Part I
Language and Translanguaging

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Language, Languaging and Bilingualism

Abstract: *This first chapter explores the shifts that have recently taken place as traditional understandings of language and bilingualism are transformed. After reflecting on views of language, the chapter introduces the concept of languaging, and follows its emergence among scholars and as it has developed in the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic literature. The chapter then reviews traditional concepts of bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism as they have been studied from monolingual perspectives that view them only as double- or many-monolingualisms. It then reviews more dynamic views of these phenomena, arguing that to capture this complexity more is needed than the term languaging. It proposes translanguaging as a way to capture the fluid language practices of bilinguals without giving up the social construction of language and bilingualism under which speakers operate.*

Keywords: bilingualism; languaging; multilingualism; plurilingualism; psycholinguistics; sociolinguistics; translanguaging

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Reflecting on language

To most people, language is what we speak, hear, read or write in everyday life. And we speak, hear, read and write in what are considered different languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Spanish and Urdu. In the theoretical discipline of Linguistics, however, tensions and controversies abound as to how language is conceptualized. One of the founding fathers of modern linguistics, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, famously described language as a system of signs. Moreover, linguistic signs are arbitrary, that is, a linguistic sign is an association between a sound image and a concept, and the sound-meaning association is established by arbitrary convention for each language. This conventionality accounts for the diversity of languages. Following this line of argument, for example, early 20th-century structural linguists demonstrated how, historically, cultural assumptions informed the development of such structures as word orders, gender morphologies and event reporting in different languages.

Saussure's ideas of signs and the relationship between the signifier and the signified gave rise to the field of *semiotics*, the study of signs and sign processes, and the acknowledgment of the social dimensions of language. But within Linguistics, his insistence that language could be analyzed as a formal system of differential elements, apart from the messy dialectics of real-time production and comprehension, and in particular, his distinction between *langue*, the abstract rules and conventions of a signifying system independent of individual users on the one hand, and *parole*, the concrete instances of the use of *langue* by individuals in a series of speech acts on the other, led to the divergence of interests in two very different directions. One trend pursued universal structures across human languages; the other followed how human beings put to use their linguistic knowledge in real-life contexts.

Noam Chomsky refashioned the *langue* versus *parole* distinction in terms of *competence* versus *performance*, the former referring to the tacit knowledge of the language system and the latter, the use of language in concrete situations. For Chomsky, Linguistics should be concerned with what all languages have in common, what he called Universal Grammar (UG). Yet, the goal of the UG enterprise is to abstract away from the diversity, the details and the plurality of human languages. In fact, Chomsky (1995: 54) suggests that the main task of linguistic theory 'is to show that the... diversity of linguistic phenomena is illusory'. There is an inherent problem with

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Chomsky's logic, as Burton-Roberts (2004) points out. That is, if UG is supposed to be about all languages as Chomsky seems to want it to be, then it cannot be conceptualized as a natural, biological, genetic endowment, as particular languages, as we know them (e.g. Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish), are historically evolved social conventions; and if UG is about something entirely natural, biological or genetic, then it cannot be a theory of actual languages that human beings use in society. But the main issue we have with Chomsky's line of inquiry is that he sets the discipline of Linguistics against the reality of linguistic diversity, a historical fact that has been further enhanced by the globalization of contemporary society.

Mikhail Bakhtin's formulation of *heteroglossia* in the early 20th century challenged the structuralist conception of language by Saussure and the strictly mentalist conception of Chomsky, both of whom removed language from context of use. Bakhtin posited that language is inextricably bound to the context in which it exists and is incapable of neutrality because it emerges from the actions of speakers with certain perspective and ideological positioning. To make an utterance, says Bakhtin, means to take language over, 'shot through with intentions and accents' (as cited in Morris, 1994: 293). Another close associate of Bakhtin after the Russian revolution was Valentin Nikolaevic Vološinov, a Marxist philosopher of language, who strongly supported Bakhtin's dialogic position on language. Language, Vološinov says, acquires life 'in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms, nor in the individual psyche of speakers' (1929/1973: 95). A shift was occurring that led to the coining of the term 'languaging'.

The emergence of languaging

Perhaps the first scholars to talk about 'languaging' were not linguists but the Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela who in 1973 posited their theory of *autopoeisis*. Autopoeisis argues that we cannot separate our biological and social history of actions from the ways in which we perceive the world. Our experience, Maturana and Varela say, is moored to our structure in a binding way, and the processes involved in our makeup, in our actions as human beings, constitute our knowledge. What is known is brought forth through action and practice, and is not simply based on acquiring the relevant features of a pre-given world that can be decomposed into significant fragments. As Maturana and

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Varela (1998: 26) say: 'All doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing'. Their autopoeisis view of biological life leads to their observations about language:

> It is by *languaging* that the act of knowing, in the behavioral coordination which is language, brings forth a world. We work out our lives in a *mutual linguistic coupling,* not because language permits us to reveal ourselves but because we are constituted in language in a *continuous becoming that we bring forth with others.* (1998: 234–235, italics added)

Language is not a simple system of structures that is independent of human actions with others, of our being with others. The term *languaging* is needed to refer to the simultaneous process of continuous becoming of ourselves and of our language practices, as we interact and make meaning in the world.

Another scholar who early on used the term 'languaging' was A. L. Becker. Writing about translation, Becker (1988) further posited that language is not simply a code or a system of rules or structures; rather what he calls *languaging* shapes our experiences, stores them, retrieves them and communicates them in an open-ended process. Languaging both shapes and is shaped by context. Becker (1995) explains: 'All languaging is what in Java is called *jarwa dhosok*, taking old language (*jarwa*) and pushing (*dhosok*) it into new contexts' (185). For Becker, language can never be accomplished; and thus *languaging* is a better term to capture an ongoing process that is always being created as we interact with the world lingually. To learn a new way of languaging is not just to learn a new code, Becker says, it is to enter another history of interactions and cultural practices and to learn 'a new way of being in the world' (1995: 227). In appealing to the concept of languaging, Becker is shaping what he calls 'a linguistics of particularity' (1988: 21) within the Humanities.

Using Becker's definition of languaging, the Argentinean semiotician Walter Mignolo (2000) reminds us that language is not a fact, a system of syntactic, semantic and phonetic rules. Rather, Mignolo says, *languaging* is 'thinking and writing between languages' and 'speech and writing are strategies for orienting and manipulating social domains of interaction' (226). Mignolo's reference to 'manipulation' reminds us that all languaging is enmeshed in systems of power, and thus, can be oppressive or liberating, depending on the positioning of speakers and their agency.

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Languaging, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics

New patterns of global activity characterized by intensive flows of people, capital goods and discourses have been experienced since the late 20th century. These have been driven by new technologies, as well as by a neoliberal economy that with its emphasis on the marketization of life has destabilized old social and economic structures and produced new forms of global inequalities. With interactions increasingly occurring in what Mary Louise Pratt (1991) refers to as 'contact zones' (often virtual ones) between speakers of different origins, experiences and characteristics, language is less and less understood as a monolithic autonomous system made up of discrete structures (as in Saussure) or a context-free mental grammar (as in Chomsky). We have entered 'a new way of being in the world' (Becker, 1995: 227), a world with Other spaces that are neither here nor there in a *heterotopia* as Foucault (1986) has called them.

With the rise of post-structuralism in the post-modern era, language has begun to be conceptualized as a *series of social practices and actions* by speakers that are embedded in a web of social *and* cognitive relations. Furthermore, a critique of nation-state/colonial language ideologies has emerged, seeking to excavate subaltern knowledge (Canagarajah, 2005; Flores, 2012, 2013; Makoni and Makoni, 2010; Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Mignolo, 2000; Pennycook, 2010; Rosa, 2010). Post-structuralist critical language scholars treat language as contested space – as tools that are re-appropriated by actual language users. Ultimately, the goal of these critiques is to break out of static conceptions of language that keep power in the hands of the few, thus embracing the fluid nature of actual and local language practices of all speakers (Flores, 2013; Flores and García, 2013). The focus on language practices of language users has been signaled by the adoption of the term *languaging* by many sociolinguists (Canagarajah, 2007; Jørgensen and Juffermans, 2011; Juffermans, 2011; Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Møller and Jørgensen, 2009; Shohamy, 2006), emphasizing the agency of speakers in an ongoing process of interactive meaning-making.

