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Teacher agency in plurilingual learning contexts

Olga Esteve

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Introduction

In the field of teacher education in Europe, there is currently a widespread debate about what must be improved, in order for additional languages teachers (henceforth ALs-teachers) foster plurilingual education in school settings, as promoted by the most comprehensive European reference for AL learning and teaching, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Within this debate, educational institutions propose different pedagogical approaches for plurilingual education.

Embracing a plurilingual language teaching perspective is, however, not an easy task for language teachers. Many find it difficult to appropriate the plurilingual approaches now favoured by educational institutions. Since teaching practices are driven by the teachers' own beliefs and understandings, adopting a plurilingual approach certainly involves deeply reconceptualizing teachers' current – mostly monolingual – classroom practices.

For this reason, as Lantolf and Esteve (forthcoming) point out, AL teacher education should be based neither on theoretical instruction on what is to be taught and how, nor on one-off experiences provided by workshops and/or a few hours of classroom instruction. Instead, it should first challenge teachers' own beliefs about language and the way they teach it. Put in another way, AL teacher education should help AL-teachers see language learning and teaching through a new lens. This, in turn, would enable them to reshape their pre-understandings, reframe their current classroom practices and engage in new ones.

In this vein, some authors (Johnson 2006, 2009; Negueruela 2011; Johnson and Golombek 2016; Esteve et al. 2017; Esteve 2018) report and document the benefits of socioculturally based teacher education programmes that focus on teachers' agency to promote teachers' professional development. These benefits derive from the finding that such formative programmes help teachers both overcome negative attitudes towards new pedagogical approaches and adopt those approaches in significant ways.

Agency-driven teacher professional development represents a complex process encompassing the whole of the teacher's persona, i.e. not only the contextual and structural factors of their teaching environment, but also their experiences and pre-understandings along with their personal interpretations of these experiences and pre-understandings (Johnson 2009). Teacher

agency thus emerges both from the interaction between resources and contexts and from teachers' perceptions and their use of them.

For this reason, formative interventions or teacher education programmes that aim at promoting teacher agency conceive of "teachers as individuals who both appropriate and reconstruct the resources that have been developed and made available for them while simultaneously refashioning those resources to meet new challenges" (Johnson 2009, p. 13).

Historical perspectives

Educational institutions offer different teacher education programmes to prepare teachers to effectively implement a plurilingual approach in the language classroom. The formative model that underlies those programmes is of two types: training sessions through conference and workshops, as well as collaborative work between universities and schools.

Training sessions through conferences or workshops usually involve theoretical instruction on what is to be taught and how. Regarding the impact of this kind of instruction for promoting teacher development, Lantolf and Poehner point out that it

> may well provide nothing more than a set of terms teachers can use to describe – rather than challenge – their existent beliefs and practices, and it is not likely to provide the depth of understanding of a coherent theory that can be drawn upon to guide decision-making in the classroom.
>
> *(Lantolf and Poehner 2014, pp. 213–214)*

This argument is underpinned by the results of research studies that analyze the impact of short-term sessions on teachers' transformative processes. Van Compernolle and Henery remark in their study that "short-term training sessions, which do not involve subsequent support from a more expert person, are likely to be ineffective in transforming teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, especially when this entails a radical reconceptualization of language, language learning, and language teaching" (Van Compernolle and Henery 2015, p. 371). In the same line, Lantolf and Esteve (forthcoming) conclude – after a review of transformative teacher education interventions for AL-teachers – that the ability and commitment of a teacher to implement a new pedagogical approach cannot be developed through the kind of cursory introduction to the approach that often occurs in workshops, conference presentations, or even published articles and books.

Collaborative work between universities and schools aims at jointly creating teaching materials or activities that can be transferred into the classrooms of the participant teachers. Proponents believe that gradually introducing such materials or activities will naturally expose tensions and contradictions in the prevailing monolingual model and will thus help bring about a more plurilingual one. The fact remains that there are few empirical studies that account for how AL-teachers comprehend, appropriate new pedagogical approaches, and implement them in their classrooms and, consequently, for the impact of collaborative work on transforming teachers' practices oriented towards plurilingual education (see *Research approaches and key findings*).

Even if one does not question the value of those formative models or their predominant role in most schools, one must acknowledge that the transformation of education practices that they strive for often falls short of expectations (Lantolf and Esteve in press). Hence, the need to rethink formative models for AL-teachers so that these models can become truly transformative (Esteve 2018). As demonstrated by Esteve et al. (2017) and Lantolf and Esteve

(forthcoming), AL-teacher education models will become transformative only if they are based on teacher agency (Biesta and Tedder 2007; Priestley et al. 2015), a concept that I will now discuss.

