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## **Translanguaging in Adult Education: Technology Curriculum Project**

Jacqueline Phillips

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Translanguaging in Adult Education: Technology Curriculum Project

by

Jacqueline Phillips

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Hamline University

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Introduction

We live in a world of constant updates. People are updating their devices and profiles regularly. They update phones and computers. They update Facebook and Instagram. In this modern world of updates, I want to focus on updates in English language learning for adult students, specifically those students who are learning to navigate the contemporary world of technology and computers. As an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, I have worked teaching adults for the past eight years. During that time, I have seen a lot of changes, and working through the COVID-19 pandemic has changed my perception of what adult students need in education. When the world shut down, and everyone was forced to work and learn from home, I immediately recognized the importance of having technology skills and how that has shaped the success and future of so many adult students. This has led me to the research question; *How can teachers support best translanguaging instructional practices in an adult basic technology curriculum?*

This first chapter examines my background and the experiences that have led me to where I am currently working. Next, I describe the motivation for working with adult students in this context and what that looks like; as well as a brief description of my student population. Then, I describe translanguaging and explain why this instructional practice is necessary to update the content technology I currently teach. Finally, I give a rationale and summary of the proposed research project.

## **My Background**

I have always been interested in education and social justice. In college, I spent two years living overseas and learning about different education models in parts of South and Central America. This experience provided me with a new lens for what education can look like. It was very meaningful for me as a student to live and see firsthand the many different approaches to change and progress that are happening in the modern educational systems. As I moved back to the United States and started my career as a teacher, I was focused on continuing that work with immigrants, and I have been passionate about helping those communities and populations ever since. As a biracial woman born in the United States, my values and identity are rooted in my experiences. I grew up in an English-speaking household until high school, when I learned Spanish and had the opportunity to live overseas for a couple of years. Also, I have been studying French since last year, and I enjoy learning about new languages and cultures through travel. This project's primary goal is related to my passions and experiences as a way to continue to push the research and work in education to be more representative of the diversity of students and the mix of cultures, languages, and identities that exist.

When I discovered the school where I currently work, Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School, the first adult education public charter school in Washington DC (Carlos Rosario, 2024), I immediately felt at home. This is a place that combines so many of my passions, and the mission and work of the school are truly representative of those values and beliefs. For several years I taught intermediate ESL life skills classes, and I enjoyed working with students at this level. I learned a lot about the specific language abilities of the intermediate students and that many of the students

struggled with technology. Technology became one of the dividing skills, as many students who struggled were not able to progress as quickly as their counterparts. I began to notice how students needed to increase their technology and computer skills at the same time as their English language abilities. This was also true in the opposite effect, and those who did not have strong computer skills struggled to keep up.

Then, four years ago, I decided to make a change. I switched to teaching a workforce-related computer class for beginner-level students. This class is a mix of both native and non-native English speakers who are working to earn a certificate in basic computer skills. This change came right as the pandemic hit, and little did I know the huge impact this work was going to have on everything I was doing. Overnight, I had to adapt to the challenges of teaching this course online, and there was one major takeaway. Education, just like technology, requires those constant updates. This has driven me to the research question above as a way to better support all of my students, specifically those who are working on both their English language and technology skills.

### **Current Teaching Environment**

The class I teach is called Computer Basics One and combines skills for students in the areas of computer fundamentals, internet, emails, word processing, and typing skills. This semester-long course meets both in-person and virtually four to five days a week. Students receive roughly 12 hours of instruction per week and are tested formally at the end of each unit using the Northstar Digital Literacy (Northstar, 2024) tests. The curriculum and class are unique to my school, and this class is the first level in a series of computer classes that lead to Information Technology certifications and job placement if desired. Due to the unit testing and design of the course, there is a lot of space and

opportunity to help make changes and create unique materials to better support students. This curriculum enhancement project directly aligns with that goal and with the idea of creating equitable access in the area of technology for adult students. The project will focus on creating materials that align with the current curriculum and promote the use of translanguaging and technology tools to better support all students.

