

The multilingual university

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Introduction

The last two decades have seen a dramatic increase in linguistic diversity in higher education institutions around the globe and the notion of ‘the multilingual university’ – the focus of this chapter – has received increasing attention. However, despite much academic activity, including a number of international conferences on multilingual higher education, there is still no agreement among scholars as to what in fact constitutes a ‘multilingual university’. The notion remains ambiguous and subject to varying interpretations, not least because multilingual universities evolve over time and differ from one context to another (Purser 2000; Van Leeuwen 2004; Preece and Martin 2008).

The multilingual university may be defined from either a narrow or a broad perspective. The narrower perspective is based on fixed or ordered multilingualism, with parallel monolingual programmes aimed at balanced multilingual speakers, that is, speakers who are equally proficient in two or more languages (Dafouz and Smit 2014: 3). The broad perspective, in contrast, emphasizes the polyglossic nature of the multilingual university (Van der Walt 2013). This broad perspective promotes an organic understanding of the multilingual university as an institution where “students, using the languages they know and those they are getting to know, are enabled to succeed” (Van der Walt 2013: 12). In this sense, multilingual universities are seen as “sites where bilingual or multilingual education, whether official or unofficial, partial or comprehensive, pedagogically explicit or implicit, may be represented” (Van der Walt 2013: 12). The broad definition of the multilingual university will be adopted for this chapter. However, the adoption of this definition raises complex questions regarding the nature of language and multilingualism, and of language education theories and practices (Hélot 2012).

Accordingly, the aim of this chapter is to explore some questions concerning the multilingual university and to identify core issues, topics and new debates and directions with a view to providing a conceptual model of the multilingual university in this era of late modernity. A dynamic bi-/multilingual education model espoused by scholars such as García (2009) is proposed for the conception of the multilingual university. The model is based on poststructuralist theories of language, multilingualism and linguistic diversity with a special focus on translanguaging. Thus, the multilingual university is viewed as a dynamic institution which takes linguistic repertoires as the starting point rather than language (cf. Banda 2000; Makoni and Mashiri 2007). A case study of the South African universities, the University of Cape Town (UCT) in particular, will be used to illustrate the proposed conceptual model.

The structure of the chapter is framed as follows: in the following section, I provide a historical overview of the multilingual university. This is followed by a discussion of the core issues,

topics and new debates on the multilingual university. Translanguaging is then discussed as an alternative pedagogy for realizing a truly multilingual university. The chapter concludes by giving a case study of UCT to illustrate how the proposed dynamic bi-/multilingual education may be implemented using a translanguaging approach. The chapter concludes by giving a brief summary and identifies areas for further research.

Historical overview of the multilingual university

The birth of the modern multilingual university can be traced to Europe. Although the bilingual university has always been a feature of higher education in multilingual contexts in Europe, it is only recent that this type of university has become the focus of attention of many studies (e.g. Purser 2000, Preece and Martin 2010, Simpson and Cooke 2010) and conferences, such as the UNESCO-CEPES seminar in 2000 which was organized to study the origins, mission and functioning of the bilingual university. Purser (2000) provides a snapshot of the key issues with regards to the bilingual university, in which he clearly shows that the origin of the bilingual university is political and that the language policies in these universities are more a result of conscious and deliberate decisions by national governments (Purser 2000).

Van Leeuwen (2004) gives a historical overview of the bilingual university in Europe. He maintains that multilingualism has always been an important feature of European universities. Although for many centuries Latin was used as the main language of instruction, the early universities were heterogeneous in terms of the student population. Thus, multilingualism in these early modern European universities was implemented through strategies such as the use of bilingual and multilingual dictionaries. These dictionaries were used by text producers, subject specialists and educators to explain difficult academic terms of foreign origin (Latin, Greek and French). They were used within texts and later outside their contexts as independent compilations. Within texts, the glossing notes were used to explain difficult terms and to provide translation equivalents (Hüllen 1989; Sauer 2008).