Biesta and Tedder point out that the

> concept of agency highlights that *actors always act by means of their environment* rather than simply in their environment, so that the achievement of agency will always result from the *interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors* as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations.
>
> *(Biesta and Tedder 2007, p. 137, my emphasis)*

So understood, teacher agency represents a process informed by creativity and related to what Stetsenko (2017) calls creative reconstruction. This is illustrated by a cocktail analogy as applied to agentive formative models. These models combine at least three kinds of ingredients, as cocktails do: (1) the teachers' own resources for AL-teaching, as embodying their own beliefs and representations (2) fellow teachers' equivalent resources and (3) structured and systematized didactic models based on scientific research. As with any cocktail, what matters are the principles for combining the ingredients to meet one's needs.

One of these structured and systematized didactic models is the *Barcelona Formative Model*, which has been successfully used to help AL-teachers adopt the didactic plurilingual approach called *Integrated Plurilingual Approach* or IPA (Esteve et al. 2017; Esteve and González-Davies 2017; González-Davies in this volume) over the course of a three-year formative research project.[1]

It is a socioculturally driven formative model of teacher education that encourages and supports language teachers in actively bringing about transformations in their own teaching practice (Esteve 2018; Lantolf and Esteve forthcoming). To this end, teachers are first provoked to critically analyze their own instructional practices and pre-understandings of specific aspects of their own teaching. Once they have engaged in that critical analysis, they are presented with systematic theoretical knowledge through organized explicit conceptual mediation. The mediation unfolds through socially mediated activities leading teachers to meaningfully reshape their previous views on language teaching (see *Pedagogic approaches and methods*).

Research approaches and key findings

With regard to research, I agree with González-Davies that studies regarding plurilingual practices usually stop short at the theoretical stage without contributing any specific pedagogical proposals for real classroom contexts. Even more to the point here, there are few empirical studies that account either for how AL-teachers comprehend, appropriate, and implement plurilingual approaches or for the impact of teacher education programmes at transforming monolingual classroom practices (González-Davies 2018).

Such empirical studies as do exist focus predominantly on teacher beliefs and representations of plurilingualism (Ziegler 2013; Arocena et al. 2015; Haukås 2016; Palou and Cabré 2017, among others). As a whole, these studies present fairly similar outcomes. Teachers certainly do become aware of the benefits of promoting learner plurilingual competence, but there are three considerable shortcomings to be noted. These are: (1) the transfer of learning strategies is hardly focused on, (2) joint work across languages is not yet common practice, despite being perceived as enhancing students' AL-learning, and (3) teacher beliefs are still largely monolingual and seem to change only gradually into more plurilingual ones.

As noted, empirical studies that account for how AL-teachers appropriate and implement plurilingual approaches or for the impact of teacher education programmes in transforming monolingual classroom practices into plurilingual ones are rare. There are a few longitudinal, context-based studies, however. To them belong the four that I will now briefly discuss. The first study focuses on the evolution of beliefs (Kalaja et al. 2016) brought about through a reconceptualizing formative intervention. Its most outstanding finding is the concept of *interpretative repertoires*. This concept describes how teachers progressively interpret meaning and how their progressive interpretations become visible in their own discourse.

The second study specifically considers how monolingual practices evolve into plurilingual ones (Tresserras 2017). This study covers an academic year and is based on data gathered through three research instruments: ten language biographies, ten semi-structured interviews, and five discussion groups. Data analysis is carried out chronologically with the aim of tracking how the teachers' thought evolves as they confront their own beliefs and interact with their peers and the teacher educators. The most outstanding finding of the study is the observation of three evolution patterns: *awareness, expansion,* and *transformation*. Awareness involves no actual shift; teachers understand what they have been exposed to but perceive no direct link between what they have learned and their own school reality. Expansion, though, does encompass a shift, as the new emerging practices lead teachers to widen their initial schemes of knowledge. Finally, transformation goes beyond both awareness and expansion; teachers not only become aware of new practices that expand their horizon of knowledge, but also see their initial practices challenged and, as a result, reconceptualize them. As for the outcomes, expansion was the most frequent pattern, whereas transformation could be observed in the case of only two teachers. Notably, these two had the most consolidated representations of plurilingualism in the classroom.

The third study (Esteve et al. 2017) also addresses the transformation of monolingual into plurilingual practices. This study is drawn from a three-year formative research project carried out in several Spanish regions. The project's aim was to study the impact of an adapted version of the *Barcelona Formative Model* described earlier, which was specifically designed to help AL-teachers adopt a plurilingual, translation-favouring approach.

Following Engeström's interventionist research approach (Engeström 2011), the formative intervention associated with the project had a twofold aim: (1) exerting an influence on the system by confronting the teachers with a scientifically grounded orienting basis of action for plurilingual education, and (2) investigating the development and consequences of the ensuing formative process, a process that lasted between five and six months in each case and that was guided by members of the research project team as facilitators. Research on this formative process was based on four types of data collected at eight schools. The instruments for data collection were: (1) video-recording of focus group discussion at the beginning and the end of the process, (2) video-recording of classrooms practice during the process, (3) internal documents explaining and justifying the schools' resetting of its language teaching model (collected at the end of the process), and (4) semi- open interviews with teachers and learners at the end of the process.

