Chapter 15
Supporting Multilingualism Through Translanguaging in Digital Storytelling

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Abstract Recent development in the areas of digital multimodal composing (DMC) and digital storytelling (DST) coincides well with the call to support English learners' (ELs') home languages and resources through multilingual pedagogy. DMC incorporates various modalities of meaning-making including written and audio text, images, graphics, animation, videos, and hyperlinks to create a multimodal digital text. DST, as a form of DMC, can emphasize creators' multilingual repertoires and identity negotiation through the expression of personal multimodal narratives. Significant work has been done by Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) educators who have incorporated DST into English language curricula and teaching. However, there is limited exploration into how DST can offer a multimodal space for home languages in English language education and thus support multilingualism. In this chapter, we explore the role of translanguaging in English language instruction, and how DST can offer a multimodal space for translanguaging. To offer practical guidelines to educators, we outline ten steps of DST production with suggestions on how to incorporate them into language instruction and scaffold ELs' translanguaging in this process. Through this work, we demonstrate the value of multilingualism and translanguaging in TESOL.

Introduction

With the "multilingual turn" in applied linguistics and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (May, 2014; Ortega, 2014, 2019), many TESOL professionals have become interested in learning ways to value and support English learners' (ELs') home languages while teaching English. TESOL professionals see the advantages of maintaining and supporting the linguistic skills and diversity of

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their students (Paris & Alim, 2014) and also recognize the potential harm done by focusing solely on teaching English, especially to minoritized speakers such as children learning English in K-12 schools in the U.S. (Pentón Herrera, 2019), or speakers of languages other than English in colonized or formerly colonized regions of the world (Canagarajah, 1999). As a field, we understand the importance of maintaining and strengthening language development in ELs' multiple languages, both for their socioemotional development and growth and for their development as multilingual language users. We also value linguistic diversity in itself, as language loss depletes humanity's shared understanding of the world and the varying perspectives and understanding that different languages offer.

Recent developments in the areas of digital multimodal composing (DMC) and digital storytelling (DST) coincide well with this desire for multilingual approaches and techniques in English language teaching. These approaches can highlight and celebrate the multiple languages, cultures, and backgrounds of students of English as an additional language (EAL). To emphasize that ELs are multilingual language learners, we use the term EAL to refer to any classroom where English is learned as a second, foreign, or additional language.

In this chapter, we discuss how DST can support multilingualism. Specifically, we explore the role of translanguaging in EAL instruction, and how DST can create a multimodal space for translanguaging. To offer practical guidelines to educators, we outline the steps and components of DST with adaptations for its incorporation into EAL instruction. Further, we present suggestions on how to incorporate translanguaging in DST projects and provide examples of such projects in a variety of EAL settings. Through this work, we demonstrate the value of multilingualism and translanguaging in TESOL.

Translanguaging, Digital Multimodal Composing, and Digital Storytelling

Translanguaging

As noted by Tian et al. (2020), translanguaging may be viewed through theoretical, descriptive, and pedagogical lenses. As a theory, it asserts that multilingual individuals have a single linguistic repertoire which they draw upon in communicative situations, rather than a separate linguistic repertoire for each language they speak. Proponents of this theory also value the ways individuals use language(s) rather than adhering to strict, constructed, and named language boundaries. Finally, proponents recognize that minoritized multilingual speakers have to contend with societal expectations about language usage, such as speaking only one named language at a time, even as the theory works to upend these expectations. When employed as a way of describing language use, theorists focus on how multilingual individuals use their communicative repertoire strategically and in an integrated manner in order to learn

and make sense of the world around them, communicate, and express their identities in social situations (Li, 2011).

As a pedagogical approach, translanguaging aims to "foster individuals' linguistic fluidity, dexterity, and identity while expanding their linguistic repertoire to include English features" (Tian et al., 2020, p. 3). Li (2011) focused on the importance of creativity and criticality in translanguaging, arguing that they "are intrinsically linked: One cannot push or break boundaries without being critical; and the best expression of one's criticality is one's creativity" (p. 1223). Li (2011) also stated that multilingualism "is a rich source of creativity and criticality, as it entails tension, conflict, competition, difference, change in a number of spheres, ranging from ideologies, policies, and practices to historical and current contexts" (pp. 1223–1224). Language educators interested in incorporating translanguaging in their teaching, however, often wonder what types of projects and activities can help them do that in a purposeful and meaningful way.