However, the emergence of the nation-states at the end of the 20th century resulted in a shift from the use of Latin to national languages (Purser 2000). In recent times, there is a growing recognition of the importance of multilingualism in European universities, and it has become fashionable in some universities to create multilingual universities either by introducing new languages of instruction in their institutions, or by founding new institutions with more systematic plurilingual design (Purser 2000; Van der Walt 2013). Examples of multilingual universities include Fribourg in Switzerland, which offers French and German programmes to a local student population with at least three languages and an international student population with many more. Other examples of multilingual universities in Europe are Bolzano in Northern Italy (Italian, German, English), Luxemburg (German, French, English), Frankfurt an der Oder (German, Polish, English) and Helsinki (Finnish, Swedish and English) (Van der Walt 2013). The promotion of multilingualism in most European universities is mainly intended to attract international students.

In Africa, and in South Africa in particular, the history of modern universities has much in common with that of European universities. In South Africa, the history of universities has been dominated by colonial and apartheid policies. The early South African universities were modelled on European universities and were based on a monoglossic language ideology, that is, an ideology that views language as fixed, separate and singular. The first university in South Africa, the South African College, was an extension of the British university system and was based on English. It was only after the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 that bilingual

universities were established to cater for speakers of Dutch/Afrikaans. In 1918, the first three autonomous universities were established, namely UCT, the University of Stellenbosch and the University of South Africa. UCT was an English-medium university, and the other two were bilingual (English and Dutch/Afrikaans). Other bilingual white universities were established; these included the University of Pretoria, the University of Free State and the University of Potchefstroom. In 1919, all-white universities, including UCT, were required by law to introduce dual-medium instruction; in this way, the birth of the bilingual university in South Africa was aimed at driving a political agenda of apartheid (Du Plessis 2006). The bilingual Afrikaans universities eventually evolved into monolingual Afrikaans universities (Du Plessis 2006: 97). The reasons for this shift included, among others, the increased demand for Afrikaans higher education and the language competence of Afrikaans-speaking students and loyalty to their language. Therefore, it could be argued that the birth of monolingual Afrikaans universities in South Africa was via bilingualism (Du Plessis 2006).

The University of Fort Hare, which was the only university for blacks coming from different ethnic backgrounds, adopted English as the medium of education instead of indigenous African languages. Similarly, the ethnic universities that were later established in different Bantustans (places allocated for different ethnic groups) opted for the use of English rather than their dominant ethnic languages.

When South Africa transitioned to democracy in 1994, universities were still very much divided along racial and linguistic lines. To address these historical divisions, some black universities were merged with historically white universities. The *Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education* (2001) was adopted by the government to develop a new identity in universities which was “neither black nor white, English or Afrikaans-speaking”, but only “unabashedly and unashamedly South African” (2001: 82).

Furthermore, in 2002, the government approved the *Language Policy for Higher Education* with the aim of promoting multilingualism in higher education to meet the goals of equity and transformation. With regard to equity, the policy considers multilingualism as pivotal for promoting equality of access and success for all students in higher education. Under the policy, all universities are required to implement multilingualism in their learning and teaching programmes, and in their institutional environments. Multilingualism is recommended in this policy as a means to ensure equity of access and success in higher education, in contrast to past colonial and apartheid education policies which left a legacy of inequality, exclusion and failure. The implementation of this policy requires that universities develop language policies that clearly show how multilingualism will be promoted in their institutional environment and in their teaching and learning programmes. As South Africa has adopted a policy of eleven designated official languages, universities can only select their official languages from among these. So far, over 80 percent of South African universities have developed language policies that seek to promote multilingualism. The majority of the language policies have designated English as the primary medium of instruction and have made commitments to developing at least one African language which is dominant in the region as an academic language. It is only the historically Afrikaans universities that have adopted Afrikaans as the medium of instruction alongside English. In general, the emerging language policy that is common across all South African universities is ‘English plus’.

From the foregoing historical overview, it is clear that in both European and South African multilingual universities, perspectives on the notion of multilingual universities are still very fragmented. Whereas in South African universities there are clear institutional policy frameworks for building the multilingual universities, in Europe there are relatively few universities that have developed coherent language policies to date. This raises the need for a clear conceptual framework or model for building the multilingual university in institutional and everyday language policies.

Core issues and topics on the multilingual university

The discussion of the multilingual university raises several issues. These include, among others, the construct of language, the notion of multilingualism, language policy versus practice(s) and linguistic (super)diversity.

