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Translanguaging and Academic Writing

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Translanguaging & Academic Writing

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University of Florida
Beijing Normal University
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What is “Translanguaging”?

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- Language used as a verb-- an action: doing, being, thinking, exploring, etc.

- **Trans**languaging: moving back and forth in languaging

Translanguaging Theory

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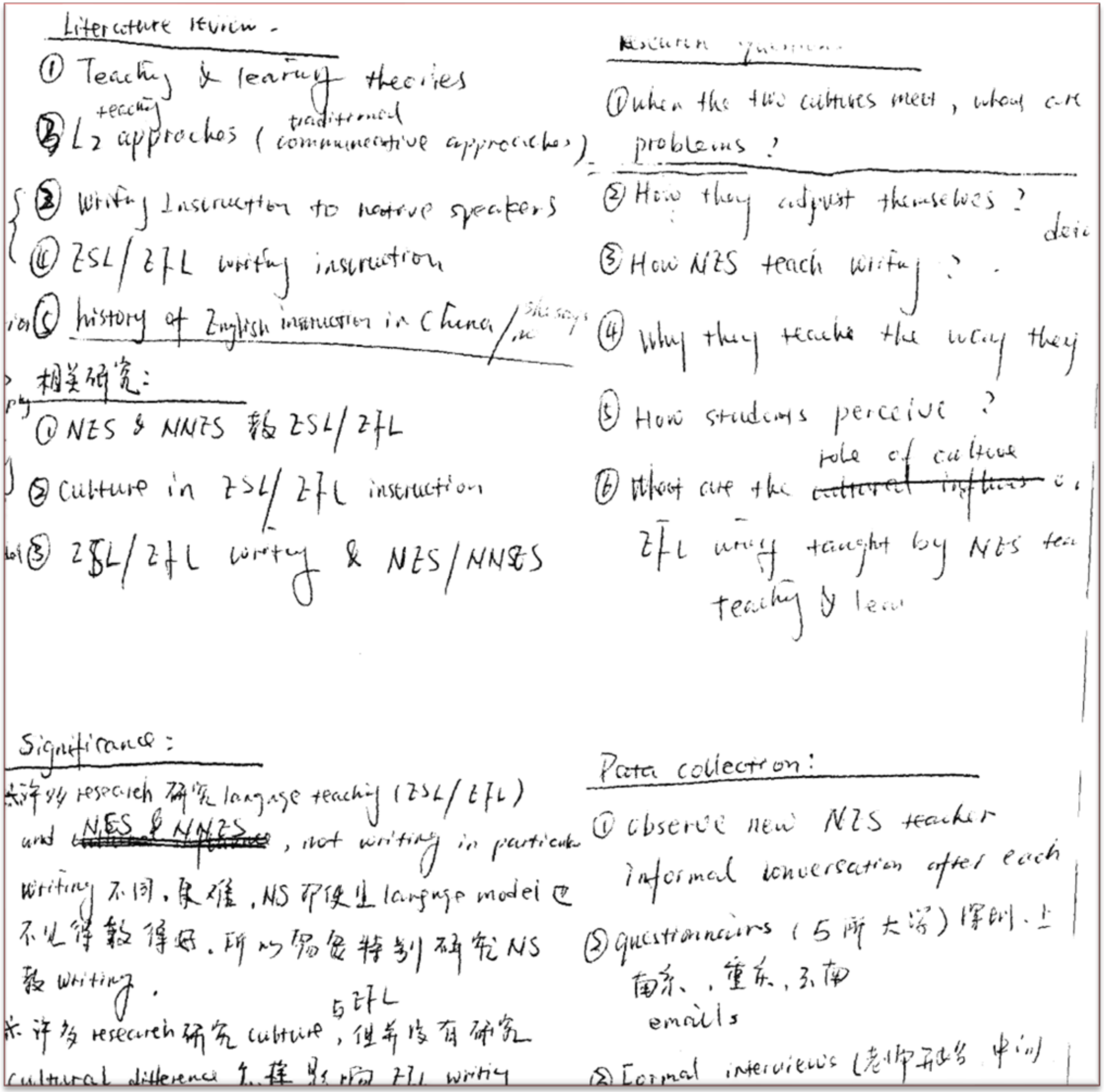
- It doesn't see languages as **separate** systems in a bilingual person
- It posits that bilinguals have **one linguistic repertoire** from which they select features strategically to communicate effectively;
- It highlights the language practices of bilingual people **as the norm** and places the speakers at the heart of the interaction.
- Translanguaging **theorizes and names** the natural communicative practice of bi/multilinguals
- It focuses on the **language practice** of bilinguals rather than the **linguistic system or codes** within bilinguals.