These new ways of being in the world have produced alternative understandings of the sociolinguistics of globalization; languages are *mobile resources* or practices within social, cultural, political and historical contexts (Blommaert, 2010). Languages are seen by post-structuralist sociolinguists as 'a product of the deeply social and cultural activities in which people engage' (Pennycook, 2010: 1) with meanings created through

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ideological systems situated within historical moments (Foucault, 1972). Pennycook (2010) adds: 'To look at language as a practice is to view language as an activity rather than a structure, as something we do rather than a system we draw on, as a material part of social and cultural life rather than an abstract entity' (2). That is, language is seen neither as a system of structures nor a product located in the mind of speaker. What we have is languaging, 'a social process constantly reconstructed in sensitivity to environmental factors' (Canagarajah, 2007: 94). Shohamy (2006) uses the term 'languaging' to refer to 'language as an integral and natural component of interaction, communication and construction of meaning' (2). We are all *languagers* who use semiotic resources at our disposal in strategic ways to communicate and act in the world, but which are recognized by the bilingual speaker, as well as by others, as belonging to two sets of socially constructed 'languages'. Thus, Jørgensen and Juffermans (2011) refer to the human turn in sociolinguistics, by which the traditional Fishmanian question 'who speaks (or writes) what language (or what language variety) to whom, when and to what end' becomes '*who languages how and what is being languaged under what circumstances in a particular place and time*' (Juffermans, 2011: 165). The human turn in sociolinguistics, Juffermans argues, is 'toward language (in singular or as a verb) as a sociolinguistic system that is constructed and inhabited by people' (165).

As sociolinguists have become more interested in the cognitive side of language practices, psycholinguists are also considering the social aspects of cognitive engagement (e.g. see studies in Cook and Bassetti, 2011; Javier, 2007; Pavlenko, 2006). Thus, post-structuralist psycholinguists have also referred to languaging as 'a process of using language to gain knowledge, to make sense, to articulate one's thought and to communicate about using language' (Li Wei, 2011b: 1224). That is, the focus is on the speaker's *creative and critical use* of linguistic resources to mediate cognitively complex activities (Swain and Deters, 2007). As Swain has said, languaging 'serves as a vehicle through which thinking is articulated and transformed into an artifactual form' (Swain, 2000: 97). This is consistent with Cook's notion of *multicompetence* (Cook, 2012; Cook and Li Wei, forthcoming), which focuses on the intertwining of language and cognition: multicompetence is not confined to the language aspects of the mind but is also linked to cognitive processes and concepts. This means, on the one hand, not putting barriers between language and other cognitive systems, and on the other, denying the no-language

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position that language is simply an artifact of other cognitive processes. Extending Maturana and Varela (1973), all languaging is knowing and doing, and all knowing and doing is languaging.

One of the differences between the orientations of post-structuralist sociolinguists and psycholinguists with regards to *languaging* is that whereas sociolinguists focus on the context of use of languaging, psycholinguists look at languaging as the property of individuals, not situations; although recently Cook, for instance, has extended his notion of multicompetence to communities as well (see, e.g. Cook, 2012; also Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Regardless of the difference, the emphasis on languaging today by both sociolinguists and psycholinguists extends our traditional understandings of languages. The next section discusses bilingualism and related phenomena, while starting to ponder how languaging further impacts our understandings of bilingualism.

Bilingualism, multilingualism, plurilingualism

It was the Saussurean vision of language as a self-contained system of structures that permeated the vision of language in early studies of bilingualism. Haugen (1956) gave an early definition of the term *bilingual*: 'Bilingual is a cover term for people with a number of different language skills, having in common only that they are not monolingual.... [A] bilingual ... is one who knows two languages, but will here be used to include also the one who knows more than two, variously known as a plurilingual, a multilingual, or a polyglot' (9). Uriel Weinreich (1974) provided a similar definition: 'The practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism, and the persons involved, bilingual' (1). *Bilingual* has thus come to mean knowing and using two autonomous languages. The term *multilingual* is often used to mean knowing and using more than two languages. The Council of Europe has proposed that the term *plurilingual* be reserved for the individual's 'ability to use several languages to varying degrees and for distinct purposes' (2000: 168), whereas the term *multilingual* be used only in relationship to the many languages of societal groups and not of individuals.

Despite their different emphases, the terms bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism have one thing in common – they refer to a plurality of autonomous languages, whether two (bilingual) or many (multilingual), at the individual (bilingual/plurilingual) or societal level

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(multilingual), and do not suggest the concept of 'languaging' presented above. Traditional notions of bilingualism and multilingualism are *additive,* that is, speakers are said to 'add up' whole autonomous languages or even partial structural bits of these languages (as in the Council of Europe's concept of plurilingualism). When societies and classrooms are said to be bilingual or multilingual, what is meant is that people in these places speak more than one language. There are also more extreme positions by some theoretical linguists, who, following Chomsky, believe that a speaker has a set of mini-grammars for different lexical domains, leading to different representations in the speaker's mind. Bilingualism is then understood as the representation of these mini-grammars, hence the term Universal Bilingualism (Roeper, 1999).

Bilingualism as dual

Precisely because of the structural treatment of languages as separate codes with different structures, the literature on bilingualism points to the problems 'of keeping the two languages apart' (Haugen, 1956: 155). Weinreich (1953: 1), an early scholar of bilingualism, talks about 'linguistic interference' as 'deviations from the norm of either language that occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language'. The linguist's task is then defined as identifying all cases of interference resulting from language contact. For example, the process of code-switching, that is, what has been defined as going back and forth from one language belonging to one grammatical system to another, has received much attention in the literature on bilingualism (see, e.g. Auer, 1999; Myers-Scotton, 1993). Code-switching behavior is often stigmatized, although recent research has questioned this deficit orientation (see, among others, Auer, 2005; Zentella, 1997). In psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics, language differentiation of bilingual speakers has been made into a core research issue for laboratory investigations. Different languages are said to be represented by different neural networks in the bilingual brain, resulting in differential access in speech production (Costa and Santesteban, 2004; Fabbro, 2001; Goral, Levy, Obler and Cohen, 2006; Kim, Relkin, Lee and Hirsch, 1997). There is a preoccupation by experimental designers to focus on the ability to distinguish and separate languages as a telltale performance indicator of a bilingual's linguistic proficiency, even competence (Bosch and Sebastian-Galles, 1997; Dijkstra and Van Heuven, 2002). And a great

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deal of effort has been made in search of a biologically rooted 'language switch' in code-switching that would actually signal when a separate language comes on (Hernández, Dapretto, Mazziotta and Bookheimer, 2001; Hernández, 2009).

Early in the study of bilingualism, Cummins (1979) 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. With the concept of the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) explained through the image of the dual iceberg, Cummins proposed that although on the surface the structural elements of the two languages might look different, there is a cognitive *interdependence* that allows for transfer of linguistic practices. More recently, neurolinguistic studies of bilinguals have confirmed, and gone beyond, Cummins's hypothesis, showing that even when one language is being used, the other language remains active and can be easily accessed (Dijkstra, Van Jaarsveld and Ten Brinke, 1998; Hoshino and Thierry, 2011; Thierry et al., 2009; Wu and Thierry, 2010). Research on cognition and multilingual functioning has also supported the view that the 'languages' of bilingual speakers interact collaboratively in listening or speaking (De Groot, 2011). The view of bilingualism as simply dual is beginning to shift to a more dynamic one.

Bilingualism as dynamic

Grosjean (1982) argued that bilinguals are not two monolinguals in one person. Heller (2007) then debunked the concept of bilingualism as two autonomous languages and defined it as,

> sets of resources called into play by social actors, under social and historical conditions which both constrain and make possible the social reproduction of existing conventions and relations, as well as the production of new ones. (15)

Heller's definition pays attention to ideologies surrounding language and moves us towards *processes* surrounding our languaging.

Related to Cummins's view of linguistic interdependence, but squarely centered on more integrative sociolinguistic practices as in Heller, and not on mentalist definitions of proficiency, García (2009a) proposed that bilingualism is *dynamic*, and not just additive, as had been conceptualized by Wallace Lambert in 1974. Unlike the view of two separate systems that are added (or even interdependent), a dynamic conceptualization of bilingualism goes beyond the notion of two autonomous languages,

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of a first language (L1) and a second language (L2), and of additive or subtractive bilingualism. Instead, dynamic bilingualism suggests that the language *practices* of bilinguals are complex and interrelated; they do not emerge in a linear way or function separately since there is only one linguistic system. Dynamic bilingualism goes beyond the idea that there are two languages that are interdependent as in Cummins (1979); instead, it connotes one linguistic system that has features that are most often practiced according to societally constructed and controlled 'languages', but other times producing new practices. Figure 1.1 delineates this difference between traditional understandings of bilingualism, those of Cummins's interdependence and those of dynamic bilingualism.