The construct of 'language'

The construct of 'language' is central to the conceptualization and building of the multilingual university. It remains the norm to view languages as separate and discrete entities that can be named and counted. In Europe, this construct of language emerged as "a cultural artefact fostered by procedures such as literacy and standardization" (Weber and Horner 2012: 32). Thus, the construct of language was based on a standard language ideology which has been the dominant factor in the development of language policies in European and South African universities. The basic assumption of these universities' language policies is that students have distinctive standard languages that can be designated as official languages and hence as the medium of education.

In the last few decades, this structuralist conception of language has been the subject of much criticism. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) note that 'languages', particularly so-called standard language varieties, as separate discrete entities, are inventions. Recently, there has been a shift from the structuralist conception of languages as 'countable institutions' to one which views languages as fluid, dynamic and socially constructed semiotic systems (Heller 2007; Makoni and Pennycook 2007). In this sense, a language can be described as a social practice rather than a normative linguistic system (Heller 2007). Scholars such as Canagarajah (2013), Blommaert (2010) and Blommaert and Backus (2011, 2012) further argue for the need to conceptualize language as emergent rather than as something that exists *a priori*.

This shift in the conception of language has implications for language policy and planning. Makoni and Mashiri (2007) suggest that rather than developing language policies that take as their starting-point hermetically sealed languages, we should be describing the use of vernaculars that leak into one another to understand the social realities of their users. These vernaculars enable students to access academic discourses or registers of their disciplines (García and Wei 2014).

The conception of multilingualism

The shift in the conception of language has implications for the notion of multilingualism. The term 'multilingualism' needs to be viewed critically as it was used traditionally to imply "that people's linguistic practices are composed of a number of discrete languages, with fixed boundaries between them" (Weber and Horner 2012: 3). This conception of multilingualism is influenced by monoglossic ideology. Recent studies on multilingualism have challenged the dominant institutional notions of multilingualism as the ordered deployment of different language or parallel monolingualisms (Van der Walt 2013; Makoni 2015). Most language policies in European and South African universities have been based on this conceptualization of the multilingual university. While in European universities, such multilingual language policy entails the policy of national languages as the mother tongue plus one or two additional languages, one of which is often English, in South African universities the opposite is the case. English is, in most cases, the primary medium of education, and the other indigenous languages are learned as subjects or auxiliary languages.

As Heller (2007: 1) argues, there is a need for

an approach to researching multilingualism that moves away from a highly ideologized view of coexisting linguistic systems, to a more critical approach that situates language practices in social and political contexts, and privileges language as a social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as products of social action.

It is against this backdrop that some scholars such as Makoni and Pennycook (2007) call for the ‘dis-invention’ of multilingualism.

Language policy versus language practices

The study of language policies, either in European universities or South African universities, clearly shows the gap between language policy and language practice. This gap is exacerbated by the fact that there are two types of language policies in operation, those which are overt and those which are covert. Overt policy is a *de jure* policy, that is, a policy that is explicit, formalized and codified, whereas covert policy is a *de facto* policy, that is, a policy that is implicit, informal, unstated and grassroots (Schiffman 1992: 3). Very often, overt policies or policy statements of intent are not fully realized, as such policies run counter to the institutional linguistic culture.

In South Africa, for example, while English is recognized as the primary medium of instruction in most universities, students seem to depend more on their heterogeneous linguistic repertoires than the so-called official language(s) of the university (Hornberger 2010; Van der Walt 2013). Thus, covert policies seem to be more effective than overt ones as they are closer to students’ everyday language reality and experience. It could, therefore, be more useful to legitimize such practices and make them part of the language policy so as to allow adequate planning (Madiba and Mabiletja 2008). Thus, language policy should be viewed not only as a top-down process, but also as a bottom-up process. As Blommaert (2011) points out, when language policies are seen from below, they emerge as “a complex and layered, stratified field in which language practices and language ideologies interact and intersect at a variety of scale-levels” (2011: 294–295).

Linguistic superdiversity

The complexity of language and multilingualism discussed in the foregoing seems to be captured well by the recent notion of superdiversity. The term ‘superdiversity’ was proposed by Vertovec (2007) to describe the new type of diversity which resulted in demographic, legal, religious and sociological changes in different parts of the globe. Vertovec (2007) points out that superdiversity “has brought with it a transformative ‘diversification of diversity’ not just in terms of ethnicities and countries of origin, but also with respect to a variety of significant variables that affect where, how, and with whom people live” (2007: 1).