As a result of the formative intervention, monolingual classroom practices became plurilingual, mostly through translation and translinguistic conceptualization (Esteve et al. 2017; Esteve 2018). That three-year formative research project has given rise to another such project that builds upon it. This fourth project,[2] currently being conducted, addresses the impact of the same plurilingual approach, this time focusing on the learners' perspective.

Pedagogic approaches and methods

Drawing on the findings and outcomes of the research project conducted by Esteve et al. (2017), the teacher agency-driven formative intervention implemented in that project has the potential to help AL-teachers significantly adopt the integrated plurilingual approach (see González-Davies this volume).

In order to orient AL-teachers towards significant plurilingual education involving an informed use of translation and translinguistic conceptualization within a communicative approach, the formative intervention developed within this project uses an adapted version of the agency-driven Barcelona formative model (Esteve 2018). In its general structure, the BFM is based on the Vygotskian *double stimulation* method, as developed by Engeström (2011).

Within this Vygotskian framework, the first stimulus is aimed at encouraging teachers to express their pre-understandings of plurilingualism and plurilingual education, as well as at making them aware of possible contradictions in their pre-understandings. Building on this, the second stimulus aims at helping them resolve the contradictions and reconceptualize their monolingual perspective. This happens through organized external conceptual mediation leading them towards pluringualism as they build their own practices based on their own agency (Esteve et al. 2017; Esteve 2018).

The formative process consists of five phases, as presented in the action plan for teachers in Table 25.1. This plan contains specific directions to lead them carry out the formative process.

As can be seen in the action plan in Table 25.1, the first stimulus of the Vygotskian double stimulation method develops within a single phase (1), whereas the second one stretches over four phases (2, 3, 4, and 5).

External mediation proves especially significant in phase 2 (as described in detail in Table 25.2). Two elements inform the external mediation carried out in this phase, namely *essence-oriented thinking* (Arievitch 2017) and the *scaffolding structure* of the workshop itself.

The workshop presents teachers with interrelated activities of conceptual analysis. These activities enable them to establish significant connections between their previously expressed pre-understandings and beliefs and the concepts underlying the plurilingual didactic model to be adopted.

As presented in Table 25.2, the teacher educator uses three global strategies during the formative process to help teachers both gradually enrich their own (monolingual) perspective and expand it, in a meaningful way, towards a translation-driven plurilingual approach.

The first strategy consists in presenting the teachers with the results of their pre-understandings – recorded during the first phase of the formative process – in an organized way and discussing them. In the second, teachers work on their own linguistic experiences both as speakers and as constructors of meaning in a new language. Finally, the third strategy is the use of schemes, the SCOBAs. A SCOBA, *Scheme for a Complete Orienting Basis of an Action*, (Gal'perin 1992), refers to a cognitive map "that captures the systematic essence of a concept in ways that are not only understandable for learners, but, at the same time, allow them to deploy the concept in a broad array of concrete goal-directed activities" (Lantolf and Poehner 2014, p. 65). Here, SCOBAs are used in the third strategy to help teachers apprehend the key concepts of the didactic model for plurilingual education to be adopted.

The conceptual mediation striven for in this kind of workshop relies on the assumption that teachers appropriate new didactic models when they see that the scientific concepts underlying these systematic theoretical models challenge the everyday empirical concepts that they have derived from their own classroom experiences (Esteve 2018; Lantolf and Esteve forthcoming).

Table 25.1 Phases of the double stimulation method

FIRST STIMULUS (one phase)

PHASE 1. Reflective autonomous work (without the teacher instructor)
Create small groups with teachers of different ALs taught at your school and jointly discuss the
following guiding questions.
- *What does 'plurilingualism' mean for us?*
- *What linguistic reality do we experience at our school? And in our classroom?*
- *What role do the native language and other languages of the students play when they learn an AL that is quite distinct from it/them? And in the case of an AL close to it/them?*
- *What are we doing at our school to promote plurilingualism? What are we satisfied with? What not?*

Do please record your reflections and send them to the teacher educator!

SECOND STIMULUS (four phases)

PHASE 2. Workshop with the teacher educator and follow-up sessions of reflective autonomous work
This is the most demanding of the reflective phases. Here, you will jointly compare your first
reflections with methodological proposals for AL-teaching based upon research on bilingualism and
pluringualism.
Phase 2 consists of two subphases.

a. In the first sub-phase, you will take part in a four-hour workshop in which the main concepts
related to the plurigual approach will be jointly addressed. You will not be provided with
explanations of these concepts generally. Instead, you will have to take a more participative role in
which your point of departure will be a critical analysis of your personal experiences as language
speakers and learners. Building upon these results, you will then be gradually introduced to the
conceptual basis of certain plurilingual approaches.

b. In the second sub-phase, you will work autonomously. Theoretical-practical papers that present
both validated plurilingual practices and the rationales behind them will be provided online by our
research team for you to discuss.