In Figure 1.1, the view of traditional bilingualism is rendered by two separate rectangles that represent two languages and separate linguistic systems (an L1 and an L2) with different linguistic features (F1 and F2). The Linguistic Interdependence proposed by Cummins is depicted in Figure 1.1 by bringing closer the two linguistic systems and proposing that there is transfer between the two, stemming from a Common Underlying Proficiency (depicted by the rectangle below), but still delineating separate L1 and L2 and separate linguistic features. The Dynamic

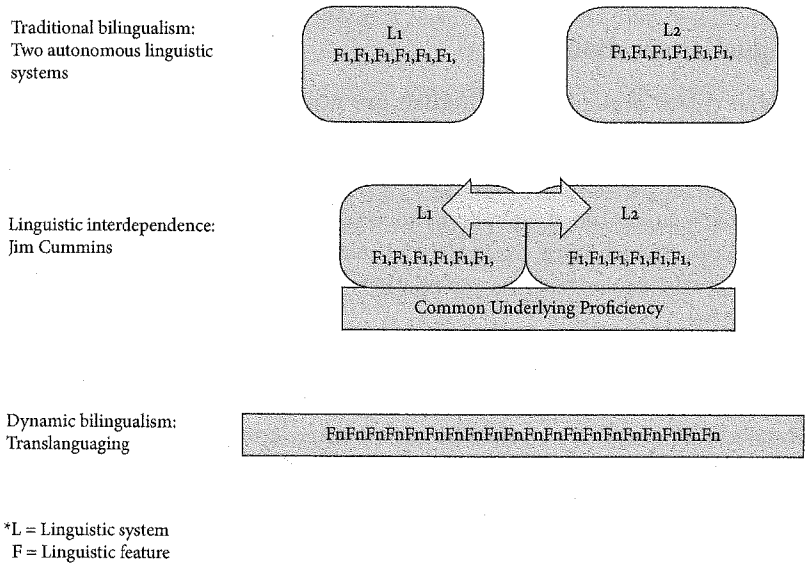

FIGURE 1.1 *Difference between views of traditional bilingualism, linguistic interdependence and dynamic bilingualism*

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Bilingual Model that is related to our theories of translanguaging (which will be the subject of the next chapter) posits that there is but one linguistic system (rendered in Figure 1.1 by one rectangle) with features that are integrated (Fn) throughout. Not depicted in the figure is the fact that these linguistic features are then, as we said before, often used in ways that conform to societal constructions of 'a language', and at other times used differently.

In general, our position is compatible with the *language-mode* perspective favored by Grosjean (2004), though it differs from it in one important respect. In their recent analysis of Hispanic bilingualism, García and Otheguy (forthcoming) explain:

> With Grosjean, we see bilinguals selecting features from their linguistic repertoire depending on contextual, topical, and interactional factors. But we do not follow Grosjean when he defines a language mode as 'a state of activation of the bilingual's languages and language-processing mechanisms' (2004: 40). In our conception, there are no two languages that are cognitively activated or deactivated as the social and contextual situation demands, but rather, as we have proposed, a single array of disaggregated features that is always activated.

The process by which bilingual speakers engage in order to select the societally appropriate features to conform to contextual, topical and interactional factors is related to Althusser's concept of *interpellation* (1972), the idea that institutions and their discourses call us, or hail us, into particular identities through the ideologies they shape. Societal forces, and in particular schools, enforce a call, an interpellation, by which bilingual speakers are often able to recognize themselves only as subjects that speak two separate languages. In so doing, bilingual speakers become complicit in their own domination as they often conform to monolingual monoglossic practices that constrain their own bilingualism to two separate autonomous languages, although at times they may resist by engaging in fluid language practices. The interpellation of bilingual subjects in societies that view languages as separate systems requires that speakers act 'monolingually' at times. But this does not mean that bilinguals possess two language systems. In effect, the research by Bialystok, Craik, Klein and Viswanathan (2004) suggests that it is the constant use of the bilinguals' brain Executive Control System in having to sort through the language features that gives bilinguals a cognitive advantage.

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As García (2009a) has said, dynamic bilingual practices do not result in either the balanced wheels of two bicycles (as in the concept of additive bilingualism) or in a unicycle (as in the concept of subtractive bilingualism). Instead dynamic bilingualism is like an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) with individuals using their entire linguistic repertoire to adapt to both the ridges and craters of communication in uneven (and unequal) interactive terrains (see García, 2009a; García and Kleifgen, 2010), and to the confines of language use as controlled by societal forces, especially in schools. García (2009a) uses the image of a banyan tree to capture the reality of dynamic bilingualism. Banyan trees start their lives when seeds germinate in the cracks and crevices of a host tree and send down roots towards the ground which envelop the host tree, also growing horizontal roots. These horizontal roots then fuse with the descending ones and girdle the tree, sometimes becoming the 'columnar tree' when the host tree dies. Dynamic bilingualism emerges in the same way, in the cracks and crevices of communication with others who language differently, gradually becoming in and of itself a way of languaging through complex communicative interactions. Dynamic bilingualism is then both the foundation of languaging and the goal for communication in an increasingly multilingual world (see also Clyne, 2003).

Beyond and with bilingualism: transformations

Psycholinguists have also recently proposed that the co-adaptation of language resources in multilingual interactions is related to psychologically and sociologically determined communicative needs, while suggesting that language resources are thus transformed. To become bilingual is then not just the 'taking in' of linguistic forms by learners, but 'the constant adaptation of their linguistic resources in the service of meaning-making in response to the affordances that emerge in the communicative situation, which is, in turn, affected by learners' adaptability' (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008: 135). In so doing, the language-using patterns affect the whole system, as they generate emergent languaging patterns. A Dynamic Systems Theory allows us to reconcile psycholinguistics with sociolinguistics, offering an integrative approach. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) explain:

> A complex systems approach takes a view of the individual's cognitive processes as inextricably interwoven with their experiences in the physical and social world. The context of language activity is socially constructed and often dynamically negotiated on a moment-by-moment basis. (155, emphasis added)

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Dynamic Systems Theory (Herdina and Jessner, 2002) holds that there is interaction between internal cognitive ecosystems and external social ecosystems; thus, languaging is always being co-constructed between humans and their environments. A translanguaging approach, as we will see later, relates to this position of Dynamic Systems Theory, although it insists on transforming, not simply dismissing, the concept of bilingualism.

In a convincing book, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have debunked the concept of a language, arguing that the idea of a language is a European invention, a product of colonialism and of a Herderian 19th-century nationalist romanticist ideology that insisted that language and identity were intrinsically linked. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) state:

> Languages do not exist as real entities in the world and neither do they emerge from or represent real environments; they are, by contrast, the inventions of social, cultural and political movements. (2)

But Makoni and Pennycook (2007) also insist on dismissing the concepts of bilingualism, plurilingualism and multilingualism because they reproduce 'the same concept of language that underpins all mainstream linguistic thought' (22). Just as the concept of language needs 'disinvention', separate languages with different labels, given by linguists and others but often unknown and unused by their speakers, are questioned as serving nation-state interests (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). English is regarded as a language only in comparison with the existence of other languages such as French, Spanish or Chinese. None of these languages exist on their own, and all languages are in contact with others – being influenced by others, and containing structural elements from others. As Canagarajah (2013) says: 'To turn Chomsky (1988) on his head, we are all translinguals, not native speakers of a single language in homogenous environments' (8). Moreover, national 'languages' are constituted with resources from diverse places and times. Thus, Makoni and Pennycook propose that 'languaging' might be a sufficient term to capture plural linguistic practices. Our position, however, on the question of bilingualism is different. We think that a term other than just 'languaging' is needed to refer to complex multilingual situations. As Hall, Cheng and Carlson (2006) have said: 'multilinguals' amount and diversity of experience and use go beyond that of monolinguals' (229).

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Multilinguals can also draw on 'more modalities of signification than one single symbolic system' (Kramsch, 2009: 99). Mignolo (2000: 229) reminds us: 'You may or may not have a "mother tongue" as Derrida argues, but you cannot avoid "being born" in one or more language(s), to have them inscribed in your body.'

We argue that the term *translanguaging* offers a way of capturing the expanded complex practices of speakers who could not avoid having had languages inscribed in their body, and yet live between different societal and semiotic contexts as they interact with a complex array of speakers. A translanguaging approach to bilingualism extends the repertoire of semiotic practices of individuals and transforms them into dynamic mobile resources that can adapt to global and local sociolinguistic situations. At the same time, translanguaging also attends to the social construction of language and bilingualism under which speakers operate. It is to a more extended discussion of translanguaging that we now turn.