Although the concept ‘superdiversity’ is increasingly becoming popular in the global North as an analytical framework for language practices, it is not unproblematic in the global South. Deumert and Mabandla (2013) argue that while this phenomenon is regarded as new in the global North, this may not be equally true of African and Indian contexts which have always been characterized by complex linguistic and cultural diversity. Thus, they question if there is any quantitative or qualitative measure to assess when a society progresses from being simply diverse to being superdiverse. Makoni (2015) also criticizes this concept on the grounds that it

can be seen simply to celebrate differences rather than highlighting and challenging elitism and social, ethnic and class differences.

Despite the above criticism, the superdiversity perspective is helpful as it challenges the traditional notions of the multilingual university and provides a lens to look at different multilingual universities and to describe and analyse their language policies and language practices. Superdiversity compels us to abandon any preconceived or absolute notion of interaction in universities as comprising stable language systems and to replace them with a more fluid and dynamic notion of linguistic repertoires. Linguistic repertoires may be defined as “the totality of linguistic resources (i.e. including both invariant forms and variables) available to members of particular communities” (Blommaert and Backus 2012: 2). However, in highly multilingual contexts, the challenge is how to identify speakers’ linguistic repertoires (Busch 2012). In the early work of scholars such as Gumperz (1964), linguistic repertoires were based on the observance of verbal interactional practices of speech communities. In recent research by scholars such as Busch (2012), the concept of linguistic repertoires has been revisited from a poststructuralist perspective which views linguistic repertoires as fluid, mixed and heterogeneous instead of being separated according to speech communities. Busch (2012) recommends the use of language portraits to identify speakers’ linguistic repertoires.

The next section focuses on the use of translanguaging as a dynamic and flexible way in which multilingual learners use their linguistic repertoires in communication in learning.

Towards the multilingual university

Translanguaging

The term *translanguaging* (*trausieithu* in Welsh) was coined by Cen Williams, a Welsh educator, who defines it as “the planned and systematic use of two languages for teaching and learning inside the same lesson” (Lewis et al. 2012: 643). In this approach, one language is used to reinforce the other in order to increase learners’ deep understanding and participation in learning and teaching activities (Lewis et al. 2012).

In South Africa, the use of the term ‘translanguaging’ is fairly new. Some scholars caution against the use of this term for the following reasons. Heugh (2015), for example, has three principal objections. First, the term was generated in contexts quite different to those found in South Africa, and it may be ill-fitting in our multilingual context. Second, she objects to the use of the term as a blanket term in preference to code-switching, translating and interpreting. According to her, “code-switching conveys a sense that this could be two or multidirectional whereas the prefix ‘trans’ in translanguaging suggests, in the South African context at least, of moving from one place to another, moving from one language to another, and possibly from an African language to English” (Heugh 2015: 283). Lastly, she argues that in the USA and UK, the term is not used in the kind of formal multilingual educational contexts that exist in South Africa or India and that it is used in a context where one dominant language is promoted.

Notwithstanding the criticism of the term, it is important to note that over the last few years, translanguaging has been the focus of various studies on multilingual education (e.g. García, 2009; Creese and Blackledge 2010, 2011; Baker 2011; Canagarajah 2011; Hornberger and Link 2012) to the extent that we may now be experiencing a translanguaging ‘turn’ (García and Wei 2014). Different scholars have contributed to the development of a translanguaging theoretical framework and its practical implementation in various ways. Baker (2011), for example, popularized the term internationally when he included it in his book *Foundations of Bilingual Education*

and Bilingualism. Other scholars who extended the use of the term include García (2009), Creese and Blackledge (2010), Hornberger and Link (2012) and García and Wei (2014). García (2009) expanded the use of the term beyond schooling contexts. She views translanguaging as a normal discursive practice of bilingual people who use their linguistic resources flexibly to make meaning of their lives and their complex worlds.

Translanguaging is now generally regarded as both a pedagogic theory and practice (García 2009; García and Wei 2014; Creese and Blackledge 2015). As translanguaging is based on the assumption that bi-/multilingual speakers have *one linguistic repertoire*, it emphasizes students' capacity to use language fluidly in order to make meaning beyond one or two languages (Creese and Blackledge 2010; García and Wei 2014).