PHASE 3. Reflective autonomous work to critically design new didactic proposals building upon the results of the previous reflection
In phase 3, you will jointly discuss the results from subphases 2a and 2b in as many work sessions as
necessary. Afterwards, another joint session will be scheduled. Prepare for it in advance by answering
the following guiding questions:
- *How do our respective starting points relate to each other?*
- *What has drawn our attention the most? Why?*
- *What has the plurigual approach led us to rethink about our AL-teaching?*
- *How we would like to put this into practice in our classrooms?*

PHASE 4. Putting the new didactic proposals into practice in the classroom
In phase 4, you will move from "reflection" to "action". Turn the results of the previous phases
right now into didactic proposals and put them into practice in your own classroom. You will
need to plan sufficient time for this and to jot down everything you observe in the classroom:
your students' reactions, your own perceptions. If possible, record that class; if not, take (field)
notes that account for everything that you would like to comment on both with fellow teachers
and with us.

PHASE 5. Reflexive autonomous work to evaluate the results of the didactic proposal and to establish future lines of work

In this phase, you will evaluate in depth the results of your didactic proposal both individually and jointly. Don't just say what went well or bad. Review your (field) notes and then answer the following guiding questions:

- *How have I personally progressed in relation to language teaching in general and plurilingual education in particular?*
- *How have we progressed as a group? How has my/our horizon of expectations expanded and how has my/our teaching practice been enriched?*
- *How much has my/our horizon of expectations and my/our teaching practice been enriched?*
- *What new questions have I/we come up with?*
- *What do we think that we still need to address?*

Once each school has done this (self-)evaluation, a joint final session will be called and recorded.

Table 25.2 Phase 2: the workshop

Introduction

After having made a summary of the recorded teacher reflections in phase 1, the teacher educator presents it to the teachers as the starting point of the workshop. The summary will stay displayed throughout the workshop for teachers to come back to at the end, after they have performed the following conceptualization activities.

Activity 1

In this activity, teachers are expected to act NOT as language teachers, but rather as language learners. Accordingly, they are first confronted with a text in a language unknown to them and then asked to understand as much as possible of it. They are given the following directions, which require them to use both their own internal resources and their linguistic repertoire:

- *Read the text to yourself and try to discover what it is about.*
- *Next, still working by yourself, underline what you do understand.*
- *Now, share the results of your individual work with one other teacher.*
- *Finally, join your pair to another pair. Working as a group of four, extract possible rules or grammatical patterns from the text.*

Afterwards, each group must create a meaningful message using the vocabulary and structures that its members have understood, as well as their own linguistic "intuition". Finally, the groups must analyze how they have solved the "linguistic conflict" posed by the activity, with the help of the following guiding questions:
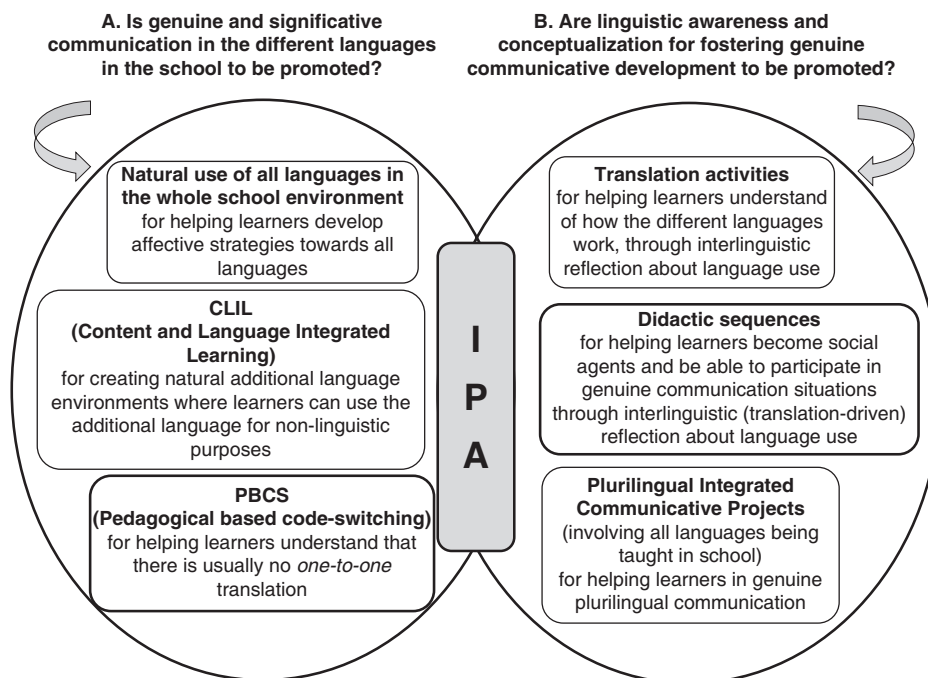
- *How did you feel trying to discover what the text was about?*
- *Did you understand anything?*
- *Could you identify the German word for* to work*?*
- *What helped you understand the text?*
- *How did you feel trying to create a meaningful message in a language unknown to you? Was it fun?*
- *What helped you create a meaningful message without prior language instruction?*

Table 25.2 (Continued)

Activity 2

Teachers are presented with the following schema (SCOBA 1):