The student population comes from all over the world and students have native languages that include English, Spanish, French, and Amharic. Nonnative speakers must complete an English pretest and score at an intermediate level before being allowed entry into Computer Basics One. This is done using an in-house assessment, TEAAL, created by my school. The range in ages of my students is from 20 to 90 years with many of the students being senior citizens. The majority are immigrants; however, I do have some non-immigrant students as well.

### **Translanguaging**

As a graduate student in the MATESOL program at Hamline University, one of the areas that I was introduced to and researched previously was translanguaging. This practice, as defined by Wei and Garcia (2022), involves dynamic multilingualism, the incorporation of all aspects of a speaker's repertoire into discourse, and the fluid multilingual use of elements from different styles, registers, and varieties. More than that, it's how students can make meaning and gain comprehension using the context around them. This use and view of language as a range of tools and not just two or more individual languages is the framework for this curriculum project design. It is also something that I see happening every day in the context of my classroom and with my students as they all interact to work on learning together in class. They are



simultaneously working on a set of skills and the English language required to apply them. Since the curriculum that I use is not specifically designed with the language learning students in mind, this project will explore and create these material updates. This project will also help students reinforce their English language skills so they can take full advantage of the context we are all currently working in. In addition, I hope this project will bring awareness and tools to help other adult teachers working in the area of computers and technology as well.

### **Rationale**

Whether it is for specific content like my class or another type of ESL class, the information about the relationships with computers, technology, and language must continue to be explored and developed. It is important to keep in mind when creating the updates that the theories and practices behind them should also be updated to match the needs and expectations of students in the modern world. Technology curriculum for adult students needs to be more inclusive of all adult students including the English language learning students I work with. These changes can allow for better inclusion and strengthen the curriculum to help bridge the gap for students who speak languages other than the global standard English. The practices of translanguaging in primary education have been around for many years now, and there is a lot of evidence and research to support these practices throughout many different classroom settings. These ideas in an adult education environment are equally as important and an area that is far less studied, but something I hope this project will contribute to.

## Summary

Throughout my journey as both a teacher and a student, I have wanted to focus on the equitable and inclusive elements of education that can open the door and create space for the unique learners that are out there. I want to support the students in a way that can help them to succeed and also build their knowledge of how to use those skills to further their lives and careers as well. In this chapter, I have gone over my background and story. I have shared about my current teaching experience and environment which has led me to this research project and question. *How can teachers support best translanguaging instructional practices in an adult basic technology curriculum?* The next chapters explore and outline the research, curriculum, and reflections for this project. Chapter Two provides the literature and background around translanguaging in adult education and helps identify best practices. Chapter Three explores the changes and examples necessary to update the curriculum to be in line with these best practices. Finally, Chapter Four reflects on curriculum changes, usefulness, and further areas of study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

This research aims to answer the question: *How can teachers best support translanguaging instructional practices in an adult technology curriculum?* This section will provide an overview of the literature in the field to understand and develop the relationship between the major themes of adult education, translanguaging, and technology. Starting by examining adult education and the needs of multilingual adult learners, the research focuses on the structure of these practices centered around equity and inclusion. The next sections will develop translanguaging as an effective instructional pedagogy (Wei & Lin, 2019). By looking at the settings where this practice has been implemented, one can gain insight into the potential influence of translanguaging in instruction, as well as the challenges faced in practicing the pedagogy throughout various settings (Rodriguez et al., 2021). Finally, in the last section, the research will focus on technology or digital curriculum and its role in adult education and the future of literacy. These three themes in relation to each other build the foundation for answering the research question and help to better understand the connections in adult education with translanguaging and technology.

#### Adult Education

The United Nations (2015) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) proposed a plan to ensure “inclusive and equitable quality education promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all” (Grotluschen et al., 2024, p.1 as cited by UN, 2015) by 2030. To begin, the wording of this unprecedented and ambitious plan (Benavot et al., 2022) offers

significant insight into the role of adult learning and education (ALE). While ALE is not specifically stated within the goal, the importance of this field for the development of this plan is clear (Benavot et al., 2022). ALE can be generally defined as the body of organized educational processes both formal and informal that play a key part in the worldwide system for education and continuing studying (UNESCO, 1976, as cited in Grotluschen et al., 2024). This diverse and multifaceted field faces many important opportunities and challenges as seen in this review of research.