The application of translanguaging as pedagogic practice in highly complex multilingual contexts such as South Africa raises questions of a theoretical, methodological and practical nature. On a theoretical level, there is still a need for more research on translanguaging as pedagogy in higher education. With regards to methodology, there are two opposing views on translanguaging as a pedagogy, one orienting to natural translanguaging and the other to planned or professional translanguaging (García and Wei 2014). Natural translanguaging suggests that there is no need to develop or investigate translanguaging pedagogical strategies since they are already very commonly used in different contexts. Canagarajah (2011), however, convincingly argues for the need to develop clear pedagogic strategies for implementing professional translanguaging in teaching and learning. The following case study of professional translanguaging at UCT shows how such strategies might appear when implemented.

UCT case study: Translanguaging in action

UCT provides an interesting case study for the use of translanguaging because of its high levels of linguistic diversity. With about 25,000 students from over 100 countries, speaking over 51 languages as their first languages, UCT constitutes a complex superdiverse multilingual environment that gives rise to a plethora of linguistic challenges in teaching and learning programmes. Although UCT has, since its establishment in 1829, adopted a policy of English as the sole medium of instruction, this policy has now been changed to English-plus to meet the requirements of the Language Policy for Higher Education (Department of Higher Education 2002). In its preamble, the UCT language policy emphasizes the value of language as a resource and recognizes the personal, social and educational value of multilingualism. The policy stresses “the need to prepare students to participate fully in a multilingual society, where multilingual proficiency and awareness are essential” (University of Cape Town 2013:1). It further stresses the importance of the development of multilingual proficiency on the one hand, and promoting multilingual awareness on the other.

While it is clear that the UCT language policy falls short of transforming the institution into a truly multilingual university, it can be argued that the language policy has opened up ideological and translanguaging spaces (Madiba 2014). In this section, I will only focus on the use of translanguaging for concept literacy. The term ‘concept literacy’ is fairly new in the literature and is used within the South African context to refer to “reading, understanding and using the learning area-specific words, terms and related language forms which are an integral part of knowledge in [...] learning areas” (Young et al. 2005). The concept literacy project that is being piloted at UCT is aimed at providing support to first-year students, especially students for whom English is not the first language, who often experience difficulties in understanding the special language of the discipline and its key concepts.

Description of the study

This study is based on the multilingual concept literacy tutorials conducted for first-year economics students. This study focuses on selected key concepts in economics. Only one concept, 'capital', will be discussed in this case study to illustrate the use of translanguaging for concept literacy. The following methodology was adopted for the study.

First, two groups of students were selected from the first-year students enrolled in the Extended Academic Development Programme in the Faculty of Commerce (one group for isiXhosa and another for Tshivenda). The focus in this chapter will only be on the isiXhosa tutorial. Second, only students who had done an African language as a home language in Grade 12 were selected. Third, two tutorials (1 hour each) were organized for each group. A tutor was also appointed for each group to assist the Principal Investigator in facilitating the tutorial discussion. Lastly, students were expected to use both English and their home language (isiXhosa) during the tutorial discussion.

Translanguaging in practice: Economics tutorials

Several terms were selected for discussion in the economics tutorial. One of the terms, which is the main focus of this section, is the concept 'capital'. The tutorial involved the Principal Investigator (PI), a tutor (T) and eight students (S). The PI began by introducing the tutor and the concept 'capital'. A multilingual glossary for economics terms has been developed on *Vula Online multilingual glossaries*. Students were asked to read the definition and the translations of this concept on Vula and give their comments. Before the tutorials started, students were again asked to write down the definition of the term and its translation equivalents in their home language. Thereafter, they were asked to discuss their understanding of the concept in English and in isiXhosa. The following extract is the transcripts of the discussion on the concept 'capital', which was done in English only.

Extract 1: English definitions of the concept 'capital'

- 1 **PI:** Can we start looking at the definitions of the concept 'capital' and see what definitions you got last week. First we will start briefly discussing this concept in English then the second part will be discussed more clearly in isiXhosa, who wants to start?
- 2 **S:** Ladies first
- 3 **S:** I will start, I said that economics, in terms of capital are resources including machinery that is used to import process of production and is also a factor of production and is paid by interest.
- 4 **PI:** Ok that is the definition that you have, the second one?
- 5 **S:** I said that capital is a factor of production that is needed to start a business. Capital can either be in the form of cash, machinery or any asset. It is contributed by an owner or an outsider.
- 6 **S:** Me I said capital is what a business or an economy needs to produce goods or services. These can be in the form of machinery investments.
- 7 **S:** I said kind of the same thing, capital is the effects of production, used in production processes and increases things like land and buildings and other assets.
- 8 **PI:** Okay so those are the definitions, okay keep them coming.
- 9 **T:** I think everyone has a basic understanding of capital but I think that they are narrowing it down, for example, the way they learnt it is that it is paid by interest but I think

that a more broad definition would be what she said, it is the factor of production used in the production process which is what everyone said.