DST is one way to enact translanguaging pedagogically in our teaching. We know that DST increases motivation and student engagement and offers a way for students to process and express complex emotions (Castañeda, et al., 2018; Kim & Li, 2021; Vinogradova, 2014). We suggest that the emotional experience of language loss, native speakerism, or language hierarchies for minoritized speakers of languages other than English can be fruitfully explored through DST, especially by offering and encouraging translanguaging in digital story creation. By highlighting possibilities for translanguaging in DST, students are encouraged to "take a step back, from being an actor to being an observer who can make objective decisions about *what* stories should be told [and] *how* they should be told" (Kim & Li, 2021, p. 8). Indeed, language is a compositional choice which situates creators in their sociocultural environment and is used to express interpersonal relationships between creators and their various audiences. As Kim and Li (2021) suggested, the layering of semiotic resources in DST "gives the audience a glimpse into [the students'] minds and helps students deal with their own complex emotions" (p. 7). In this way, we also imagine a future community in which plurilingual language users are comfortable and free to use languages in ways that they choose.

The connections between translanguaging and DST, and DMC more broadly, are clear. Referring to Li's (2018) work, Tian et al. (2020) highlighted the "multilingual, multimodal, multisemiotic, and multisensory performance" nature of translanguaging, going on to state that it "integrates diverse languaging and literacy practices to maximize communicative potential and indicate sociocultural identities, positionings, and values in different social contexts" (p. 5–6). We explore this further in the next section.

Digital Stories as Translanguaging

In recent years, we have seen the rise in general of digital multimodal composing (DMC) projects, and more specifically DST as one type of DMC, in EAL curricula

(see Hafner & Ho, 2020; Jiang, 2017; Jiang et al., 2020; Kim & Belcher, 2020; Smith, 2018). DMC incorporates various modalities of meaning-making, including written and audio texts, images, graphics, animation, videos, and hyperlinks to create a multimodal digital text. The main argument for DMC incorporation in EAL has been its support of purposeful engagement with "multiple semiotic resources" (Kim & Belcher, 2020, p. 87) and the development of competencies in multiple modes of communication (Hafner & Ho, 2020). DST is a form of DMC that combines a multimodal narrative, visual images of various formats (e.g., still images, cartoons, graphics, video clips, and various special visual effects), and music. It is "a distinct non-linear narrative genre that uses new media technology to produce short, personal narratives using high quality sound and image" (Vinogradova et al., 2011, p. 175). Used successfully in language curricula with ELs of various ages and language levels (see Anderson & Macleroy, 2016; Hafner, 2015; Kim & Li, 2021; Vinogradova, 2014, 2017) as well as in out-of-school programs (see Castañeda, et al., 2018), what positions DST as separate from other DMC projects is that it promotes language learning through community engagement, including continuous collaboration with classmates, families, and various community members. In this collaborative process, DST offers space for ELs' multilingual repertoires and identity negotiation through the expression of personal multimodal narratives (Anderson & Macleroy, 2016; Anderson et al., 2018; Vinogradova, 2011). As Kim and Li (2021) put it, "Embedding digital storytelling projects in a school curriculum can engage learners with a wide range of expressive resources while also enhancing students' motivation, creativity, identity development, and connection with others" (p. 33).

DST offers many benefits to educators seeking ways to implement translanguaging or multilingualism in their classrooms. Student motivation and engagement increase with DST projects as does language learning (Castañeda et al., 2018; Kim & Li, 2021; Vinogradova et al., 2011). By introducing DST as translanguaging and offering students the possibility of drawing upon their full communicative repertoire, students can showcase their full linguistic capabilities which go beyond monolingual classroom practices. Anderson and Macleroy (2016) stated that by becoming creators of digital stories, "we resist being defined by others and declare the legitimacy of a personal way of seeing and making sense of reality" (p. 1). The authors further connected this perspective to the language chosen to communicate, noting that when stories are created in different languages or combinations of languages, "they often carry greater cultural authenticity [and] embody and give positive expression to plurilingual repertoires within individuals and societies providing a deeper literacy experience and basis for greater intercultural respect and understanding" (p. 1).

The process of engaging in DST promotes both creativity and narrative skills (Rodriguez et al., 2021). Including translanguaging in DST can also encourage the criticality noted by Li (2011). Not only can "students' home language practices be used to further learning" (Marrero-Colón, 2021, p. 3), in DST, they can be encouraged to explore and to critically reflect on how and why they are deemed, or relegated to, *home* language practices. DST has always been used as a tool for social change and is "an ideal resource for giving voice to the voiceless" (Rodriguez et al., 2021, p. 22). Similarly, the main goal of translanguaging is to challenge discriminatory