Literature review.

① Teaching & learning theories

② L2 teaching approches (traditional communicative approaches)

③ Writing Instruction to native speakers

④ ESL/EFL writing instruction

⑤ history of English instruction in China / she says

相关研究：

① NES & NNES 教 ESL/EFL

② Culture in ESL/EFL instruction

③ ESL/EFL writing & NES/NNES

Research questions

① When the two cultures meet, what are problems?

② How they adjust themselves?

③ How NES teach writing?

④ Why they teach the way they

⑤ How students perceive?

⑥ What are the ~~cultural influences~~ role of culture ...
EFL writing taught by NES tea
teaching & lea

Significance:

很多 research 研究 language teaching (ESL/EFL) and ~~NES & NNES~~, not writing in particular. writing 不同，很难，NS 可使生 language model 也不见得教得好。所以需要特别研究 NS 教 writing.

许多 research 研究 culture 与 EFL，但并没有研究 cultural difference 怎样影响 EFL writing

Data collection:

① observe new NES teacher
informal conversation after each

② questionnaires (5所大学) 深圳、上
南京、，重庆，云南
emails

③ Formal interviews (老师开始 中间

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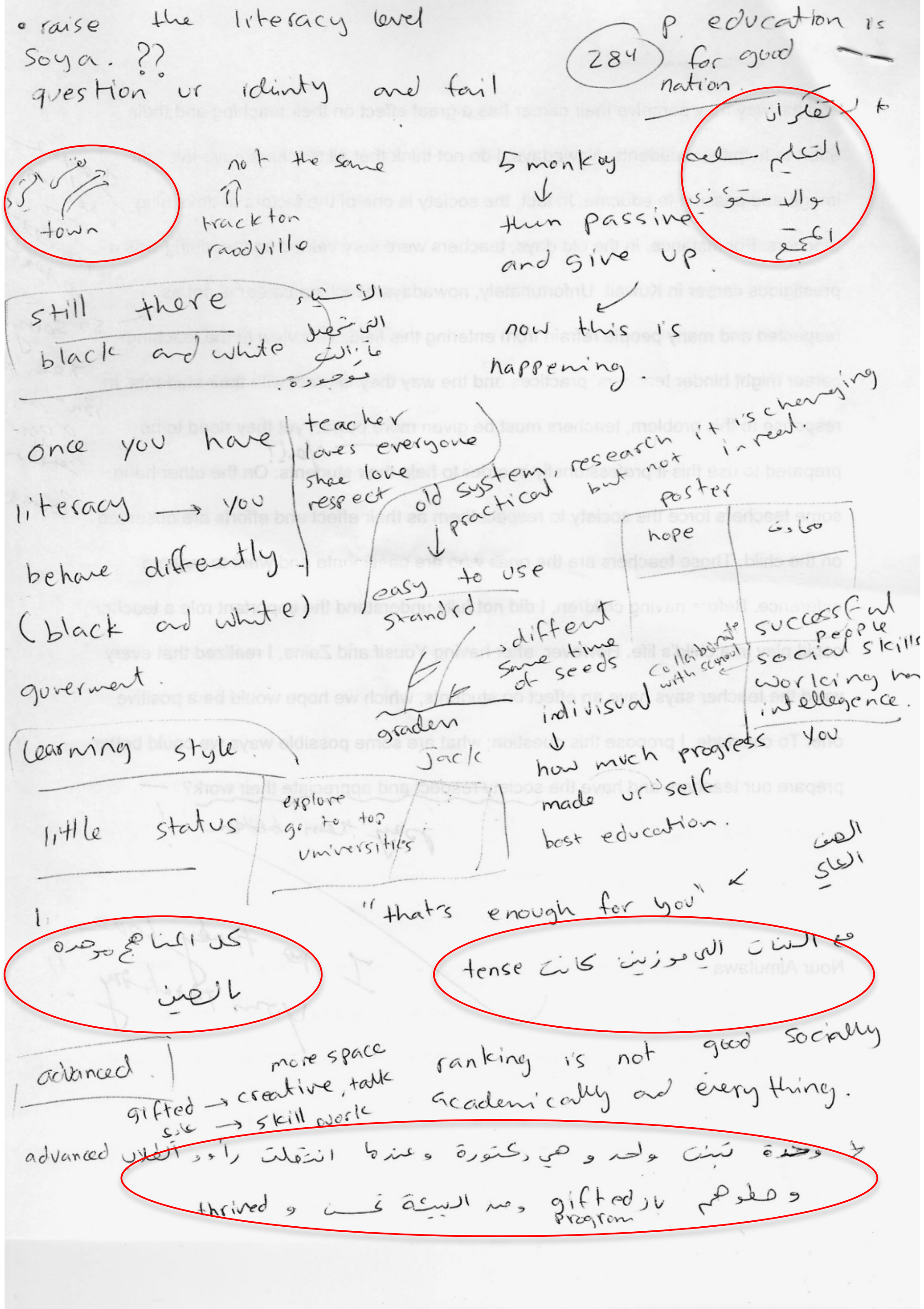
A Chinese doctoral student's outline for her dissertation