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2
The Translanguaging Turn and Its Impact

Abstract: *This chapter traces the development of a translanguaging theory from its origins in Wales. It draws differences between translanguaging and code-switching, describes it as the discursive norm among bilinguals, and considers the speakers' construction of a translanguaging space. The chapter also looks at the relationship of translanguaging to Dynamic Systems Theory, to multimodalities and to writing. Finally, the chapter considers the contributions of translanguaging to Linguistics theory and the concept of linguistic creativity. The chapter ends by reviewing concepts and terms that have recently proliferated to emphasize the more fluid language practices of bilingual speakers and to relate and differentiate translanguaging from these.*

Keywords: bilingualism; code-switching; codemeshing; Dynamic Systems Theory; linguistic creativity; multimodalities; translanguaging; translanguaging instinct; translingual practices

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The development of a translanguaging theory

The term *translanguaging* comes from the Welsh *trawsieithu* and was coined by Cen Williams (1994, 1996). In its original use, it referred to a pedagogical practice where students are asked to alternate languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use; for example, students might be asked to read in English and write in Welsh and vice versa (Baker, 2011). Since then, the term has been extended by many scholars (for example, Blackledge and Creese, 2010; Canagarajah, 2011a, 2011b; Creese and Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009a, 2011c, 2014b; García and Sylvan, 2011; Hornberger and Link, 2012; Lewis, Jones and Baker, 2012a, 2012b; Li Wei, 2011b; Lin, forthcoming; Sayer, 2012) to refer to both the complex language practices of plurilingual individuals and communities, as well as the pedagogical approaches that use those complex practices (more on the pedagogical approach in Part II of this book). Each of these scholars, however, defines translanguaging slightly differently. And yet, as the discussion of how these scholars treat 'translanguaging' will show, the concept of translanguaging is based on radically different notions of language and bilingualism than those espoused in the 20th century, an epistemological change that is the product of acting and languaging in our highly technological globalized world. We start by tracing the development of the term translanguaging in its relationship to language and bilingualism.

Working within the Welsh tradition, Baker, who first translated the Welsh term as 'translanguaging', defines it as 'the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages' (2011: 288). Lewis, Jones and Baker further claim that in translanguaging,

> both languages are used in a dynamic and functionally integrated manner to organise and mediate mental processes in understanding, speaking, literacy, and, not least, learning. Translanguaging concerns effective communication, function rather than form, cognitive activity, as well as language production. (2012a: 1)

Both these definitions go beyond additive concepts of bilingualism, but yet refer to two languages.

Translanguaging, for us, goes beyond the concept of the two languages of additive bilingualism or interdependence, as we described in our discussion of Figure 1.1, but also of languaging previously discussed. For us, the

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trans- prefix relates to the concept of *transculturación* coined in the 1940s by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. In the prologue to Ortiz's monumental study *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* (1940/1978), Bronislaw Malinowski explains that *transculturación* refers to:

> A process in which *a new reality emerges,* compounded and complex; a reality that is not a mechanical agglomeration of characters, not even a mosaic, but a new phenomenon, original and independent. (4, García's translation and italics)

In the same way, for us translanguaging does not refer to two separate languages nor to a synthesis of different language practices or to a hybrid mixture. Rather translanguaging refers to *new* language practices that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories, and releases histories and understandings that had been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation-states (see Mignolo, 2000). Interestingly enough, the title of Ortiz's book refers to a *contrapunteo*. In music a 'counterpoint' is the relationship between musical lines that sound different, move independently and have different motifs, but that sound harmonious when played simultaneously and against each other, an element prevalent in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Translanguaging is the enaction of language practices that use different features that had previously moved independently constrained by different histories, but that now are experienced against each other in speakers' interactions as one *new* whole. As such, translanguaging also has much to do with Derrida's concept of *brissure*; that is, practices where difference and sameness occur in an apparently impossible simultaneity.

Canagarajah (2011a) provides us with a definition of translanguaging as 'the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an *integrated* system' (401, our emphasis). We agree with most of this definition. Canagarajah then argues that this translanguaging ability is part of the *multicompetence* of bilingual speakers (Cook, 2008) whose lives, minds and actions are necessarily different from monolingual speakers because two languages co-exist in their minds, and their complex interactions are always in the foreground (Franceschini, 2011). Multicompetence regards the languages of a multilingual individual as an inter-connected whole – an eco-system of mutual interdependence. From this perspective, the idea of a single language as a reducible set of abstract structures

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or as a mental entity is effectively misleading. And yet, our concept of translanguaging, as we will see in what follows, goes beyond the idea of the multicompetence of bilingual speakers.

Translanguaging and code-switching

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 cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of a language, but that make up the speakers' complete language repertoire. Translanguaging, García (2009a) posits is:

> an approach to bilingualism that is centered not on languages as has been often the case, but on the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable. These worldwide translanguaging practices are seen here not as marked or unusual, but rather taken for what they are, namely the normal mode of communication that, with some exceptions in some monolingual enclaves, characterizes communities throughout the world. (44)

García (2009a) continues, 'translanguaging are *multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage in order to *make sense of their bilingual worlds*' (45, emphasis in original). A translanguaging lens posits that 'bilinguals have *one linguistic repertoire* from which they select features *strategically* to communicate effectively. That is, translanguaging takes as its starting point the *language practices of bilingual people as the norm*, and not the language of monolinguals, as described by traditional usage books and grammars' (García, 2012: 1, emphasis in original). Likewise, Blackledge and Creese (2010) speak about flexible bilingualism 'without clear boundaries, which places the speaker at the heart of the interaction' (109).

An illustration that García has used in many lectures about the epistemological difference between code-switching and translanguaging has to do with the language function on the iPhone. The language-switch function could be said to respond to a code-switching epistemology where bilinguals are expected to 'switch' languages. But especially in texting, bilinguals' language practices are not constrained by outside societal forces; and thus features of their entire semiotic repertoire may be selected. Some of these features are visual – emoticons and photographs; other features are textual, defined societally as different 'languages'. For bilinguals, able to use their semiotic repertoire without constraints

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in texting, the language-switch function of the iPhone is useless. For García, then, a translanguaging epistemology would be like turning off the language-switch function on the iPhone and enabling bilinguals to select features from their entire semiotic repertoire, and not solely from an inventory that is constrained by societal definitions of what is an appropriate 'language'.

Translanguaging as bilingual norm

Translanguaging is the discursive norm in bilingual families and communities. For example, the only way to communicate in bilingual/multilingual family events is to translanguage. There are always family members who have different language practices, and thus to communicate with them, speakers have to select certain features of their multilingual repertoire, while excluding others. And there are always events and topics for which certain features in the multilingual repertoire are more relevant than others (Lanza, 2007). A bilingual family conversation about school, for example, might take place with speakers selecting features associated with the language that is dominant in society; whereas the same speakers, when conversing about intimate relationships might select very different features. Other times, talk in family is translanguaged precisely because it signals fluid language practices, now often released, in the family intimacy, from the social external conventions that tie them to one or another 'language'.

Likewise, signage in bilingual communities is often translanguaged. Sometimes this is so because the makers of the sign want to ensure that it appeals to speakers who use various language practices or because the message that it wants to convey to distinctive speakers is indeed different. But most times those who design translanguaged signs understand that bilingual speakers have one linguistic repertoire and that capturing features from socially constructed different languages is more appealing to bilingual speakers. For example, when the beer industry wants to ensure that US Latinos drink a certain brand of beer, a translanguaged advertisement that says: 'A Nuevo Twist on Refreshment', works much better than one conceived in Spanish only or in English only. The translanguaged advertisement reflects also the type of beer, inspired by a Mexican recipe with lime and salt. Translanguaging captures not only the message for bilingual Latinos, but also their cultural hybridity. The act of translanguaging constructs a social space for bilingual individuals

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within families and communities that enables them to bring together all their language and cultural practices. The significance of this translanguaging space is the subject of the next section.

A translanguaging space

Li Wei (2011b) refers to a *translanguaging space* where the interaction of multilingual individuals 'breaks down the artificial dichotomies between the macro and the micro, the societal and the individual, and the social and the psycho in studies of bilingualism and multilingualism' (1234). A translanguaging space allows multilingual individuals to integrate social spaces (and thus 'language codes') that have been formerly practiced separately in different places. For Li Wei (2011b), translanguaging is going both *between* different linguistic structures, systems and modalities, and going *beyond* them. He claims that the act of translanguaging:

> creates a social space for the multilingual user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance. (1223)

Li Wei explains that a translanguaging space has its own transformative power because it is forever ongoing and combines and generates new identities, values and practices. Translanguaging, according to Li Wei, embraces both *creativity*; that is, following or flouting norms of language use, as well as *criticality*; that is, using evidence to question, problematize or express views (Li Wei, 2011a, 2011b). Multilingualism by the very nature of the phenomenon is a rich source of creativity and criticality, as it entails tension, conflict, competition, difference and change in a number of spheres, ranging from ideologies, policies and practices to historical and current contexts (Li Wei and Martin, 2009). Enhanced contacts between people of diverse backgrounds and traditions provide new opportunities for innovation and creativity. Individuals are capable of responding to historical and present conditions critically. Speakers consciously construct and constantly modify their sociocultural identities and values through social practices such as translanguaging.