### ***Framework and Structure***

Starting by unpacking the multiple layers of adult education, and the structural frameworks that exist within this space, one common breakdown that researchers impose looks at the mega, macro, meso, and micro-level perspectives (Boren, 2019; Grotulschen et al., 2024). These four domains provide a structural system for how adult education interacts at various levels around the world. The mega level is representative of the general national and political contexts, and it is associated with supranational crises like climate change and the pandemic. The macro level encompasses educational policy, including laws and national structures. Next, the meso level is focused on networks and partnerships with non-governmental organizations, often including universities and international organizations. Lastly, the micro level encompasses the activities of common people, frequently viewed through grassroots activism and local partnerships (Grotulschen et al., 2024).

The primary focus of this research is on implementation and practices within the meso and micro settings, rooted in an understanding of the larger structures and systems at play. Within the meso level, community-based informal adult education programs are

some of the most common types and they provide insight into the teachers who are implementing the various educational practices (Grotluschen et al., 2024) that over time can help lead to the realization of the SGD four (Benavot et al., 2022; Boren, 2019). However, the monitoring and support of these programs often need more visibility and funding in order to bridge the gap between the less visible micro and meso levels and the agencies and authorities of the macro and mega policymakers (Boren, 2019; Grotulschen et al., 2024). One important consideration in how to implement and understand the intentions of SDG four in ALE is to create an atmosphere of clear and open communication among the levels. Furthermore, teachers' recognition of these structures is important as they are often seen as bridges between the various levels. Working to reconcile the bottom–up and top-down policymaking that is happening throughout the field. Additionally, having a clear understanding of the structural system is important for teachers as they play a critical role in ALE with regard to instructional practices and the implementation of pedagogies or best practices within the field. This research is focused on building equity and inclusion for both teachers and students within this space, as well as grounding these practices within the larger ALE framework.

### ***US Programming***

In the United States currently, adult education is governed by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AELFA) Title II of the Workforce and Investment Act of 1998 (Tamassia et al., 2007). Within this act, the breakdown of goals of adult education programs are divided into three main stages: becoming literate, gaining the skills and knowledge necessary for employment, and finally focusing on parents and helping them to become full partners in their children's educational journey (Adult Education and

Family Literacy Act, 1998). All three of these areas have specific roles in ALE and are often working in unison. This research is mainly interested in the initial stage of adults becoming literate with an emphasis on multilingual literacy. Furthermore, one can argue that technology or digital pedagogies are an area of practice that needs to be added to these standards (Housel, 2023; Smythe, 2022). Technology and digital skills are currently seen as foundational for students in many areas, and especially for adult students in the contemporary classroom. While not explicitly stated, technology use is standard practice and an area that many teachers see as critical to student success. Additionally, teachers have also been advocating for more support and resources that focus on technology integration within ALE (Kobrin et al., 2021; Smythe, 2022). In some cases, even taking the standpoint that the promotion and use of technology within the field is a form of digital as well as educational justice.

The U.S. Department of Education has worked with the National Reporting System (NRS) to publish the *Implementation Guidelines: Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education* (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, 1998). These guidelines work to identify defined measures for national reporting, help establish methodologies for data collection, and maintain standards for reporting. All of this supports the strong macro-level influences of using benchmarks, indicators, and targets provided by the NRS and plays a large part throughout the US reporting systems (Boeren, 2019). In addition, looking at Section One of the Act specifically, there is a significant role in the development of programs that offer English literacy instruction. These reporting guidelines demonstrate the importance of English and the integration of the English language as a key component in the measurement of literacy here in the

United States. The NRS includes the following core indicators of performance, identified in Sec. 212(b)(2)(A) of AEFLA that are used to assess state performance: “(i) Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills” (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, 1998, p. 7).