- raise the literacy level

Soya. ??

question ur idinty and fail

284 p. education is for good nation

تفكر ان التعليم والمتوازن أفضل

نفس

town

not the same ⇈ trackton roadville

5 monkey ↓ then passive and give up

now this's happening

still there الآن، التي تحمل

black and white بالأبيض [illegible]

once you have teacher loves everyone shae love respect

literacy → you

behave diffeently

(black and white)

old system, research but not practical it's chenging in reel

↓ easy to use standard

poster

hope هدف

successful people social skills working hard intelligence.

same time of seeds diffent

collaborate with school

garden Jack

indivisual ↓ how much progress you made ur self

gouverment.

learning style

little status

explore go to top universities

best education.

الصف العالي

"that's enough for you"

1.

كل المناهج موحده بالصين

مع البنات اللي موزين كانت tense

advanced.

more space

gifted → creative, talk

عادي → skill work

ranking is not good socially academically and every thing.

advanced الأطفال

وحدة تبنت واحد و هي دكتورة و عندما انتقلت رأو

و حطوهم بالـ gifted program و مع البيئة نفسـ و thrived

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An Arab doctoal student's classnotes

Abby Figueroa, a Spanish-English bilingual author, wrote (2004)

I swerve between two languages. I sometimes skirt the edges of proper grammar and social acceptance, and often crash into a linguistic wall. What is that word? Como se dice? And then I remember que lo que you queria decir es muy simplemente expresado en espanol, or may be in English, or may necesito combiner palabras y frases from both languages to get right to the heart, el Corazon de lo que deseo explicar. There' s something exhilarating about being able to race through una conversacion sin frenando cuando me encuentro trabada and I have the thoughts, the poem, the word at the tip of my tongue just itching to get out but I scramble por recordarme por la parabra exacta but then I just switch and boom I finished what I had to say and it quite incredibly makes perfect sense (286).

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I don’t seem to feel that there is a space between the two languages in me that keeps them apart. On the contrary, for me French and English always seem to overlap, to want to merge, to want to come together, to want to embrace one another, to mesh one into the other. Or if you prefer, they want to spoil and corrupt one another.

I think that two languages in me love each other, and I have, on occasion, caught them having wild intercourse behind my back (p.237)

“A voice within a voice” by Raymond Federman, a French and English novelist, in *The Multilingual Mind (2003),* by Tracet Tokuhama - Espinosa

Translanguaging, an emerging concept

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Translanguaging, an emerging concept, is rapidly gaining significant traction in language acquisition, literacy, and TESOL circles. Notably, out of the 1,454 library search results for “translanguaging,” 1,201 of the texts were published over the last five years. Equally noteworthy is the fact that beginning in 2013, translanguaging has seen an ever-increasing presence in practitioner-oriented publications and newsletters from TESOL and the National Council of Teachers of English.

Translanguaging concepts emerging among scholars across the world in the past five decades

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Early in the study of bilingualism, Cummins (1979), from Canada, posited that the proficiency of bilinguals in **two languages was not stored separately in the brain, and that each proficiency did not behave independently of the other.**

Grosjean (1982), from Switzerland, argued that **bilinguals are not two monolingual in one person.**

Suzanne Romaine (1995), Meton Professor of English language, Oxford University, UK, posits that

In situations of intense language contact it is possible for a third system to merge which shows no properties found in either of the input languages. Thus through this merger and convergence of two systems, a new one can be created (4).

Elizabeth B. Bernhardt (2000), from Stanford University, USA

In the notoriously monolingual Anglophone world, *language*, is frequently synonymous with *English* and, therefore, *second language* refers to all languages other than English. This monolingualism, that is English-language monolingualism, is such a dominant dimension in the Anglophone world that it is often difficult to get even the most astute scholar to think about the worlds in ways other than with an Anglophone view (791).