Translanguaging goes beyond hybridity theory that recognizes the complexity of people's everyday spaces and multiple resources to make sense of the world (Bhabha, 1994; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López and

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Tejeda, 1999). A translanguaging space has much to do with the vision of Thirdspace (one word) articulated by Soja (1996) as:

> a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable. It is a space where issues of race, class, and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other; where one can be Marxist and post-Marxist, materialist and idealist, structuralist and humanist, disciplined and transdisciplinary at the same time. (5)

Soja critiques binaries, and proposes that it is possible to generate new knowledges and new discourses in a Thirdspace. To frame his Thirdspace, Soja uses the Argentinean Jorge Luis Borges' short story, 'El Aleph,' of which Borges (1971) says it is 'where all places are seen from every angle, each standing clear, without any confusion or blending'; that is, 'the sum total of the spatial universe' (189). A translanguaging space acts as a Thirdspace which does not merely encompass a mixture or hybridity of first and second languages; instead it invigorates languaging with new possibilities from a site of 'creativity and power,' as bell hooks (1990: 152) says. Going *beyond* language refers to transforming the present, to intervening by reinscribing our human, historical commonality in the act of languaging.

Translanguaging and Dynamic Systems Theory

From a Dynamic Systems Theory perspective, translanguaging is a creative process that is the property of the agents' way of acting in interactions, rather than belonging to the language system itself (Shanker and King, 2002: 206; see also De Bot, Lowie and Verspoor, 2007). Translanguaging, for us, is rooted on the principle that bilingual speakers 'soft assemble' their various language practices in ways that fit their communicative situations (García, 2009c, 2014b). That is, bilinguals call upon different social *features* in a seamless and complex network of multiple semiotic signs, as they adapt their languaging to suit the immediate task. Translanguaging, as a soft-assembled mechanism, emerges with enaction, with each action being locally and uniquely situated to satisfy contextual constraints, and creating an interdependence among all components of the system (Kloss and Van Orden, 2009; Turvey and Carello, 1981). Although all speakers have always been engaged in translanguaging, it will be even more

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important in a future of virtual interactions when we would need to engage in fluid language practices and to soft-assemble features that can 'travel' across geographic spaces to enable us to participate, as well as to resist, our more globalized world.

Translanguaging is not limited to oral interactions, but has always encompassed other modalities. The next section explores translanguaging in writing, a most important modality in the world today.

Translanguaging and writing

In contemporary society, writing in a dominant language is seen as 'the sine qua non condition for education and culture' (Menezes de Souza, 2007: 155), although this is not so in all spaces and has not been this way for all times. Because of the interest in writing as a technology or code for dominant languages and not as a series of ideological social practices (Street, 1993), the study of *written multilingual discourse* has been underresearched (Sebba, 2012). But translanguaging in writing has been common from ancient times to today. J. N. Adams (2003: xx–xxi) reminds us, speaking about code-switching, that 'There is a mass of evidence for the practice from Roman antiquity, in primary sources (inscriptions and papyri) and literature (e.g. Plautus, Lucilius and Cicero), and involving several languages in addition to Greek in contact with Latin.' Bilingual texts, as well as transliterated texts where, for example, Latin inscriptions and texts were written in Greek characters, and Greek texts were written in Latin script, abound from the early Roman Republic to the late Empire in the 4th century (Adams, 2003: 40–67). But also prevalent in Classical times were 'mixed-language texts' where the writer used different language conventions and scripts. Adams (2003: 69) says: 'Cicero probably used Greek script in his letters when he switched to Greek.' And there is much evidence of how script and spellings typical of one language were used in writing another.

Writers translanguage to make sense of themselves and their audience. Some languages, such as Wolof, Pular and Manyika, are written in either Arabic or Roman scripts or a combination of the two, depending on writers and audience (Makoni, Makoni, Abdelhay and Mashiri, 2012). Bilingual literary writers often write in one or another language (see, for example, Joseph Conrad who was born in Ukraine to Polish parents but wrote mostly in English, or Eva Hoffman who moved to Canada from Poland at the age of 13, but uses English). As more and

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more bilingual authors are published, many self-translate themselves into one or another language. This is, for example, the case of the Puerto Rican novelist Rosario Ferré who first wrote her novels in Spanish and self-translated them into English, and then wrote one in English and self-translated it into Spanish. What is called 'mixed-language' bilingual writing is also becoming more prevalent today. For example, in the US, Spanish/English bilinguals, writing in English, are using translanguaging strategically for literary effect. This is the case, for example, of the writing of the Dominican-American Junot Díaz, the 2008 Pulitzer winner for his novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). In the novel, Spanish 'interjects' into an English sentence often; for example, when Beli confronts the Gangster's wife, and says: 'Cómeme el culo, you ugly disgusting vieja' (141). Junot Díaz explains what he calls his 'mash-up of codes' which also includes no quotes, no italics, no way to privilege one or another way of speaking:

> By keeping the Spanish as normative in a predominantly English text, I wanted to remind readers of the fluidity of languages, the mutability of languages. And to mark how steadily English is transforming Spanish and Spanish is transforming English. (Díaz cited in Ch'ien, 2005: 204)

And in a 2013 interview, Díaz adds:

> I think I have no more understanding of the way the immense wave of language works than a guy that surfs really well and speaks to this profound understanding of oceanic forces. The older I get and the more time I spend in language work, the more aware I am of how little I understand the powerful forces that have allowed both English and Spanish to spread across the world, to thrive, to create entirely *new* edifices for themselves, which permits the kind of *linguistic simultaneity* that I so thrill in. (our emphasis, n.p.)

Today new technologies have enabled the production of more fluid language texts (Sebba, 2012; Sebba, Mahootian and Jonsson, 2011). Digital genres such as e-mails (Hinrichs, 2006), online discussion forums, blogging (Montes-Alcalá, 2007) and instant messaging (Lam, 2009) have brought translanguaging in multimodal writing to the forefront. Likewise, the marketization that has accompanied globalization has spurred translanguaging in advertisements as a way to address a public with a bilingual, rather than a monolingual identity. The work on linguistic landscapes has especially made evident the use of translanguaging in written signs, especially in urban landscapes (see Gorter, 2006; Shohamy, Ben Rafael and Barni, 2010; Shohamy and Gorter, 2009). Makoni and

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Makoni (2010) examine, for example, the combination of what they call 'plurilanguaging' and multimodality within the lingual culture of taxis in Ghana and South Africa. The next section focuses on the intersections of translanguaging with multimodalities and social semiotics.

Translanguaging and multimodalities

Our notion of translanguaging foregrounds the different ways multilingual speakers employ, create and interpret different kinds of linguistic signs to communicate across contexts and participants and perform their different subjectivities. Bailey points out that there are tensions and conflicts among different signs because of the sociohistorical associations they carry with them (2007: 257). The focus on signs in our conceptualization of translanguaging enables us to investigate the multimodal nature of communication, especially obvious in complex multilingual contexts.

Successful multilingual interactions have always been aided by multimodalities – gestures, objects, visual cues, touch, tone, sounds and other modes of communication besides words (Khubchandani, 1997; Norris, 2004). And multimodal texts have always been part of writing, as shown, for example, by Menezes De Souza (2007) for the Kashinawas of Brazil. Enhanced today by advanced technologies, all communication is even more *multimodal* than it has been in the past. Multimodal communication refers to that which is typically done through a mixture of gesture, oral performance, artistic, linguistic, digital, electronic, graphic and artifact-related signs (Pahl and Rowsell, 2006). The theoretical underpinnings of multimodality studies can be traced not only to Linguistics, in particular to Halliday's social semiotic theory of communication (Halliday, 1978), but also to cognitive and sociocultural research (Arnheim, 1969), as well as anthropological and social approaches (Goffman, 1979) (see Jewitt, 2008: 357–358). Bezemer and Kress define a *mode* as 'a socially and culturally shaped resource for making meaning' (image, writing, speech, moving image, action, artifacts) (2008: 6). Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) talk about *multimodal social semiotics*, which focuses on signs in all forms, as well as the sign makers and the social environments in which these signs are produced. They go on to argue that meaning-makers or 'sign makers' can make meaning drawing on a variety of modes that do not occur in isolation but always with others in ensembles. Moreover, different modes may share similar and/or different

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'modal resources'; for example, writing has syntactic, grammatical and graphic resources, whereas image has assets that include the position of elements in a frame, size, color or shape. These differences in resources, they further argue, have important implications for the ways modes can be used to accomplish different kinds of semiotic work, which means that 'modes have different affordances – potentials and constraints for making meaning' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001: 22). Multimodal social semiotics views all linguistic signs as part of a wider repertoire of modal resources that sign makers have at their disposal and that carry particular sociohistorical and political associations. In a social semiotic approach, language is central to other modes that sign makers can choose from for meaning-making and social identification. Translanguaging for us includes all meaning-making modes.