This integration of the English language provides the backbone for how we measure and educate adult multilingual students here in the United States, a group that includes roughly 44% of adult learners enrolled in English literacy programming (Zeigler & Camarota, 2019). This population represents a significant number of students in the United States, and the diversity of knowledge as well as the students' educational backgrounds that exist within that group should be accounted for within the instructional practices used. In taking a social justice standpoint this is frequently seen as a challenge to the dominant presence of English as the language of knowledge and instruction which is commonly seen throughout these contexts (Hasan et al., 2020; Kim & Weng, 2022; Rodriguez et al., 2021). While many multilingual adult students are constantly making progress along a never-ending road, the commanding role of the English language in US educational settings often labels them unfairly as inferior to native speakers. This creates an environment of unrealistic and often unreachable goals, instead of focusing on the real students and the skills and assets they bring with them (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019). A shift in both the view of language learners and the instructional practices working with these populations is needed to move away from the imagined perfect monolingual speakers to the real students and learners in practice. This shift also needs to be supported in

classroom practices and can provide a clear overlap with the translanguaging pedagogies presented in the following sections.

Additionally, the NRS standards and indicators that generate data for mainstream broad-level consensus need to reprioritize the standards that guide the curriculum and instruction provided by institutions. These standards are consistently being met with criticism and are seen by many as problematic for several reasons (Housel, 2023; Zeigler & Camarota, 2019). First, they often overlook the individuals. For example, many programs and schools use student-centered approaches and models, but these practices are seldom in alignment with the testing and standards of reporting. Secondly, the standards often put pressure on the organizations and institutions reporting to meet these specific benchmarks (Zeigler & Camarota, 2019). It is important to point out again that the argument for the inclusion of digital literacy skills among these standards is of growing importance to adult learners. Even though it is not officially part of the NSR standards, researchers have pointed out the pervasive problems related to equity and inclusion (Housel, 2023). This again demonstrates the need for updates to the measured accounts for literacy to start including technology and digital skills. This is a growing area of research and has become even more essential as we have seen from the impacts of the pandemic and global crises that continue to integrate technology into our everyday lives.

### ***Multilingual Adult Learners***

From the data and reporting methods mentioned above one can conclude that adult education in the United States is limited by the language restrictions imposed by the governing body with a large emphasis on English literacy and language. Therefore



creating an environment that is missing the richness of aspects and processes associated with the social and linguistic characteristics of other languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019). This is compounded by the extreme prevalence of English in technology and creates the necessity for this research and other potential research in the area of technology use by multilingual students. The impacts of the monolingual English educational bias are an area that will continue to pose challenges, specifically as the number of multilingual students in the US continues to grow (Rodriguez et al., 2021). This issue presented here in the micro-level classroom practices is also important in the broader context as well, as decisions of ALE hierarchies continue to adapt to the diversity of the globalized world and economies of the next generations (Benevot et al., 2022; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Smythe, 2022). Over the past few decades, there have been large increases in the number of United States residents who speak languages other than English at home. According to Zeigler and Camarota (2019), those increases are most common in urban areas, and the statistics from the recent census indicated that roughly 19.3 million adults identified as native-born speaking languages other than English at home. These trends support the need for more support and planning in the urban multilingual communities of the United States as a necessary investment in the future of adult education and the population trends of the future.

Policy around these circumstances demonstrates the additional need for change. A common hurdle for adult multilingual learners is English language proficiency. While some may view learning English on a scale of progress that leads to native-like speaking status (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022), emergent multilingual students are often forced into language programs that fit the standards of the institution rather than the goals or

circumstances of the participants. To combat this, there needs to be changes in policy to move away from the imagined monolingual speakers of an ideal society to the identities and assets of the real and current adult multilingual learners (Benevot et al., 2022; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). In addition, the work of Benevot concludes that to promote the sustainability and monitoring of ALE the goals must also include support of the interactive potential of local learning practices including that of indigenous knowledge. Therefore giving an additional example of a direct overlap with the practices of translanguaging pedagogy which are outlined in the next sections. Not only can these practices promote values for teachers and students in alignment with equity and inclusion for all, but they can also help to transform and break down hierarchical structures for the educational practices of the future.