James Alastis (2005), a well-known linguist from Georgetown University, USA, proposed that

The objective of English teaching should be to enable students ***"to switch codes instinctively and to communicate in the most appropriate language or dialect, in a manner most conductive to producing the greatest amount of cooperation and the least amount of resistance"*** (32).

Harklau & Pinnow(2009), researchers on second language writing, from University of Georgia, USA

Our dependence on monolingual models of teaching and learning literacy leads us to define L2 writing merely as a problem or L2 deficit, rather than ***considering writers' entire linguistic repertoires and resources*** *(135)*

Canagarajah (2011), researcher in Composition and Rhetoric, Penn State University, USA, states

The ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system (401).

He argues that this translanguaging ability is part of multicompetence of bilingual speakers whose lives, minds and actions are necessarily different from monolingual speakers because two language co-exist in their minds, and their complex interactions are always in the foreground.

Multicompetence regards the language of a multilingual individual as an inter-connected whole—an eco-system of mutual interdependence.

Garcia and Wei (2014), from New York and London

Based on other scholars with multilingual perspectives, Garcia and Wei claims that their concept of

Translanguaging differs from the notion of code-switching in that it refers not simply to a shift or a shuttle between two languages, but to the speakers' construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannon be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of a language, but that make up the speakers' complete language repertoire (22).

They stress that:

- **Bilinguals have one linguistic repertoire from which they select features strategically to communicate effectively;**
- **And see the language practices of bilingual people as the norm and place the speakers at the heart of the interaction.**

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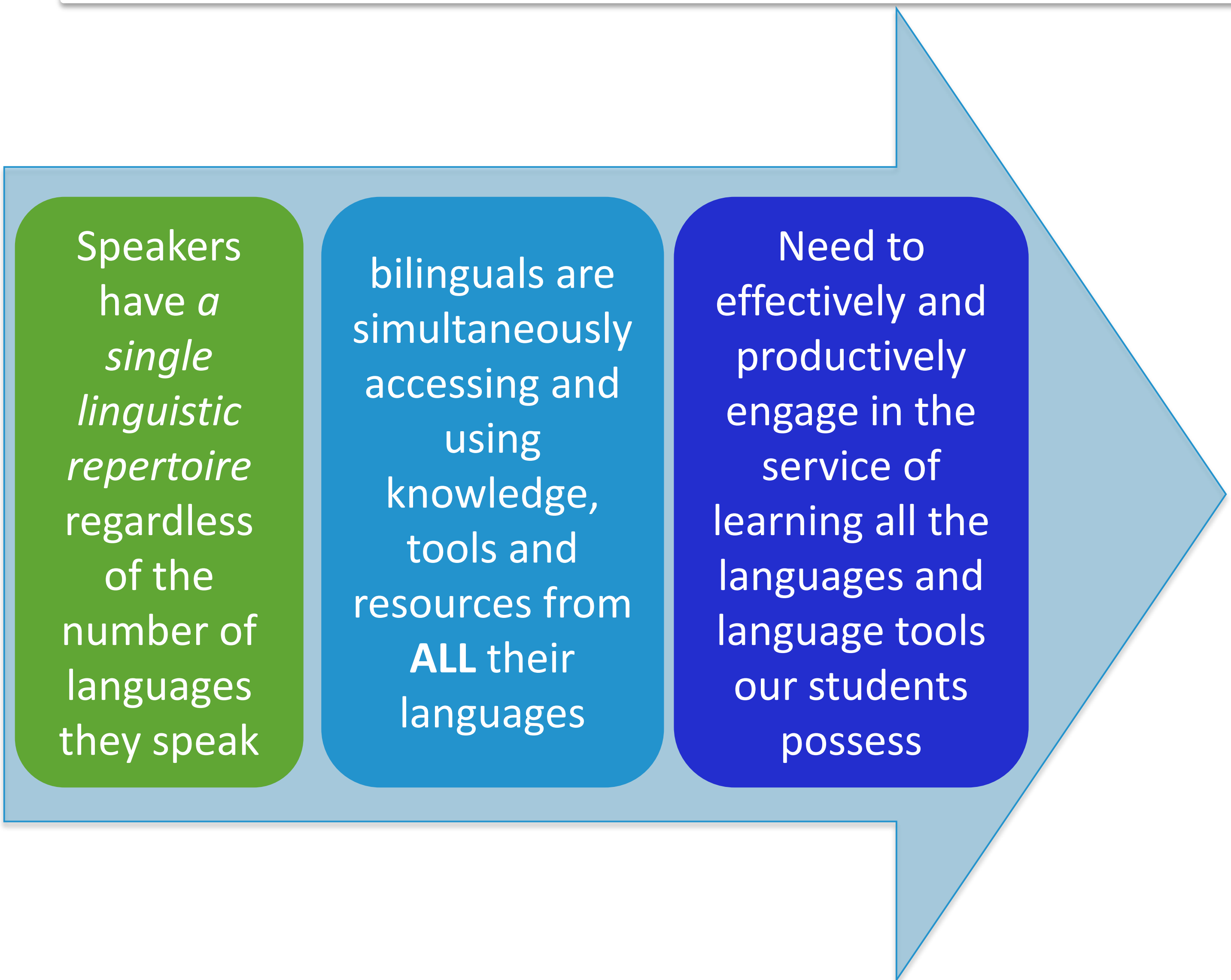