language ideologies "by liberating and privileging language-minoritized speakers' multilingual performances and legitimizing all their linguistic varieties" (Tian et al., 2020, pp. 6–7). By combining the two, teachers can "make heteroglossic spaces that leverage students' bilingualism and bilingual ways of knowing and that support their socioemotional development and bilingual identities" (Tian et al., 2020, p. 7). In one example, Zhang and Gong (2020) used translanguaging digital storytelling with Chinese international students in Australia to interrupt the *deskilling* impact of an English-only focus. Their use of translanguaging in a digital storytelling workshop "helped foster a sense of empowerment as the act resisted the English superiority discourse that still prevails in academic institutions" (p. 101). Surprisingly, even in this environment, the final stories produced in their workshops were monolingual—an outcome worthy of further exploration. We suggest that multilingual digital stories offer the most benefits to the creators as well as audience members who can develop a greater understanding of multilingual language practices.

Marrero-Colón (2021) outlined several benefits of translanguaging in dual-language classrooms, and we believe the same benefits can be reached through multilingual DST. These benefits include increasing students' metalinguistic awareness and understanding of how different languages can be used strategically to communicate with multilingual audiences and negotiate meaning. This validates the role of language practices in homes and schools and provides opportunities for students to develop creativity as they experiment with their language resources. Anderson and Macleroy (2016) connected these benefits to multilingual DST, noting how this practice "values and supports multilingual repertoires, recognizing that every language is a distinct medium in itself with its own expressive resources, its own palette of colors, its own sounds and rhythms, all shaped by and representing history, culture, values, and beliefs" (pp. 4–5). In this sense, insisting on students only using one language—one part of their linguistic repertoire—is denying them their full expressive capabilities. As a final benefit, any translanguaging practice can support multilevel language classrooms where students have varying degrees of English or other language skills as it "allows the integration and collaboration of language learners from all proficiency levels" (Marrero-Colón, 2021, p. 8).

Incorporating Translanguaging into DST Work

In our work with multilingual ELs and TESOL teacher candidates, we have discovered that translingual practices might not come as naturally to the students as one might expect. While some students engage in translanguaging when brainstorming and discussing their ideas for digital stories, they do not recognize ways they can translanguage in their digital stories. Translanguaging has been evident with ELs when the students needed to reach out to their families and friends for help with visuals or music; however, students avoided using their home languages in their digital stories (Vinogradova, 2011). When prompted to incorporate their home languages in their multimodal narratives when reporting conversations between

family members or addressing their parents, they were hesitant as they did not see a legitimate place for their home languages in an EAL class. At the same time, incorporation of home languages in DMC projects, including DST, has shown increase in students' engagement in the target language (see Castañeda et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2020; Vinogradova et al., 2011), especially legitimizing and empowering language practices of ELs who come from minoritized language backgrounds in their home countries. These multilingual practices become acts of advocacy and empowerment for ELs, especially those who are mislabeled as native speakers of dominant languages in their countries of origin (Jiang et al., 2020; Pentón Herrera, 2019).

Scaffolding of Multimodal Translanguaging

Careful and purposeful scaffolding of translanguaging through the steps of digital story production will create space for multilingual students to incorporate their home languages and legitimize this language use as part of their multimodal practices. For that, we adapted the steps of digital story production developed by Lambert (2009) and Lambert and Hessler (2018) to explicitly facilitate translanguaging, as explained here.

Step 1. The first step in the DST process is to introduce the project to students, showing examples of a variety of stories and analyzing the components. At this point, it is important to choose stories that are multilingual and use a variety of languages in order to encourage translanguaging from the beginning of the digital storytelling process. As students analyze the components of the example digital stories, teachers can also have students notice the choices made when selecting and using various languages. The students can be prompted to think how well they understand the digital stories and what multimodal components help them in their understanding.

Step 2. With this foundational understanding of what digital stories are, and the establishment of a clear multilingual approach, students are ready to brainstorm ideas for their own digital stories. The prompts for this brainstorming can be quite general, asking the students to develop a digital story about something that is interesting or important to them or by posing a question (e.g., what aspect of your life would you like to share?). Depending on the focus of the class and the purpose of the DST project, the prompt can be more specific and can focus on community life, stories of migration, stories of language learning, or stories of traditions or cultural practices. To include translanguaging at this stage, educators can encourage students to use their full linguistic repertoire as they think about or collaboratively talk about ideas for their stories. An assignment can be to brainstorm and record their thoughts in their home languages and discuss their thoughts with family, friends, and community members. From the very beginning,

this brings in collaborative narrative practices and students' lives and communities into the educational setting.