### **Translanguaging**

Translanguaging, or the practice of incorporating students' native languages and entire communicative repertoire into the classrooms of multilingual students, is a dominant theory in language learning environments (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). This view of language summarizes that the usage of a student's native language as well as any other languages they speak should and do work together to produce effective communication (Wei & Lin, 2019). Cenoz and Gorter went on to note that translanguaging also establishes a foundation for both the linguistic and nonlinguistic elements that help to employ meaning and comprehension within language. Translanguaging as a theory can provide both a framework for understanding language learning, as well as an instructional language learning pedagogy. They state that in the last decade, significant research has supported translanguaging as an effective pedagogical practice throughout various

educational settings. The following sections explore how this practice has evolved within different educational settings to demonstrate the use of translanguaging and its possible applications for this project. Examining research in areas of pedagogical design, the importance of context, English as a foreign language (EFL), higher education, and other additional contexts will help to define the different areas of translanguaging research and showcase potential benefits for multilingual adult settings as well. In addition, specifically focusing on the technology demands within these settings will map some of the successes and challenges for this project as well as other areas for potential research.

### ***Pedagogical Design***

According to Cenoz and Gorter (2019), translanguaging by design should include functional breathing spaces for using other languages, and the development of translanguaging practices with those languages through enhanced metalinguistic awareness that is both spontaneous and planned. Language use shouldn't fall into the traditional isolation of monolingual ideologies, but thoughtful consideration of the communities and contexts for language within a group should become the norm. It is important to note that translanguaging can sometimes be counterproductive to the preservation or revival of minority languages, but the context of the community as well as the goals of the learners will play an important role in determining those factors (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019).

The benefits of translanguaging pedagogy can be seen in a couple of areas. First, by looking at student engagement where students can use their multilingual resources to understand and complete different tasks. In these contexts, students were able to both understand better and see the value of their multilingualism as a positive asset in the

classroom (Cenoz & Santos, 2020; David et al., 2022). Second, in peer-scaffolded learning students were able to better collaborate, helping to expand the knowledge of both students' individual language architectures as well as the larger class communicative repertoires as well (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Mustonen & Strommer, 2022). Another benefit of translanguaging design seen in studies of students at younger ages is in creating a strong sense of belonging and inclusion for multilingual learners (DeNicolo, 2019). While this area is less researched in adults, the overlap in the promotion of these feelings of belonging and inclusion has seen proven benefits to the continuation and motivation of adult students long term (Evans & Tragant, 2020). Leading to potential positive effects for the adult populations and possible recommendations for counteracting the common problem of dropout that exists among adult learners (DeNicolo, 2019; Evans & Tragant, 2020).

Despite the many benefits of supporting translanguaging in the classroom, there are also several difficulties. Specifically, some of the biggest challenges in implementation are focused on practices directly involving teachers. These teacher-led practices are often faced with issues in creating routines and grouping, classes with large ranges of language proficiencies, and most importantly school, level, or program structures around translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019; David et al., 2022; Singleton & Flynn, 2022). The ability of teachers to implement the translanguaging design is a practice that needs to be supported with both time and space for real and actionable implementation which in many research examples was often missing. This was seen in David et al. 's (2022) study as a major concern as many teachers commented on the administrative pressure to focus on other priorities. Researchers additionally noted

challenges including teachers' feelings of nervousness about multilingual engagement, development of print literacy in other languages, overreliance on oral strategies, and general difficulty in both student and teacher comfortability using multiple languages. Researchers also reported reactions from teachers who felt translanguaging was ideologically supported as a benefit to their students, but not supported in the current testing and accountability measures, thereby creating a constraint on them specifically to implement. This same feeling was also noted in the Cenoz and Santos (2020) study that reflected on the "challenge of implementing pedagogical translanguaging at the school level because it implies coordination among teachers, professional development courses, and the development of translanguaging materials for different subjects" (p. 8). Leading to the conclusion that some of the biggest challenges to translanguaging pedagogy are not centered on the teacher and program buy-in, but the commitment hierarchically to adopt the practices fully. Directly related to the challenges of these practices in overcoming the similar challenges of traditional language separation ideologies of the schools and institutions they fall within (Singleton & Flynn, 2022). While many teachers felt these challenges were worth combating for the promotion of inclusion and equity, pushing forward these practices was seen as a major deterrent, and an important space for teachers to help promote awareness and create real actionable change. The translanguaging pedagogies explored have shown that students can truly benefit from their unique multilingualism if provided with practice opportunities (Cenoz & Santos, 2020; David et al., 2022).