In this tutorial, students were asked to give the English definitions of the concept 'capital'. Defining concepts is always challenging to students as it requires deeper understanding. The first observation from this tutorial was that students gave very brief definitions which, according to the tutor, were rather shallow. The definitions demonstrated a basic and narrow understanding of the concept. It is also important to note that definitions were given without much elaboration or illustration with examples. This is not surprising as it is widely acknowledged at UCT that students who do not speak English as their first language often find it difficult to participate actively in class discussion.

Extract 2: isiXhosa definitions

In the following extract, students were asked to discuss their definitions in isiXhosa. As may be observed from turn 1 below, the PI requested students to discuss the concepts in isiXhosa, which is their strong language.

- 1 **PI:** Maybe we can look now at ..., basically we have a basic understanding in English. What I want us to do now is to discuss it in isiXhosa, what is it, how can you define it in your language?
- 2 **S:** He can start now.
- 3 **S:** Ndithe mna sisixhobo esidingekayo, esidingwayo ukuqhala ishishini, ingayimali okanye isixhobo esidingekayo ukuqhala ishishini ekuphuhlisweni izinto ezithengiswayo. Ndithe **icapital** lifakwa ngumini shishini okanye ngumntu okanye **yibank** ebolekisa ngemali. Apho ndifocuse khona kukuba **icapital** iyadingeka ukuqhala ishishini, amashishini **it's either siyaproducer** okanye **siprovider iservice, so icapital** siyayidinga. Awunohala ishishini kanti awunayo **neCapital and** akho nomntu onokuboleka yona. <I said it is a tool that is required, which is needed to start a business, it could be money or a tool that is required to start a business to develop things that are being sold. I said capital is given by the owner of business or a person or the bank that loans money. Where my focus is, is that capital is required to start a business, businesses, it is either we produce or we provide services, so capital is necessary. You cannot start a business without having capital and not even having someone to lend you money>
- 4 **S:** **Okay can I come in?**
- 5 **PI:** Yes.
- 6 **S:** Ewe unyanisile **icapital** uyayineeda xa uqhala ishishini, but **icapital** ayidingeki xa uqhala ishishini qha, **iproducton** iyaqhala noba ayikho **icapital**. **Obviously** xa iqhala uyayineeda **but** naxa iqhubekeka ikhula uyayidinga. <Yes you are correct, you need capital when you start a business, but capital is not only required when you start a business, production starts even if there is no capital. Obviously when you start you need it, but as the business progresses to grow, you need it>
- 7 **PI:** **So it is not that you need capital when you need to start a business, but when it carries on you still need it for factors of production.**
- 8 **S:** Ndiyayiqhonda. <I understand it>
- 9 **T:** Someone had a good definition I think in isiXhosa, I am not sure who it is but I can check the writing.

- 10 **S:** Ndithe mna ezi zizinto ezifunekayo, **ikampani** ukuze ikwazi ukuphuhlisa ezozinto ezozithengisa okanye. Ingaba lutyalo mali kwishishini okanye imishini. <I said they are things that are necessary and things that one uses in order to produce other things that can be sold in a business or it could be an investment in a business or machines>
- 11 **PI:** **You can comment on every definition.** Uthi Zizinto. <You say they are things>
- 12 **T:** Ewe zizinto, ekuqhibeleni ezizinto zingaba lutyalo mali. <Yes, they are things, at the end these things can be in the form of investment>
- 13 **PI:** **If i say imali (money) would that be a problem?**
- 14 **S:** **ICapital** ayifunekanga ibe yimali qha. < Capital does not have to be only money>
- 15 **S:** Akunyanzelekanga ibe yimali qha. <It is not compulsory to be only money>
- 16 **T:** **But he did give an example, it could be imali okanye imachini.** <it could be money or a machine>