Translanguaging and transformations

Scollon and Scollon (2004) have proposed that certain actions, such as translanguaging, whether in speech or writing, transform a whole cycle of actions during which each action is transformed. They refer to this phenomenon as *resemiotization*. Actions are resemiotized, that is, they are redesigned, from one semiotic mode to another, with new meanings emerging all the time. Iedema (2003) refers to resemiotization with particular reference to multimodality. He argues that the inevitably transformative dynamics of socially situated meaning-making processes require an additional and alternative analytical point of view. Scollon and Scollon (2004) advocate that the following question be asked: 'Is the action under examination a point at which resemiotization or semiotic transformation occur?' (170). This is what Li Wei (2011b) proposed as 'moment analysis', moving the analytic focus from frequency and regularity to *creative and critical moments* where a specific action leads to a transformation of a cycle of actions. In the next section we consider further this relationship between linguistic creativity and translanguaging, and specifically we question how this impacts the field of Linguistics.

Translanguaging, Linguistics and linguistic creativity

So far we have tried to argue that translanguaging better captures the sociolinguistic realities of everyday life. Does the concept have any value

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for the theoretical field of Linguistics? Since the so-called Chomsky revolution, theoretical linguistics seems to have been rather obsessed with characterizing language as entirely natural, a biological, generic endowment, downplaying, even denying, the diversity of particular languages. In the meantime, however, Chomsky himself, and many of his followers, also seem keen on understanding human beings' capacity to utter an infinite number of sentences based on a finite set of rules of mental grammar and with a finite number of words in their brain. This capacity has been described as 'linguistic creativity' (Chomsky, 1966) which is predetermined by innate forces. Moreover, this innate capacity is believed to enable the novice to acquire different, and sometimes multiple, languages, often in linguistically deprived environments. Pinker popularized these ideas with his book *The Language Instinct* (1994), where he describes language as a discrete combinatorial system, like genes, that has the capacity to generate an infinite number of combinations and permutations out of a finite number of discrete elements. A consequence of the discrete combinatorial system is that human beings not only can interpret ungrammaticality using the fixed code, or Universal Grammar (UG), but also instinctively know when a well-structured string of words do not make sense; yet, they can exploit that fact for the fun of it. Linguistic creativity in the Chomskyan sense is then nothing more than the combination of a finite set of discrete items following a finite set of rules, all of which could be accounted for in UG.

Some psychologists and psycholinguists, while sympathetic to Chomsky's overall goal of making Linguistics a scientific discipline, have argued that Chomskyan linguists pay insufficient attention to experimental data from language processing, with the consequence that Chomskyan theories are not psychologically plausible. In particular, they have challenged the necessity to posit Universal Grammar to explain language acquisition, arguing that domain-general learning mechanisms are sufficient (Elman et al., 1996; Tomasello, 2003, 2008). In the meantime, in their own camp as it were, some have begun to question whether Universal Grammar can in fact be a theory of all languages as Chomsky intended it to be. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Burton-Roberts (2004), for example, argues that since particular languages are social conventions, not biological endowments, Universal Grammar, when conceived as an innate singular, and biologically based language, cannot be used as a generic term for all languages.

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What seems to be at issue is how to understand the creativity of human action, including linguistic creativity. Having the capacity to produce what Pinker describes as the 'sheer vastness of language' using a *fixed* set of rules of action does not necessarily mean a *closed* system. In fact, it may well suggest the opposite, that of an open-ended, complex, adaptive system. Recent research in the cognitive sciences has demonstrated that the processes of human interaction, along with domain-general cognitive processes, shape the structure and knowledge of language. These processes are not independent from one another but are facets of the same *complex adaptive system* (CAS). As the group known as The Five Graces argues (2009: 1–2):

> Language as a CAS involves the following key features: The system consists of multiple agents (the speakers in the speech community) interacting with one another. The system is adaptive, that is, speakers' behaviour is based on their past interactions, and current and past interactions together feed forward into future behaviour. A speaker's behaviour is the consequence of competing factors ranging from perceptual constraints to social motivations. The structures of language emerge from interrelated patterns of experience, social interaction, and cognitive mechanisms.

Applying the Complex Adaptive System approach to language, researchers in language acquisition have explored what they call the Interactional Instinct (Lee et al., 2009), a biologically based drive for human beings to attach, bond and affiliate with others. This instinct leads children to seek out verbal interaction with caregivers and allows them to become competent language speakers. It also explains some of the reasons for the successes and failures in the acquisition of an additional language, in literacy development, and in language use in schizophrenia (see studies in Joaquin and Schumann, 2013). From this perspective, language is not acquired as a result of a Language Acquisition Device in the brain, but is rather a cultural artifact universally acquired by all typical children. Moreover, the Interactional Instinct is at the root of human sociality (Enfield and Levinson, 2006); it is what makes us not only human, but effective social actors in everyday life.

While we also see language as a complex adaptive system, we emphasize, in our notion of translanguaging, the interconnectedness between the traditionally and conventionally understood languages and other human communicative systems. In our view, human beings' knowledge of language cannot be separated from their knowledge of human

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relations and human social interaction, which includes the history, the context of usage and the emotional and symbolic values of specific socially constructed languages. We see translanguaging as having the capacity to broaden the scope of contemporary Linguistics, to look at linguistic realities of the world today and how human beings use their linguistic knowledge holistically to function as language users and social actors. Linguistic creativity therefore needs to be reinterpreted as the language user's ability to play with various linguistic features as well as the various spatial and temporal resonances of these features. Kramsch and Whiteside (2008) have called this ability *symbolic competence,* 'the ability not only to approximate or appropriate for oneself someone else's language, but to shape the very context in which the language is learned and used' (664), hence the transformative capacity of translanguaging. Translanguaging enables the creativity that Li Wei (2011b) has defined as 'the ability to choose between following and flouting the rules and norms of behaviour, including the use of language, and to push and break boundaries between the old and the new, the conventional and the original, and the acceptable and the challenging' (94).

Linguistic creativity and the Translanguaging Instinct

Everyday communication involves traditional linguistic signs (letters) and images, emoticons and pictures. Nicholas and Starks (2014) use the heart image that has become an iconic element in expressions of affection for particular cities, for example, 'I ♥ NY', to illustrate the interconnectedness of all signs. It is also an example of translanguaging, where an image of a heart (traditionally understood as a noun) is used in the linguistic construction in the place that is usually occupied by a verb. Yet when the expression is 'read out', most people would say 'I love New York' rather than 'I heart New York', so changing the grammatical status of the 'word' to which the image is linked. As Nicholas and Starks argue, 'examples such as these reinforce the variation and creativity of speakers as they bring together multiple elements of rich and complex communicative resources.' Research evidence shows that children, even infants, have no problem using their multiple semiotic resources to interpret different forms of symbolic references (Namy and Waxman, 1998; Plester et al., 2011). Human beings have a natural Translanguaging Instinct.

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Let us see some other examples that expand upon the now familiar translanguaging sign of I ♥ X. Figure 2.1 may look like a fairly simple, bilingual extension of I ♥ X, with the word 'China' written out in Chinese characters. Yet, in the original design, reproduced here in black and white, the colors are purposefully chosen. The words and the heart image are yellow, printed on a red T-shirt. This is because the Chinese national flag is red, with five yellow stars – one big one and four smaller ones – in the corner. Figure 2.2, which is frequently found on various merchandise in China, is more abstract and more complex. Instead of

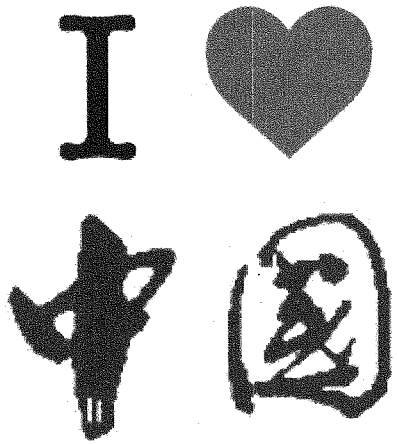

FIGURE 2.1 *I love China a*

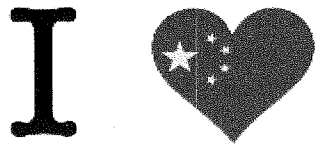

FIGURE 2.2 *I love China b*

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the word China written out, the heart image is reinscribed in red with five yellow stars at one corner, exactly the same as in the design of the Chinese national flag. The process of creating these signs, and the process of interpreting them, is a process of translanguaging, involving words, images, symbols and colors, all of which are culturally and historically specific and significant. Understanding the meaning of signs like these require the understanding of not only the linguistic structure but also all the other indexical cues that together make up the signs.