As an additional note of the numerous studies related to translanguaging throughout the world, the United States has less of a presence in translanguaging practice

and research in comparison to many European and Asian countries (Kim & Weng, 2022). However, there has been a lot of growth in this area in the last few years and many of the practices are starting to gain more recognition in both research and practice currently. Since translanguaging pedagogy is still very fluid, the development of sufficient knowledge for teachers and students is an important factor. Creating the knowledge base for how to perform tasks and activities that support translanguaging is part of the shift that may take time and buy-in for mainstream educational systems in the United States to adopt and something that this research hopes to shed light on (Hasan et al., 2020).

### ***Importance of Context***

Translanguaging as a pedagogical practice has its limitations, and while there are gaps in the research, one key factor outlined is the importance of context. Current research in the area of how the different contexts play a major role in the theoretical and pedagogical practices of translanguaging applications concludes that there is no singular approach or method that works for all (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019). For example, in some communities translanguaging can be seen to empower minority languages (DeNicolo, 2019), but not necessarily in all contexts, so careful consideration of these factors needs to be determined first (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Singleton & Flynn, 2022; Wei & Lin, 2019).

Throughout the variety of contexts examined, assessing the effectiveness of translanguaging practices proved to be a second large barrier. This assessment is often tied to the testing systems used in a variety of contexts. Testing based on skills that have not taken into consideration the communicative competence of learners, and that of those who don't fit within the idealized native speaker is a pervasive problem seen throughout

the classes and programs implementing translanguaging practices (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019; David et al., 2022). There is a great need to find a balance between the idealized theory and practice that also aligns with the measured points of reference or assessment of learners. In David et al.'s (2022) study of teachers participating in translanguaging professional development the majority of teachers ideologically supported the practices, but they felt constrained by the testing and accountability practices students were accountable for. Therefore expressing the same need for systematic changes to support implementing the strategies overall that was seen in translanguaging pedagogy. Support for these changes also needs to be seen in the testing, monitoring, and reporting systems as well. Again, this showcases the need for larger-scale movement and ideological shifts. The underlying challenge of how to align the structure of ALE to start accounting for elements of translanguaging practice within its various levels systematically is a major problem seen here. To make the necessary changes for translanguaging to become a common core practice, the bottom-up or micro-level influence cannot be a stand-alone approach. These practices must be promoted and seen as viable options throughout the ALE structural domains for translanguaging practices to truly become transformational.

The research of Singleton and Flynn (2022), as well as Sultana and Fang (2024), provide additional perspectives on the applications of translanguaging practices seen within specific settings and conclude that translanguaging is not always optimal. They argue that translanguaging can sometimes be more work with fewer benefits, and is very dependent on the circumstances. Also, these researchers' critical view of translanguaging practices argues that a crucial component of successful implementation is directly tied to language learning environments. Again this demonstrates that a key component of

successful translanguageing is alignment with the context in which it is applied. There are a variety of contexts where these opportunities have been successful and pedagogical advantages do exist, primarily within language classrooms and communities of English-dominant countries and the global south. However, these practices are still debated in other contexts, specifically those of minority language maintenance programs.

### ***English as a Foreign Language***

Historically English language learning has been tied to traditional views of second language acquisition theories that define first languages (L1) and second languages (L2) as separate systems (Hasan et al., 2020). Recently the concept of translanguageing has opened this space for debate as it views language as part of a single homogeneous system. When looking at translanguageing in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts these pedagogies are often studied concerning specific skills and abilities that they can enhance or promote (Kim & Weng, 2022). As outlined in the two studies below, translanguageing pedagogy can have numerous benefits that strengthen students' knowledge in the areas of grammar, phonological awareness, and even specific oral or written skills.