A. Is genuine and significative communication in the different languages in the school to be promoted?	**B. Are linguistic awareness and conceptualization for fostering genuine communicative development to be promoted?**

Natural use of all languages in the whole school environment
for helping learners develop affective strategies towards all languages

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)
for creating natural additional language environments where learners can use the additional language for non-linguistic purposes

PBCS (Pedagogical based code-switching)
for helping learners understand that there is usually no *one-to-one* translation

IPA

Translation activities
for helping learners understand of how the different languages work, through interlinguistic reflection about language use

Didactic sequences
for helping learners become social agents and be able to participate in genuine communication situations through interlinguistic (translation-driven) reflection about language use

Plurilingual Integrated Communicative Projects
(involving all languages being taught in school)
for helping learners in genuine plurilingual communication

(Adapted from Esteve et al. 2017)

This presentation first involves drawing the teachers' attention to the concept of *significative communication* in the SCOBA through the following guiding question:

- *In your view, what does 'genuine communication' entail?*

The teachers are next asked to reflect on a scientific paper related to the holistic view of language (Esteve et al. 2017), guided by these directions and the subsequent final question:
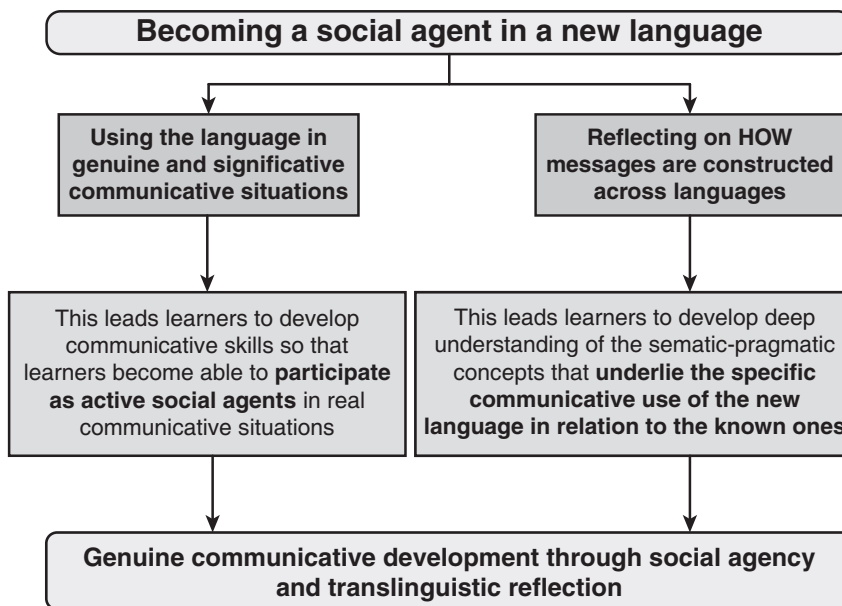
- *Individually read the text and underline the concepts that are relevant to you.*
- *Form groups of three and explain the concepts you have chosen and the reasons why you chose them.*
- *Make a poster with the ideas you would like your group to present to the rest of the teachers.*
- *In your view, how could translation contribute to genuine communication in a given AL?*

Activity 3

Drawing on the results of activity 2, the teacher educator poses a key question that goes to the essence of the IPA:

- *How can translation help develop genuine communicative competence so that learners become able to act as social agents in control of the language in a variety of communicative situations?*

After that, teachers are asked to compare their own answers with the explanations given by the teacher educator in relation to SCOBA 2 that follow.

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│          Becoming a social agent in a new language               │
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Using the language in genuine and significative communicative situations	Reflecting on HOW messages are constructed across languages
This leads learners to develop communicative skills so that learners become able to **participate as active social agents** in real communicative situations	This leads learners to develop deep understanding of the sematic-pragmatic concepts that **underlie the specific communicative use of the new language in relation to the known ones**

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Genuine communicative development through social agency          │
│            and translinguistic reflection                         │
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(Adapted from Esteve et al. 2017)

In presenting SCOBA 2, the teacher educator stresses the importance of keeping balanced the two strands making up the SCOBA, i.e. language use and reflection on how messages are constructed. Only if they bear this balance in mind will teachers become able to promote genuine learner communicative competence. To this end, some key concepts must be explained, as they represent the epistemological basis of the *Integrated Plurilingual Approach* (Esteve et al. 2017). To such concepts belong