Speakers have *a single linguistic repertoire* regardless of the number of languages they speak

bilinguals are simultaneously accessing and using knowledge, tools and resources from **ALL** their languages

Need to effectively and productively engage in the service of learning all the languages and language tools our students possess

Translanguaging pedagogy

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Translanguaging Pedagogy

It sees values in all languages students possess as resources in their learning;

It requires teachers to systematically provide space and opportunity in their instruction for students to maximize their learning potentials, which includes giving students choice in language usage to engage in learning.

Academic Writing

- It is very different from conversational language, with different discourse, language structure, writing format (or genre), and special terminology. It is like a foreign language that people don’t encounter this kind of language or text in their everyday conversation or out of academic contexts.

- For emergent bilinguals (students who are learning a new language), to write an academic paper in a developing language presents a high cognitive demand: to present their understanding of a new content knowledge in a limited language proficiency and very distanced writing style.

Translanguaging and Academic Writing for Emergent Bilinguals

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Challenges in Academic writing

Translanguaging Pedagogy to address challenges

- Don’t have enough background knowledge to understand academic writing
- Don’t have the language proficiency to produce academic writing
- Unfamiliar with academic writing style

Don’t have the background knowledge to understand academic writing

Let EBs read (watch or listen to) the materials about the new content knowledge in their first language (L1)

This is to let students develop their content knowledge or background knowledge in their academic learning such as science. This lays the foundation to learn a new content knowledge in a new language.

Without solid comprehension of new content knowledge, it is hard to write about it.

Don’t have the language proficiency to produce academic contents

Let EBs draft their academic writing in their L1

This is to enable students to think deeply and write down their thoughts as much as they can, as they don’t have to worry about words they don’t know or about the spelling, the grammar and even the organization.

Once they have something sufficient enough on paper, they can translate and revise.

Unfamiliar with academic writing style

Students first of all have to become familiar with academic writing styles in their first language: read and write enough to develop their academic writing ability, or it doubles cognitive demands when they have to learn to write in an unfamiliar writing styles in a newly developing language.

- Become familiar with academic writing styles in their first language through reading and writing academic work in L1.

Challenges in translation issues

True, translation never can be accurate enough, especially using translation software to do the work.

However, studies in L2 writing process (…) show that most of L2 writers do mental translation when they write in a new language: think in L1 and translate their thoughts into L2.

It is easier to work on translation errors or revise a content-rich paper than helping someone to think.

Teachers in translanguaging classrooms

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- They don’t need to know all the students’ language, but need to provide space and resources, and help students learn and work with each other. Teachers are co-learners rather than sole knowledge givers or language teachers in this community.

- They need to engage students by creating a multilingual learning environment to maximize all students’ learning potentials and engage all students actively participating in reading, speaking and writing activities (being translators and interpreters).

- They need to highlight students’ expertise and background knowledge, and let them play an important role in leading us to know about their cultures and their languages, and to help them initiate into new knowledge, new language and new world.

Translanguaging and Writing Instruction for Emergent bilinguals

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- Writing in their first language and drawing allows students who never wrote joined the writing community in class
- Allowing them to write in any languages enhances their development as writers.
- Allowing them to write in any languages enables them to read and write (draw) their reading responses.
- Allowing them to choose any languages to write enables them to express themselves fully and effectively.
- Allowing them to use any languages to present their learning deepens their content knowledge learning and expressions.

