robyn aus London. Ich habe Deutsch in der Schule gelernt, so would like to refresh my German'

Being creative

'Hi!!! I'm Guillermina. I'm from Argentina. As many of you, I learnt Deutsch in the past but now I dont remember much...I can understand it yet, but I have lots of doubts when I have to speak it...I hope we all Viel Spass while learning have it!!!'

Scaffolding

'We are not alone einsam =solitude we are connected and we can learn and meeting(encounter) by others and become happier and meaningful life'

Looking ahead

We identify a potential role of translanguaging in modern language learning in:

- giving learners a voice (condoning the full use of their repertoires)
- enabling them to enact personal identities and group belonging
- facilitating playful exploration of the target language and other languages
- supporting one another's learning.

We conclude by arguing that the promotion of pedagogic translanguaging needs to take account of the (perceived) nature of different online modern language learning spaces.