An extension of these translanguaging signs is Figure 2.3 where the heart symbol is replaced by an image of a shamrock, and Obama's name is spelled in a mock Irish fashion. When we asked a random selection of people how they would 'read' the sign, they said either 'I love Obama' or 'Ireland loves Obama'. The shamrock image is reinscribed with the meaning that is conventionally symbolized by the heart symbol to mean 'love'.

FIGURE 2.3 *Shamrock and Obama*

Another example of creative translanguaging that involves perhaps even more complex processes of resemiotization and reinscription is the ObaMao image, purportedly created by a Chinese self-made entrepreneur named Liu Mingjie, who superimposed Barack Obama's face in Chairman Mao's Red Army uniform, in the Chinese revolution woodprint style. The design is now used in a variety of tourist souvenirs, adding some 'Chinglish' phrases – funny, direct English translations of Chinese phrases – and 'Serve the people' in Mao's calligraphy, as Figure 2.4 shows.

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FIGURE 2.4 *ObaMao image*

The Chinglish phrase is a direct translation from the Chinese expression 给你点颜色看看, meaning 'I'll show you some color' or 'I'll teach you a lesson.' This is set in direct contrast with Mao's slogan 'Serve the people'. When the design was first shown on the Internet, there were comments from online bloggers that the expression could be misinterpreted as slightly racist, referring to Obama being black. But the image could be widely seen in Beijing when the US President visited China in 2009, and did not receive any negative reaction in the United States. Yet, the fact that the design, with the linguistic expressions on it, is open to different interpretations is precisely the point of translanguaging that we wish to highlight. When Linguistics focuses narrowly on language as a discrete system of a fixed set of rules, none of the intricacies of

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human creativity, human interaction and human knowledge can be fully understood. Taking a translanguaging approach to the discipline of Linguistics can help to make it more open, democratic and socially relevant. Moreover, the translanguaging perspective provides deeper insights into not only how human beings think, but also why they think the way they do.

In the next section we review other terms that are being used to capture the complexity of interactions in the 21st century. We discuss these terms and draw distinctions between our theory of translanguaging as we have defined it earlier, and these new emerging terms.

Translanguaging and related terms

The shift in the literature on bilingualism/multilingualism from a description of languages as different systems of structures to one emphasizing the fluid language practices of speakers has recently produced a plethora of terms to capture this new linguistic reality (see May, 2013). The Bakhtinian concept of *heteroglossia*, referred to earlier, serves as an umbrella term for all of these practices, including that of translanguaging. As Bailey (2007) has shown, taking up heteroglossia for analysis focuses attention on alternations of officially authorized codes, without neglecting 'the diversity of socially indexical linguistic features within codes' (268). Bailey argues:

> Heteroglossia can encompass socially meaningful forms in both bilingual and monolingual talk; it can account for the multiple meanings and readings of forms that are possible, depending on one's subject position; and it can connect historical power hierarchies to the meanings and valences of particular forms in the here-and-now. (267)

We discuss later a number of alternative terms being used, all pointing to the fluidity of language practices in the world today – crossing, transidiomatic practices, polylingualism, metrolingualism, multivocality, codemeshing, bilanguaging and the 'glish' terms such as Spanglish, Singlish, etc. We argue, however, that for us the term translanguaging is better able to capture the trans-systemic and transformative practices as a new language reality emerges. In addition, our concept of translanguaging resists the danger that Flores (2013) has warned against in the blind acceptance of plurilingualism. Flores

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(2013) cautions that in adopting a translanguaging stance we might simply be preparing flexible workers to advance the neoliberal agenda. Translanguaging for us, however, is part of a moral and political act that links the production of alternative meanings to transformative social action. As such, translanguaging contributes to the social justice agenda. This in itself distinguishes our concept from many others that we discuss here.

Crossing

We start with Ben Rampton's notion of *crossing*, which refers to the use of language practices of out-group members for purposes of temporary identity representation and to resist the authority of their teachers. In his pioneering study of a multiethnic secondary school in inner London, Rampton (1995) showed how and when different language varieties were integrated into ordinary talk.

Rampton's concept of crossing is related to *stylization*, defined by Bakhtin (1981) as a performance in which speakers produce an artistic image of another's language. Although Rampton's notion of crossing has been very influential in disrupting the direct link between language and identity that had been constructed since the 19th-century work of the German Romantics, crossing seems to connote going from one autonomous language to another, a concept that our definition of translanguaging would challenge.

Transidiomatic practice

Jacquemet (2005) coins the term *transidiomatic practices* to refer to the 'communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes, simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant' (264–265). Jacquemet adds: 'Transidiomatic practices are the results of the co-presence of multilingual talk (exercised by de/reterritorialized speakers) and electronic media, in contexts heavily structured by social indexicalities and semiotic codes' (265). Jacquemet's work, focused on communication in the Adriatic region, highlights the complex connectivity and flow of global processes and diasporic social formations. He reminds us that language contact between groups is not new, although the 'extraordinary simultaneity and co-presence of the languages' (271) is

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novel. He then calls for a 'linguistics of *xenoglossic becoming*, transidiomatic mixing, and communicative recombinations' (274, emphasis added). Although Jacquemet's work makes evident that the deterritorialization of communicative practices brought about through diasporic social formations, media and global power elites does construct new transidiomatic practices, neither the concept of language itself, nor the power dynamics involved in these constructions, are questioned. Jacquemet problematizes traditional sociolinguistic conceptions of language, but does not challenge the existence of language as a system of structures that is merely recombined.

Polylingualism

In contrast, Jørgensen (2008) argues that it doesn't make sense to talk of 'a language' per se, although he defends the concept of 'language'. He agrees with Makoni and Pennycook (2007) and Heller (2010) that languages are constructs that cannot be counted or categorized. And he claims that language in itself consists of human behavior between people by which we form and shape our social structures. He convincingly argues:

> The concept of *a* language is thus bound in time and space..., and it is not part of our understanding of the human concept of language. Features are, however. Speakers use features and not languages. Features may be ascribed to specific languages (or specific categories which are called languages). This may be an important quality of a feature, and one which speakers may know and use as they speak. But what the speaker uses is a feature. (166, our emphasis)

In referring to language use, especially by young people in urban late modern societies that simultaneously use features from different sets, Jørgensen (2008) and Møller (2008) use the term *polylingualism*. The term refers to the combination of features that are not discrete and complete 'languages' in themselves but that are bound up in change. Jørgensen distinguishes polylingualism from multilingualism because polylingual behavior is a combination of features that are used side-by-side, whereas multilingualism refers to a combination of languages that should be separated. In this aspect, and in arguing for feature-based languaging, polylingualism comes close to our concept of translanguaging.

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Metrolingualism

Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) refer to fluid practices in urban contexts as *metrolingualism*, as in translanguaging rejecting the notion that there are discrete languages or codes. They argue:

> Metrolingualism describes the ways in which people of different and mixed backgrounds use, play with and negotiate identities through language; it does not assume connections between language, culture, ethnicity, nationality or geography, but rather seeks to explore how such relations are produced, resisted, defied or rearranged. Its focus is *not on language systems* but on languages as emergent from contexts of interaction. (246, emphasis added)

Otsjui and Pennycook (2010, 2011) focus on a metrolingual space where people 'undo, queer and reconstitute their linguistic practices between the orthodox and heterodox' (424). Metrolingualism focuses on social practices that are in a state of construction and disarray within urban contexts, and thus, does not go far enough in extending these practices to all contexts, as translanguaging does.

Multivocality

Another term related to translanguaging is that of *multivocality*, proposed by Higgins (2009) in her study of language practices in Kenya and Tanzania. Based on Bakhtin's concept of voice, multivocality for Higgins refers to the idea that multilingual utterances, because of their syncretic nature, convey all possible meanings simultaneously because they are, as Woolard (1998) suggests, *bivalent*. That is, by belonging to two languages at once and thus allowing double-voiced usages, multilingual utterances allow speakers to 'remain in the interstices of multivocality' (Higgins, 2009, 7).