Step 3. After determining topics or general themes for their stories, students engage in a story circle, a collaborative and supportive sharing of their story ideas in groups. Translanguaging can be utilized at this stage as students listen intently to their peers' ideas and ask questions, offer feedback, and help each other further develop their ideas. While the main linguistic medium of the story circle might be English, depending on the make-up of the class, students can be prompted to talk about how they took notes and recorded their thoughts in their home languages, who they talked to and why, and how their use of home language(s) can help them develop their multimodal narratives. They can also be guided to think how languages can be present visually in their digital stories, thus viewing languages as part of their multimodal repertoires. In this initial step of in-class collaborative reflection, analysis, and discussion, a multilingual community of practice starts forming where students find support and encouragement throughout the whole DST process.

Step 4. With the feedback of their peers, students are now ready to develop their verbal narratives. Depending on the course goals and the students' literacy levels, they might be writing their verbal narratives or invited to audio record their narratives right away. This verbal narrative becomes the oral voiceover for their story and undergoes several rounds of editing and revisions. In this step, translanguaging forms the basis of discussions of authenticity of voice, language expectations, and audience understanding. A teacher might ask students, "How would you convey this to different audiences? Which audience do you want to address here? How else, besides oral language, can you support comprehension of your message?" In particular, students can be reminded that subtitles or textual clues can be used in any language to help audience members understand their messages. It can be useful to ask the students to go back to their notes from Step 2 and use these notes when developing their verbal narratives. It is also useful to split this step into at least three stages: (1) initial drafting of the verbal narrative; (2) a peer-review session where students give each other feedback in the language(s) of their choice; and (3) revision of the verbal narrative. Depending on how this stage is structured, the instructor can give feedback and suggest points for revisions. Further, a peer-review session can be scaffolded using a worksheet with a list of questions for the students to discuss or elements of a verbal narrative to pay attention to.

Step 5. With the verbal narratives reaching their final form, it is time for the students to start collecting and organizing their visuals. These visuals can take various forms and can include photographs and various still images, drawings and cartoons, short video excerpts, animated images, and visual effects. Depending on the levels of technological and digital literacy, the students might choose to incorporate various types of visuals. Students who draw, take photographs, record their own videos, or do any type of other visual work professionally or as their hobbies might choose to produce their own visuals. In our work, we have also observed students reaching out to friends and family members to help them produce the visuals, further engaging in translingual practices by collaborating

with relatives and friends. Students can also be encouraged to pay attention to verbal representations in their visuals and engage in multimodal translanguaging this way.

Step 6. Finding music to accompany verbal and visual narrative elements is another step in the process of DST. Here, translanguaging includes thinking beyond language and employing the full range of multimodal resources one has access to (Zhang & Gong, 2020). Students can be encouraged to think about how the music helps tell their story, how it contributes to the emotional aspect of the story, and how it can support and complement some of the oral narrative to fully integrate the multimodal DST experience.

Step 7. Storyboarding—creating an explicit multimodal outline of a digital story—is an important part of the DST process as it helps the creator visualize their digital story by combining multimodal elements of a digital story in an explicit outline. Students again have the opportunity for multilingual peer feedback on their storyboards and for another round of thinking about their audience and the authenticity of their voices. At this stage, the students are able to see their story and assess how multimodal components—languages, visuals, and music—come together to convey their point of view, emotions, and the moment of change in their narrative.

Step 8. Recording the audio of the narrative (the voiceover) is the next step. At this point, students can once again revisit their language choices and consider how multilingual they want their digital stories to be. They can also be encouraged to think about the emotions in their digital stories and how their intonation and voice volume can convey these emotions and emphasize significant moments in their stories. As they record, and even re-record if they choose to do so, authenticity and clear communication of the story's message are primary goals. As in all steps, students have the final say as they decide when the voiceover is ready to be included in their digital story.

Step 9. The next step in the DST process is to take all of the elements and combine them into the digital story using video-editing software. There are many choices for video-editing software and we do not have the space to go into the pros and cons of each here. We recommend software that comes standard on many computers now (i.e., Windows Video Editor for PCs or iMovie for Macs) or free applications that can be downloaded onto tablets or mobile phones (such as KineMaster or OpenShot). It is often true that the students will have greater abilities in this step than some teachers, and acknowledging this student expertise can bring a great sense of empowerment for the students. Translanguaging choices in this step relate to decisions about adding subtitles and special sound and visual effects, the use of language(s) in the title slide and credits, and overall evaluating the story for its multimodal cohesion and meaning, not to mention the collaboration among students and teachers that happens throughout this stage. The students also work on adjustments to transitions between images, adjustments to volume of the voiceover and music, and determine whether any multimodal components need to be edited, added, or re-recorded. All of this multimodal work happens in service to telling the story in the best way possible, as determined by the story's creator.