Cenoz and Santos (2020) provided support for the pedagogical translanguageing opportunities that can be practiced in EFL multilingual learning environments. This study focused on the use in primary and secondary schools in the Basque region of Spain. The results provided new opportunities for language learning and language awareness in the context of multilingual education that have meaningful applications to other contexts. Particularly the soft approach to the language boundaries. In this study, English was the main language which was successful in all three of the contexts examined. In one activity



the benefits of learning English grammar by reading multilingual news was examined, presenting a clear overlap with the skills that are a necessary part of many adult education programs. The biggest takeaways from the teachers implementing the pedagogy were focused on providing flexibility in implementation and lessons. Researchers also noted the importance of grouping students. For example, by providing support only for students who were struggling with language in the class, and even though these practices could be implemented in the larger group in different models this differentiation was helpful within this context. Some of the drawbacks to this model were that it required a lot of planning and specific awareness of the individual students' needs (2020).

In Cenoz and Gorter (2022), the translanguaging practices focused on a variety of different language levels including phonetics, syntax, pragmatics, and discourse having positive impacts within these areas. They also focus on the specific skills of students doing translanguaging by looking at various reading, writing, speaking, and listening tasks. As an example, a strong practice that helped learners achieve a deeper understanding of academic texts involved students being tasked to read or listen to the text in one language, and then summarize it in another, either through writing or speaking practice. In this example, participants are applying several cognitive skills at the same time and are working to alternate between the use of two languages in both input and output. As supported in the study by Cenoz and Santos (2020), students had positive reactions to the use of three languages (English, Spanish, and Basque) in a lesson related to reading the news and reporting on the findings using all three languages. They enjoyed the use of learning the three languages together and grew their awareness of the benefits of multilingualism to further their understanding of the information. Overall the successes

in these studies demonstrated the need for clear parameters regarding the type of program or class, the general aim of translanguaging, and organization which included planned activities that support the soft boundaries between languages.

The studies above provided specific examples of translanguaging successes in EFL contexts. The research of Kim and Weng (2022) supports these practices as well. In their systematic review, they found that research generally supports translanguaging instruction as a tool for reinforcement and creation of classroom rapport. In addition, these researchers showcased findings in K-12 contexts that concluded translanguaging pedagogies can help in correcting student behavior and elevating equal access to knowledge. In higher education translanguaging uses were more centered on supporting skills for students in multilingual written and oral communication skills (Kim & Weng, 2022). In these examples, much of the research in EFL contexts focuses on skill acquisition, while researchers in Hasan et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of using these educational spaces to educate learners about the benefits of their L1 or native language as a resource. They stress the importance of discussion with students about the funds of knowledge and human diversity they bring with them to the classroom. In contrast to the research in primary education settings, when working with adults it is both beneficial and engaging for them to talk about and acknowledge the translanguaging pedagogy that is taking place (Hasan et al., 2020).

### ***Higher Education***

The prominence of language-compartmentalized approaches to education has dominated higher educational landscapes for many years. More recently these views have been challenged by new ideologies and approaches including that of translanguaging

pedagogies (David et al., 2022). The practice and use of purposeful and strategic planning of translanguaging spaces to leverage multilingual students' entire linguistic repertoire can be seen in research like Rodriguez et al.'s (2021) case study. In this Hispanic-serving higher education institution in Texas, two instructors curated translanguaging spaces by applying the theory to their syllabi and course design. They then reflected on the practice of examining student interactions, course design, and instructional decisions made to promote the development of these linguistically inclusive spaces. The research resulted in advancing students' bilingualism, and fully utilizing and validating their linguistic repertoires to benefit overall learning. Here it is important to note that the successes seen are directly related to this specific setting and environment, where the majority of students in this US-based institution were English and Spanish bilingual. In different settings like that of Sultana and Fang's (2024) study in Bangladesh and China, the creation of the spaces was seen as an extreme hurdle to overcome for instructors. This struggle is representative of how the role of translanguaging in higher education is very dependent on the languages spoken and the countries where they are being implemented. Sultana and Fang (2024) concluded that applying the translanguaging pedagogy as compared to mother-tongue-based practices in the higher education areas of law, general education, and business posed a significant change to the monolingual English biases that existed, and the time needed to adopt these changes was not ultimately worth the work and effort of implementation. Thus demonstrating that higher education still has a lot of work to do in decolonizing global language pedagogies in favor of English, before translanguaging can even become a viable practice in many places around the world. The development of translanguaging from the perspective of bilingual or multilingual students