The above examples clearly show that although students were asked to give and discuss their definitions in isiXhosa, they opted to use translanguaging. It was not the objective of the study to assess the use of translanguaging, and students were not explicitly asked to translanguage. The goal was to assess how students use isiXhosa as a complement to English. Although students were not aware of translanguaging, it was evident that they have been exposed to translanguaging pedagogical practices even though they do not know these as such. The discussion of the concept ‘capital’ was very engaging and lively as students drew on their linguistic resources from English and isiXhosa varieties and even went beyond them (cf. Wei 2011: 1223), rather than being restricted to the use of English. In this way, the potential for students’ learning was maximized. A further advantage of translanguaging observed in this study was that it promoted *linguaging* which, according to Wei (2011: 1223), is “the process of using language to gain knowledge, to make sense, to articulate one’s thought and to communicate about using language”. The definitions provided by students in isiXhosa demonstrated their deeper understanding of the concept under discussion.

For translanguaging to be transformative in pedagogy, students need to open translanguaging spaces for themselves, and continue to use the spaces when discussing other concepts. The students concerned did this here. The PI and the tutor took the role of facilitators as the students claimed agency in their learning.

From the example above, different translanguaging strategies may be observed. Students used high linguistic creativity and criticality. Creese and Blackledge (2015) regarded these concepts to be central to translanguaging in education. Creativity may be defined as “the ability to choose between obeying and breaking the rules and norms of behaviour, including the use of language” (Creese and Blackledge 2015: 28), and criticality may be defined as “the ability to use available evidence to inform considered views of cultural, social, political and linguistic phenomena, to question and problematize received wisdom and to express views adequately through reasoned responses to situations” (García and Wei 2014: 28). The linguistic adaptations of English terms into isiXhosa such as **iCapital** (capital), **yibank** (bank), **ndifocuse** (me focus), **siyaproducer** (we produce), **siprovider iservice** (we provide a service) and **neCapital** (and capital) show a high degree of linguistic creativity. Some of this linguistic creativity violates the existing grammar rule of isiXhosa standard language.

Extract 3: Students’ creativity in giving translation equivalents

- 1 **PI:** **If we were to use one word,** usebenzise igama elilodwa **what would you use?** <If we were to use one word, using one single word, what would you use>?

- 2 **S:** Zizixhobo. <They are tools>
- 3 **S:** **But** kunzima usebenzisa **one word because** ungathi le**bag** zizixhobo, **but** awukwazi ukuzisebenzisa ekwenzeni imali ekunikeni igama **eliyione**. <But it is difficult to use one word because you can say this bag is a tool, but you are not able to use it to make money, to give it one word>
- 4 **PI:** Ewe **but** uzothini wena? <Yes but what would you say>?
- 5 **S:** Zininzi <They are many/various>
- 6 **S:** **We need one word.**
- 7 **PI:** Uzothi yintoni **icapital**? <What would you say Capital is>?
- 8 **S:** Mali yenzala. <Interest money>
- 9 **S:** Hayibo. <Oh no!>
- 10 **T:** **I think** izinto **accommodates that** kukho izinto ezininzi, **but if it is** isixhobo, **you are limiting it to one thing because** imali ayikwazi ukuba isixhobo. <I think to say things is accommodative since there are various things, but if it is a tool, you are limiting it to one thing because money cannot be a tool>
- 11 **PI:** **What do you mean when you say**, izixhobo? <What do you mean when you say, tools>?
- 12 **S:** Izixhobo **is like weapon**. <Tools are like weapon>
- 13 **S:** Yah nam ndicinga lonto, **it is a weapon**. <Yes, I also think like that, it is a weapon>
- 14 **PI:** Something like a tool?
- 15 **S:** Yah **something like that**. <Yes, something-like that>
- 16 **PI:** Okay, **so it's like a means, so it can't be a tool, but think about it, hey**.
- 17 **S:** **I think that I take** isixhobo **as** into eyi-**asset anything that is an asset** <I think that I take the word isixhobo as something like and asset, anything that is an asset>
- 18 **S:** Yitool. <It is a tool>
- 19 **S:** Yah. <Yes>
- 20 **PI:** **It is a tool that you can use to start a business or something like that, so what is a problem with that?**
- 21 **S:** **They do not fully agree with** isixhobo, **you can't just say** isixhobo. <They do not fully agree with the word a tool; you cannot just say a tool>
- 22 **S:** **Does it include money?**
- 23 **T:** **That is the thing.**
- 24 **S:** **It does not include money.**
- 25 **PI:** **Is money not a tool?**
- 26 **S:** **Yes it can be a tool in another definition.**
- 27 **T:** **Metaphorically, it can be.**
- 28 **S:** **But we can't just say capital is** isixhobo, **we can't**. <But we cannot just say capital is a tool, we cannot>
- 29 **PI:** **We can't, what would the word be?**
- 30 **S:** **Izixhobo zokuphuhlisa ishishini**. <Tools that develop a business>