Step 10. The final step is for students to share their stories with each other, their families, and their communities. Castañeda (2013), Castañeda et al. (2018) and Vinogradova (2014, 2017) emphasized the importance of this step as it is when the students get to engage with their audience and see live reactions to their digital stories—cheering, tears, laughter, applause, and body language indicating emotional engagement. Here again, translanguaging can occur as engagement with family members and friends is likely to happen using a home language. Thus, we suggest rolling out the red carpet (Castañeda, 2013) and having a movie night that is likely to inspire conversations about DST, multilingualism, language choice, and the importance of storytelling in communities.

Examples of Multilingual DST Projects

So far, we have discussed how DST can be employed with a multilingual focus and can facilitate multimodal translanguaging. Here, we would like to highlight several specific examples of DST projects that incorporate translanguaging in various ways. First, from Canada, children with a Farsi language background attended a heritage language school and created digital stories using both Farsi and English (Golneshan, 2016). The author noted that this pedagogy gave the students "the opportunity to move between the two languages, provided power to express themselves in the language they chose, and take control of their own learning" (Golneshan, 2016, p. 39). In another example from Australia, Chinese and other international students engaged in a DST workshop which encouraged them to critically question and creatively deal with how the use of English-only in their academic studies had marginalized them with respect to academic, social, and economic opportunities (Zhang & Gong, 2020). Discussing this project, the authors note:

> In narrating these experiences, [the Chinese international students] engaged in a creative and critical process of examining their social life and presented their thoughts, which would be challenging to do in English, if we see English as an arbitrary and self-contained [linguistic] system by itself…, an inefficient and insufficient tool for EAL students to demonstrate and express critical thinking. Ironically, the concern of English language deficiency, which weighs heavily in the student participant's mind, became a non-issue in their DST making process. They by-passed the "barrier" with their ability to use different modes to communicate ideas. In this sense, we argue that DST is a translanguaging practice… is empowering for students who are studying overseas. (p. 116)

In a final example, a teacher in Indonesia (Laily Amin Fajariyah, personal communication, 2021) used digital storytelling to improve her middle-school students' oral language and literacy skills in English, technological skills, and motivation for learning English. Using a play on words (and an example of translanguaging), rather than translating "digital story" directly into Bahasa Indonesia as "terita digital" (literally, story digital), Laily Amin Fajariyah used the term "cerdig," a combination of "cerdas" ("smart") and "digital." She used this "catchier" term to generate interest in DST and her project. After creating her own digital stories as listening texts for her middle-school EL students, she was challenged by a colleague to have

her students create their own stories. She found that students enjoyed being active learners, creators of content from scratch that they can upload and share on social media. She also noted that students find it motivating to have the opportunity to use their mobile devices in school as they typically have to leave them at home. This teacher introduced a variety of text types to her students that they can use to create their digital stories, including procedural texts and narrative texts. For narrative texts, students create digital versions of Indonesian stories and legends in English. While she did not encourage students to use Bahasa Indonesia or other Indonesian languages in their stories, students translanguaged as they wrestle with how to translate the stories and legends, or otherwise express their topics in English. She also noted that although DST improved students' pronunciation in English, they still spoke "Javanese English" (Laily Amin Fajariyah, personal communication, 2021), which was okay. No matter the topic, this teacher connected her DST project to students' interests noting that, "accommodating students' interests are the first thing we have to do in the digital storytelling project." She also recommended teachers "give [students] as much freedom as possible, freedom of creating their own creativity." She credited this freedom with the success of her DST projects.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed how DST can be used to encourage multilingualism in EAL instruction. DST, as a creative, multimodal, and critical endeavor, has the potential to disrupt monolingual language ideologies and promote multilingualism in classrooms and communities—a goal of translanguaging. DST also encourages the many pedagogical benefits of DMC, including greater student engagement with each other, their families, and communities; empowerment of multilingual and historically marginalized students; and creation of spaces for identity negotiation and expression. Despite some concerns about the potential of DMC and DST to distract learners from their target language acquisition, DST projects facilitate development of linguistic skills, critical literacy, and multiliteracies, thus fostering "multimodal communicative competence" (Castañeda et al., 2018, p. 11). By employing translanguaging in DST as a pedagogical approach, we hope to encourage the strengthening of ELs' full linguistic repertoires in order to empower and benefit each language learner individually. This work also benefits societies as language loss and marginalization have a negative impact on humanity, eliminating forever the varying perspectives, and understanding that different languages offer. We are excited to add our chapter to the growing ideas for multilingualism in TESOL.

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