• *Didactic sequence* as a pedagogical tool for blending language use and reflection on how messages are constructed,
• *Discourse genre* as the framework for any text, itself the basic communicative unit, and
• *Pedagogical translation and translinguistic conceptualization* as agency- promoting tools for interlinguistic and intercultural reflection.
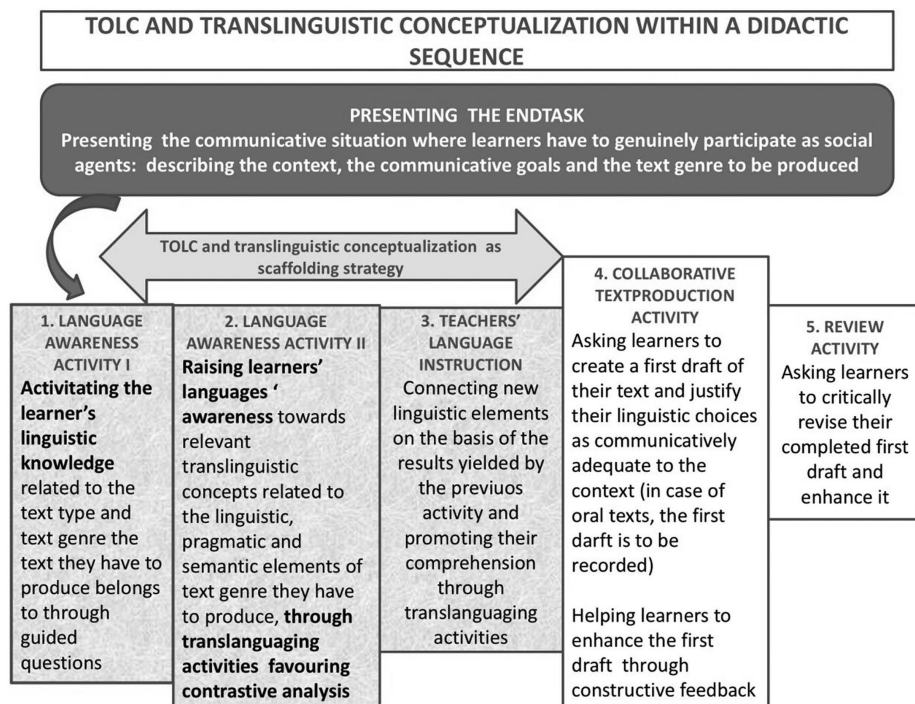
Activity 4
Activity 4 presents samples of translanguaging activities, i.e. translation and translinguistic conceptualization activities embedded in didactic sequences (see the example of a didactic sequence in the annex), for teachers to reflect on with the help of the following guiding questions:
• *What is a didactic sequence (like)?*
• *What is its purpose?*
• *What conclusions do you draw from this activity?*
• *Now that you have been exposed to the activities, what do you think are the potential benefits of using pedagogical translation and translinguistic conceptualization in the communicative AL-classroom?*

Once teachers have answered the previous questions, the teacher educator explains the value of translanguaging activities framed within a didactic sequence, using the following scheme (SCOBA 3) as a guide.

Table 25.2 (Continued)

TOLC AND TRANSLINGUISTIC CONCEPTUALIZATION WITHIN A DIDACTIC SEQUENCE

PRESENTING THE ENDTASK
Presenting the communicative situation where learners have to genuinely participate as social agents: describing the context, the communicative goals and the text genre to be produced

TOLC and translinguistic conceptualization as scaffolding strategy

1. LANGUAGE AWARENESS ACTIVITY I	2. LANGUAGE AWARENESS ACTIVITY II	3. TEACHERS' LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION	4. COLLABORATIVE TEXTPRODUCTION ACTIVITY	5. REVIEW ACTIVITY
Activitating the learner's linguistic knowledge related to the text type and text genre the text they have to produce belongs to through guided questions	**Raising learners' languages ' awareness** towards relevant translinguistic concepts related to the linguistic, pragmatic and semantic elements of text genre they have to produce, **through translanguaging activities favouring contrastive analysis**	Connecting new linguistic elements on the basis of the results yielded by the previuos activity and promoting their comprehension through translanguaging activities	Asking learners to create a first draft of their text and justify their linguistic choices as communicatively adequate to the context (in case of oral texts, the first darft is to be recorded) Helping learners to enhance the first draft through constructive feedback	Asking learners to critically revise their completed first draft and enhance it

(SCOBA 3. Adapted from Esteve 2018)

This process of confrontation and challenge unfolds within the teachers' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), i.e. "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86).

Instructional activity that is based upon such a confrontation process and that unfolds within teacher education programmes does not confine itself to merely transmitting theoretical knowledge untethered to real practice. Instead, it involves dynamic, agency-based knowledge construction by the teachers themselves, as oriented by the teacher educator. This active knowledge construction introduces new knowledge in a meaningful way, helping teachers develop deeply informed new insights.

According to Kozulin (2003), the scientific concepts that teacher educators make available to teachers should serve as psychological tools guiding their teaching practices. For this reason, teachers must deeply understand these concepts and not simply memorize them, if they are to actually put them into practice in their classrooms. Teacher educators, then, must carefully choose the concepts to be introduced and must carefully consider the appropriate way to do so. This twofold need is met through the SCOBAs deployed in the course of the workshop (see Table 25.2, activities 2 and 3).

The goal of SCOBA 1 is to make teachers aware that neither of the two approaches depicted in it should be favoured at the expense of the other. This is shown in the integrated way in

which the two approaches intersect in the diagram (along the lines of the *Integrated Plurilingual Approach*, IPA). Teachers should, rather, fully grasp what each approach can contribute to their teaching, so that they can make informed decisions about what to use in their classrooms.