In this example, students were asked to give translation equivalents of the term 'capital' and its definition in isiXhosa. Translation is very useful to assess students' understanding as it compels them to focus on the meaning rather than the form. It is interesting to note students' critical engagement with the concept and the use of translanguaging to develop a deeper understanding of the term. It is this understanding that helped them to translate the term into their language. After a long discussion, students finally came up with the term 'Izixhobo zokuphuhlisa ishishini' (tools or resources to develop a business) as a translation equivalent of the term 'capital'.

Interestingly enough, this translation equivalent was different to the one in the online glossary, namely 'inkunzi' (bull), which was provided by professional translators. Students rejected this translation equivalent as it was based on a rural isiXhosa variety and did not adequately capture the meaning of the term in economics. What is important here is not just the translation equivalent, but the languaging process that led to the deeper understanding of the term. Using translanguaging, students demonstrated high levels of creativity and criticality.

The tutorials discussed above clearly show that students draw on their full linguistic repertoires to make meaning in their learning (cf. Paxton 2009). Neither the so-called home language/mother tongue nor English only is conducive to effective learning and teaching in multilingual classroom/tutorials as both are based on a monoglossic ideology in relation to language use in education.

While the use of the home language or the mother tongue as the medium of instruction is recommended by some scholars, Canagarajah (2006: 598) criticizes such monolingual approaches for ignoring the reality of multilingualism demanded by globalization. As this approach to language segregates the target students who are speakers of these languages, it runs the risk of creating what Canagarajah refers to as 'vernacular speech ghettos'.

The use of translanguaging further promotes the development of academic competences such as agency, voice, criticality and creativity (García 2009; Creese and Blackledge 2011; García and Wei 2014).

Lastly, translanguaging allows the simultaneous use of both indigenous African languages and their academic varieties and English. It is not a question of either/or, as both are possible. It is this actual use of African languages which promotes their intellectualization and the development of their academic registers.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the notion of the multilingual university from a superdiversity perspective. The dynamic bi-/multilingual education model based on linguistic repertoires and translanguaging has been proposed for the conception and development of the multilingual university. It has been argued that a truly multilingual university needs to take linguistic repertoires rather than 'language' as the starting point. The adoption of the linguistic repertoires approach has serious implications for institutional language policies and language practices. It has been shown in this chapter that translanguaging pedagogy offers a better alternative for building a truly multilingual university in institutional language policies and language practices. In respect to policy, top-down language policies are important in so far as they open ideological and implementation spaces for translanguaging pedagogy. Whereas the approach adopted for language policy process in South African universities has been mainly top-down, there is now a growing consensus among language planning scholars that the language policy process for building the multilingual university needs to begin by tracing micro-interaction in spaces of learning, both formal and informal.

Further reading

Blackledge, A. and Creese, A. (2010) *Multilingualism: A Critical Perspective*. New York: Continuum.

A groundbreaking study of multilingualism in education and language practices of multilingual young people and their teaching experiences in complementary schools in four cities in England, UK.)

Canagarajah, S. (2013) *Translingual practice. Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*. London: Routledge.

This book argues for a shift from a monolingual to a translingual orientation to language and communication. It provides invaluable insights on the translingual practices of multilingual speakers.

García, O. and Li Wei (2014) *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

A very informative book for understanding theoretical and practical aspects of translanguaging pedagogy.

Hibbert, L. and van der Walt, C. (2014) *Multilingual Universities in South Africa. Reflecting Society in Higher Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

The book provides a collection of case studies of multilingual teaching and learning strategies in South African higher education institutions.

Van der Walt, C. (2013) *Multilingual Higher Education: Beyond English Medium Orientations*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

The book discusses the complexity of learning and teaching in higher education in multilingual and provides theoretical and practical strategies that may be adopted to support multilingual students.

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