Creating translanguaging classrooms

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- Conceptual shift: see bilingual/multilingual as one linguistic repertoire, which cannot be forcefully separated in thinking, communicating and learning, and include all languages of the students in the learning community;

- Not only allow students to use their home language in classrooms, but also systematically design lessons to create space for translanguaging: students can choose to read, respond, discuss in small groups, draft in any languages, while the teacher reads, responds, recasts, explains, translates, and writes in English or the target language;

- Students have access to bilingual/multilingual books, reading materials, word walls, dictionaries, and Google translation programs in classrooms.

Creating translanguaging classrooms

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- Lesson objectives, key vocabulary/phrases, essential questions, study guide, and group discussion questions should be in bilingual/multilingual languages (using Google translation program or student translators)
- Group students according to their language needs: home language groups, or with translation helpers, or with English editors;
- Invite non-English speakers to speak to the class, and have your students as the translators/interpreters;
- Publish not just English work/projects, but bilingual/multilingual work.

My Scholarship Engagement in the US and Beyond

- My work in schools densely populated with new immigrant students in the past three decades

- My recent work, to lead a team to implement translanguaging and writing process theory in working on English writing textbooks for 3-12 grade students in China commissioned with Shanghai Education Press

My Research Collaboration in China

- A comparative study of reading and writing instruction between the US and China
  - 20 articles published (2012-2016)
  - Two books (2012, 2018)
  - at the planning stage of establishing an institute of Comparative Study on Reading and Writing Instruction between China and US in Nanjing

- A doctoral student of mine has just completed a study of an exemplary high-school CLA teacher in Nanjing: how he manages to engage his students in authentic reading/writing under the heavy testing pressure in China (2018)

- To launch a new study: Dewey theory and practice in China, 2-3 years longitudinal study (2019--)

Partnership between COE-UFL and China

- 4+1 program from 2015-present
- Visiting scholars program from 2012-present
- Exchange program of high-school students from 2012-present
- A the planning stage of doctoral program and distance learning

Thank you!

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Questions and Discussion

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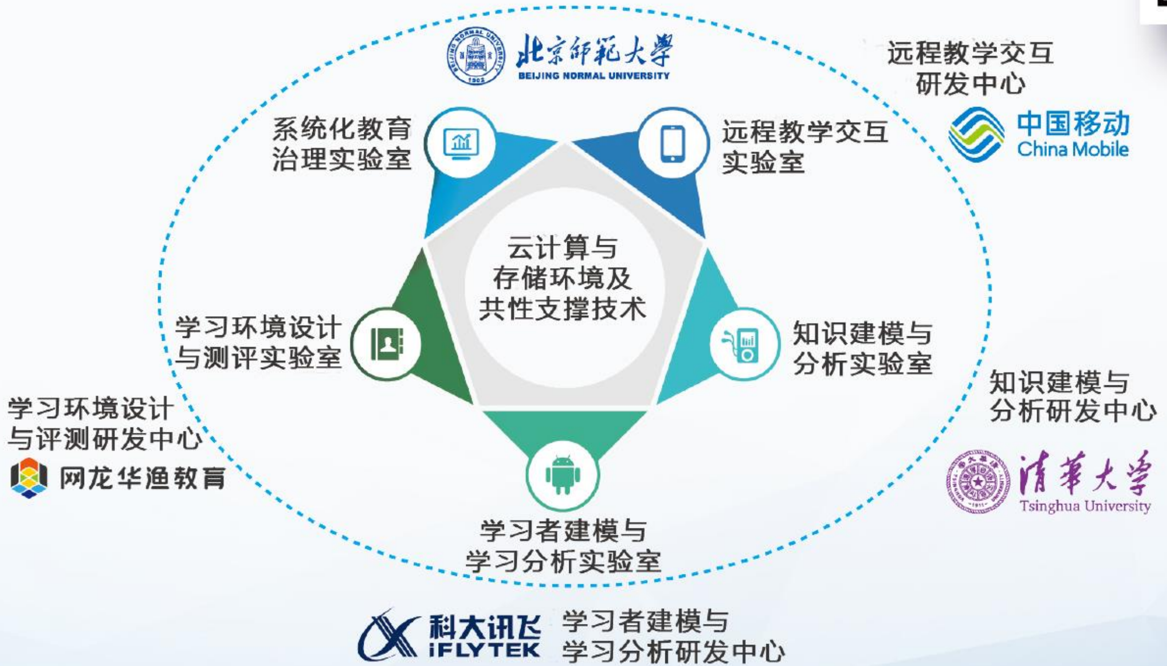

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THANKS