The goal of SCOBA 2 is to make teachers aware of how translinguistic reflection can help develop genuine communicative competence in the AL-classroom by enabling learners to act as social agents. According to the CEFR, social agents are "members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action" (CEFR p. 9). This view of learners as social agents performing tasks differs from that of learners as performers of non-situated speech acts, a view still prevalent in most AL-syllabuses.

The goal of SCOBA 3 is to make teachers aware of how pedagogical translation and translinguistic conceptualization can help learners learn to communicate in a given AL. They do so as they become social agents in it by carrying out didactic sequences (González-Davies 2017). Didactic sequences blend comprehension and production activities, which are necessary to communicate, with reflection activities, which are necessary to complete the final task of the sequence. This task unfolds within a specific communicative situation requiring specific linguistic elements. These, in turn, are produced and manipulated by the learners through reflection activities including pedagogical translation and translinguistic conceptualitzation. As a result, the linguistic elements to be worked are those relevant to the communicative situation in question, which ensures the functionality of what is being learned through interlinguistic reflection.

Conclusions and future directions

Vygotskian based formative interventions aim to construct new forms of activity jointly with the local participants. Such construction can be successful only when it is based on careful historical and empirical analyses of the activity in question (Engeström 2011). The data considered in this chapter about the impact of the Vygotskian teacher education model presented in promoting translation-driven plurilingual approaches confirm that this kind of formative intervention can be successfully appropriated and implemented in schools. This formative intervention, thus, has tremendous potential to help teachers agentively transform their own practice.

The use of this model is intended to promote new understandings and ways of acting. This happens first through the critical analysis of the teachers' system of activity, i.e of their classroom reality, as informed by their own beliefs and understandings. Next, their reality is expanded as their pre-understandings of plurilingualism are challenged by scientifically validated didactic models. Finally, the essence of these models is finally addressed, including their pros and cons, so that teachers can be led towards informed decision making.

Drawing on the definition of agency as emerging from the interaction between resources and contexts and the learners' perceptions and use of them, prescriptive and transmissive formative models should be progressively replaced by models favouring agentive formative activity (Esteve 2018). These models promote a significative internalization of the new concepts – that is, they promote a process in which the learners' perceptions and practices undergo "successive qualitative transformations during the mastery of a given activity" (Arievitch 2017, p. 94).

Accordingly, what teachers internalize through agentive formative models is not identical with the external models provided. Rather, it is the result of a process of *creative reconstruction*

(Stetsenko 2017). That process should, thus, be promoted in every teacher education programme, as is the case with the formative model presented. This is so because, in agentive formative models, teachers themselves engage in a dialectic process between what they feel to be theirs and what is new to them. As a result, they create a model of 'their own' under the *constructive* guidance of experts.

By *constructive* I mean guidance that significantly orients teachers towards what they must assimilate. Such an orientation requires far more than theoretical explanations of the didactic model to be appropriated and how to best foster it. Those explanations, while somewhat useful, are far from sufficient. The teacher educator must, in addition, help teachers grasp the principles that underlie the specific didactic model through work on SCOBAs (as in the case of the SCOBAs related to the *Integrated Plurilingual Approach*). In grasping these principles, teachers will also develop a deep understanding of the didactic model(s) provided, which in turn will give them solid criteria that will enable them to informedly create their own didactic model.

As for future directions, I deem it essential that further research be conducted on how teachers make sense of scientific concepts related to plurilingual education as introduced through organized external mediation like the one presented in this chapter. That research should also include the effects of such mediation as considered from teachers' agency. This, in turn, involves gaining insights into the plurilingual models teachers create for themselves: how they create them and what key concepts they use.

Further reading

Corcoll, C. and González-Davies, M. (2016) Switching codes in the additional language classroom. *ELT Journal*. 70(1), pp. 67–77.
In this article, the authors present a rationale for an informed use of code-switching and translation in the AL-classroom. It encourages teachers to adopt a plurilingual approach by presenting and discussing realistic tasks that can be easily included in the foreign language syllabus.

Negueruela, E. (2011) Beliefs as conceptualizing activity: A dialectical approach for the second language classroom. *System*. 39, pp. 359–369.
This article aims to help teachers, teacher educators, and researchers reconsider the specific relationships between teachers' beliefs and actions. It also presents a specific research methodology, semiogenesis, which captures the orienting power of beliefs as teachers conceptualize activity in the classroom.

Esteve, O. (2018) Concept-based instruction in teacher education programs in Spain as illustrated by the SCOBA-mediated Barcelona Formative Model, in Lantolf, J., Poehner, M.E. and Swain, M. (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Development*. New York: Routledge. pp. 487–504.
This chapter describes the agency-driven formative model referred to in the present article (the Barcelona Formative Model or BFM). More precisely, it focuses on how the BFM helps AL-teachers understand the principles of 'translinguistic conceptualization', appropriate them significantly and, thus, promote plurilingual education as they build their own practices based on their own agency.