Multivocality has in common with translanguaging the multiplicities of meanings of multilingual utterances. However, Higgins considers these multiplicities as organized on the basis of domains or specific activities. Translanguaging goes beyond the sociolinguistic conception of space or domain which orders the multivocality. As Li Wei points out, the act of translanguaging itself creates the social space within the multilingual user that makes it possible to go between different linguistic structures and beyond them. It is *the speakers*, not the space, who are in control of the languaging performance, by bringing

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together 'different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity' (Li Wei, 2011b: 1223).

Codemeshing and translingual practices

Canagarajah (2011a) reserves the term *codemeshing* to refer to the shuttle between repertoires, especially in writing, for rhetorical effectiveness. He defines codemeshing as 'a communicative device used for specific rhetorical and ideological purposes in which a multilingual speaker intentionally integrates local and academic discourse as a form of resistance, reappropriation and/or transformation of the academic discourse' (Michael-Luna and Canagarajah, 2007: 56). For Canagarajah, codemeshing differs from codeswitching in that it refers to one single integrated system. Like translanguaging, codemeshing signals one single integrated system, but whereas codemeshing is seen as a form of resistance, translanguaging is positioned as the discursive norm that names a reality other than a monolingual one.

Recently Canagarajah (2013) has coined an all-encompassing term – *translingual practice* – meant to serve as an umbrella for all these dynamic terms surrounding the language practices in multilingual encounters:

> The term translingual conceives of language relationships in more dynamic terms. The semiotic resources in one's repertoire or in society interact more closely, become part of an integrated resource, and enhance each other. The languages mesh in transformative ways, generating new meanings and grammars. (8)

Canagarajah's rejection of the term translanguaging and adoption of translingual practices is based on his claim that translanguaging has been defined in cognitive terms, as a cognitive multicompetence. However, as we have seen in this chapter, what makes translanguaging an important theoretical advance is that it is transdisciplinary; that is, it refers to a meaning-making social *and* cognitive activity that works in-between conventional meaning-making practices and disciplines and goes beyond them, for it emerges from the contextual affordances in the complex interactions of multilinguals. Canagarajah also claims that in codemeshing there is a mixing of communicative modes and diverse symbol systems other than language and that this distinguishes it from translanguaging. For us, however, as we said before all translanguaging is multimodal.

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Bilanguaging

Taking up and extending A. L. Becker's concept of languaging described in Chapter 1, the Argentinean semiotician, Walter Mignolo (2000) uses the term *bilanguaging* to refer not only to the language fluidity of interactions, but also to political action. Mignolo says that the focus of bilanguaging is on 'redressing the asymmetry of languages and denouncing the coloniality of power and knowledge' (231). By bringing the coloniality of power to the foreground and thinking from that colonial difference, Mignolo's bilanguaging calls forth a political process of social transformation. Mignolo's 'bilanguaging love' is offered as a way to correct the violence of systems of control and oppression that colonial expansion and nation building have installed within traditional understandings of language and sign systems.

Translanguaging shares much with Mignolo's concept of bilanguaging. Bilanguaging, like translanguaging, confronts colonial language practices with subaltern ones in a border space; but translanguaging goes beyond a physical space that brings together two realities, as it focuses on the dynamism of the actual complex interaction of speakers with multiple semiotic resources.

Spanglish, Singlish

Monolingual communities and the elite often refer to the fluid ways in which non-dominant communities speak with terms that are stigmatized such as *Spanglish* or *Singlish*. It is interesting that both these terms refer to stigmatized ways of speaking, although they signal different social languages. Singlish refers to what is socially constructed as the colloquial English spoken in Singapore, described as neither Mandarin Chinese nor Standard English (Rubdy, 2005). Despite official visions of Singlish as corrupted English, it is said that 70 per cent of Singaporeans accept it as a mark of solidarity and the symbol of 'Singaporeanness' (Rubdy, 2005). In contrast, Spanglish refers not to what is socially considered English, but to 'corrupted' forms of Spanish used by US Latinos, 'a bastard jargon: part Spanish and part English' (Stavans, 2000: 7; Stavans, 2003). Some Latino scholars claim the term as a badge of bicultural identity (Rosa, 2010; Zentella, 1997, 2008). Otheguy and Stern (2010), however, warn against the use of the term, for it disparages ways of speaking of Latinos, focusing on what is seen as structural

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mixing and unusual hybridity, and separating US Spanish-speakers from others who speak other varieties of popular Spanish throughout the Spanish-speaking world, and marginalizing them.

The appropriation of these terms by ethnolinguistic communities points to the growing fluidity in bilingual speech. But these terms take as their point of departure a 'standard' language, comparing bilingual speech to each of the 'languages', as defined and described by the dominant members of society. In contrast, translanguaging assumes one linguistic repertoire that could never be split into one or another language, an Aleph in the Borgean sense that contains the sum total of the meaning-making universe of bilingual speakers.

Translanguaging is related in different ways to the terms above, and owes a great deal to some of these theoreticians. Yet, as we discussed before, our theory of translanguaging differs in ways that we summarize in the next section.

Translanguaging: a summary and our positionalities

Translanguaging, as we have said, liberates language from structuralist-only or mentalist-only or even social-only definitions. Instead, it signals a trans-semiotic system with many meaning-making signs, primarily linguistic ones that combine to make up a person's semiotic repertoire. Languages then are not autonomous and closed linguistic and semiotic systems. Bilingual speakers select meaning-making features and freely combine them to potentialize meaning-making, cognitive engagement, creativity and criticality. Translanguaging refers to the act of languaging between systems that have been described as separate, and beyond them. As such, translanguaging is transformative and creates changes in interactive cognitive and social structures that in turn affect our continuous languaging becoming. Finally, in its transdisciplinarity, translanguaging enables us as speakers to go beyond traditional academic disciplines and conventional structures, in order to gain new understandings of human relations and generate more just social structures, capable of liberating the voices of the oppressed.

Translanguaging, as we have seen, offers a transdisciplinary lens that combines sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives to study the complex multimodal practices of multilingual interactions as social and

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cognitive acts able to transform not only semiotic systems and speaker subjectivities, but also sociopolitical structures. Translanguaging works by generating trans-systems of semiosis, and creating trans-spaces where new language practices, meaning-making multimodal practices, subjectivities and social structures are dynamically generated in response to the complex interactions of the 21st century.

Our positionalities and translanguaging

Before we conclude this chapter, it may be useful to point out that our consideration of translanguaging emerges from our own positionalities as transnational scholars[1] and from what the Argentinean semiotician Walter Mignolo (2000) has called '*border thinking*' (11); that is, understandings that emerge from experiences and thinking between and beyond languages and modes and their historical relations. Border thinking is related to the Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa's *borderlands theory* – the straddling of worlds, languages and cultures that occurs in her *nepantla,* the Nahuatl word for the land in the middle, the space of transformation. In speaking about her identity, Anzaldúa says: 'Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders' (1987: 84). And of her languaging, she says: 'neither español ni inglés, but both' (1987: 77). 'To survive the Borderlands/you must live *sin fronteras*/be a crossroads', she adds (217). Translanguaging provides this space *sin fronteras* – linguistic ones, nationalist ones, cultural ones. Translanguaging for us refers to languaging actions that enact a political process of social and subjectivity transformation which resist the asymmetries of power that language and other meaning-making codes, associated with one or another nationalist ideology, produce. As García (2014b) has said: 'In translanguaging the speaker is situated in a space where alternative representations and enunciations can be generated because buried histories are released and alternative, conflicting knowledges are produced.' Translanguaging resists the historical and cultural positionings of monolingualism or of additive bilingualism, releasing speakers from having to conform to 'parallel monolingualisms' (Heller, 1999) or to traditional linguistic ways of making meaning.

In Part II of this book we turn to considering how translanguaging has the potential to liberate both monolingual and bilingual education from the structural strictures of the past. In particular, we review the

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structures of bilingual education of the 20th century and describe the control of language practices most often exercised by education systems, as well as the agency of learners in violating these strictures through translanguaging. We argue that bilingual education, in the forms of the past, has done little to destroy the hierarchies among languages and people, to ameliorate the lives of language-minoritized students, or to generate learner subjectivities able to engage in, and value, the translanguaging practices which are the norm in bilingual communities. We suggest that translanguaging can be used in education, and particularly in bilingual education, as a transformative practice in order to provide a trans-space of change and an interdisciplinarity of knowledge and understandings. At the same time, we point to how hard it is to accept translanguaging within educational systems that are instruments of the nation-state and how difficult it becomes for us to speak about translanguaging in the context of schools.

Note

1 García was born in Cuba and has lived in New York City from the age of 11. Li Wei was born in Beijing, China, of Manchu-Chinese parentage, and has lived in the UK since his mid-twenties.

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Part II
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