Related topics

teacher agency, plurilingual education, teachers' zone of proximal development, concept-based instruction in teacher education

Notes

1 Research project: "Diseño y Experimentación de un modelo didáctico para el fomento de la competencia plurilingüe en la enseñanza-aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras" funded by the Spanish government (Reference: EDU2012–38452), led by Dr. Olga Esteve (Universitat Pompeu Fabra).
2 Research project: "Estudio exploratorio del impacto del Enfoque Plurilingüe Integrador (EPI) en centros educativos como modelo orientativo para el profesorado de lenguas adicionales" funded by the Spanish government (Reference: EDU2016–75874-P), led by Dr. Maria González-Davies (Ramon Llull University, Barcelona).

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Annex

Example of a didactic sequence for B1-B2 learners of Spanish as additional language at adult education in Germany (Author: Master student Laia Sánchez).

German-Spanish language-exchange partner sought

LEVEL: Intermediate (B1-B2 of the CEFR)

SETTING: You have set up a German-Spanish speaking group on Facebook in order to seek a language-exchange partner to practice your Spanish.

END TASK: Writing a brief self-description in Spanish introducing yourself and helping you find a suitable language-exchange partner on Facebook.

Activity 1. Warming-up

1.1. Do you know what a language exchange is?

1.2. Have you ever learned with a language-exchange partner?

1.3. What was your experience like (positive, negative, etc.)? Why?

1.4. How can you find a language-exchange partner?

Activity 2: Language research

2.1. Think of a **self-description in your own language,** answer the following questions and fill in section *a* and *b* of the following grid:

- What texts are these?
- What information do they provide?
- What words are predominant in such texts? Make a list with your classmates?
- What verbs are predominant? What do we use them for?

a. Predominant words in a self-description in my L1	b. Used for	c. Can I find corresponding expressions in the text in the new language?

2.2. Now read the self-descriptions in Spanish from two people seeking a language-exchange partner on Facebook and analyze them guided by the results of the previous reflection *(the teacher hands out several self-descriptions and asks the following questions)*. Fill in section *c* of the grid.

2.3. Now let us focalize on the difference between two important verbs that appear in the texts, *ser/estar*. In German there is only one verb, *sein*, for expressing both meanings in Spanish. Working in small groups, we search in the self-descriptions in Spanish for further samples of sentences with both *ser* and *estar* + adjective and try to infer a rule accounting for their use

NORM? EXPLANATION?	
Ser + adjective *Estar* + adjective	

2.1. The preceding verb grid is jointly discussed and **the teacher asks the learners if the possible German equivalents function in the same way.**

2.2. Now, we focus on the verbs *ser* and *estar* [*both equivalent to the verb to* be] when followed by adjectives. Is there anything which calls our attention? Are both alike? How do their equivalents function in German? Do you know other languages with the same twofold distinction?

2.3. Working in small groups, we search in the self-descriptions for further samples of sentences with both *ser* and *estar* + adjective and try to infer a rule accounting for their use

NORM? EXPLANATION?	
Ser + adjective *Estar* + adjective	

2.8. The teacher writes down the different norms inferred by the learners. Do some of them coincide? In which aspects are they similar and in which do they differ?

Activity 3. Systematizing the findings gained

3.1. The teacher provides the learners with a copy of learning guidelines for using *ser/estar*.

3.2. Sub-activities aimed to raise learner linguistic awareness are introduced.

3.2.1. Complete in pairs the following sentences with the correct form of *ser* or *estar*. You may use the guidelines as needed.

- Marta _____ de Barcelona, pero ahora vive en Madrid.
  [Marta _____ from Barcelona, but now she is living in Madrid]
  EXPLANATION
- A: Oye, ¿sabes dónde _____ la conferencia de mañana?
- *[A: Hi, do you know where the lecture tomorrow _____?]*
  B: Creo que sí, _____ en el auditorio.
  [B: I think so, it _____ in the lecture room]
  EXPLANATION:
- Por lo que me han dicho, los ponentes de la conferencia de mañana _____ prestigiosos investigadores en el ámbito de la lingüística.
- *[As far as I have been told, the speakers at the lecture tomorrow are prestigious researchers in the field of linguistics]*
  EXPLANATION

- . . .

3.2.2. Sara, a former German exchange student who lived in Madrid for some months a couple of years ago, has recently moved to London to refresh her English. Now, she has just written an email to a Spanish friend where she has got the verbs *ser* and *estar* wrong. Check her email by using the *ser/estar* guidelines and correct any possible mistakes

Sara's text
(. . .)

Activity 4. Text production

4.1. Before setting to write, let us consider what we want to tell our future language-exchange partners.

What do we mean? What information do we want to convey?	Can we express the desired information in Spanish?	What expressions in our L1 would we like to use? How can we express them in Spanish?

4.2. Now, write out your text individually without using the *ser/estar* guidelines. It must be a brief self-description between 80 and 100 words in length and include sentences with *ser* and/or *estar* followed by adjectives.

4.3. After completion, check your text with the *ser/estar* guidelines and modify it as needed. Then hand it in to the teacher.