in higher education has a larger connection to the dominance of the English language within these contexts (Rodriguez et al., 2021; Sultana & Fang, 2024), and while both positive and negative outcomes were examined more research within the field is needed. Specifically research in the area of multilingual or non-English contexts which is an extremely underrepresented area and a gap in the current research.

### ***Additional Contexts***

In looking at translanguaging beyond the classroom recently interest in how this theoretical framework could be applied in other nonacademic contexts like workplaces and vocational studies has appeared (Singleton & Flynn, 2022). These areas also create an overlap with ALE as part of the second stage which is focused on gaining skills and knowledge necessary for employment (Tamassia et al., 2007). The work of Jonsson and Blasjo (2020) observes the common practice of writing within a workplace as shifting between monolingual and translanguaging modes depending on the context and use of that writing. These findings indicated that the use of both English and Swedish within the workplace was an integrated skill, and the ability to both translanguage and produce monolingual work was considered crucial for professional success within the companies studied (Jonsson & Blasjo, 2020). This created an environment where professionals could draw on the many different semantic resources available, and in many ways encouraged the practices of translanguaging within the work context. These translanguaging practices are more natural and spontaneous in comparison to the intentional practices of pedagogy seen in classroom studies, and an area of research that should be explored further.

In the research of Mustonen and Strommer (2022), translanguaging in vocational-specific learning settings also proved beneficial. The ability to positively

impact students' individual multilingual understandings, as well as with the field-specific content was a proven strength. The findings of this research indicated that further analysis of the pedagogical multilingual and translanguaging practices should be studied specifically for the development of increased presence in the common monolingual ideologies that persist in vocational education currently (Mustonen & Strommer, 2022). This research showcases the importance of creating a true multilingual workforce as something that starts in job training and learning spaces to encourage these practices from the beginning and continues into the places of employment (Jonsson & Blasjo, 2020; Mustonen and Strommer, 2022). When looking at this research together one can surmise that this modeling of success applies across stages in helping to create spaces and opportunities for translanguaging practices on a potential ladder of development.

The sections above have examined the many benefits and challenges of translanguaging throughout several different contexts. The benefits can be seen not only for the individual students and teachers but also across the many different contexts viewed. There is not one specific way to implement translanguaging pedagogy, but in all cases, the aim is to promote the practices of using learners' entire multilingual repertoire to promote learning and achievement. This aim is in direct alignment with the promotion of equity and inclusion that is seen in first sections on ALE, and will also be explored next in sections regarding technology use.

## **Technology**

Technology and its uses in adult education have been revolutionized in the last few decades. The explosion of apps and online platforms has provided learning opportunities for so many adults who would otherwise not be able to participate (Allman

& Guethler, 2021; Howell et al., 2023). This growth and opportunity have provided many adult learners with positive effects. However, conversely, the research on mitigating many of the dispositional barriers to learning has shown an even bigger divide for adults who struggle to use technology. Recently the field has seen an even larger discrepancy created by the loss of students during the pandemic. In contrast to the strengthened access for students who were able to thrive digitally and connect in new, often more efficient ways (Smythe, 2022). The complex issues and experiences of this recent history are now more important than ever in helping vocalize these inequalities and propel educators and teachers to continue using creative solutions that push the boundaries of both technology and education forward. The expansion of technology in ALE is a space for continual growth while also being ever cognizant of the challenges still to be faced, and resiliency for change that is inevitable within the field.

### ***Digital Pedagogies***

In Carhill-Poza's (2017) study, technology-enhanced learning environments provided English learners the spaces to use and interact with academic English through multimodal content. Translation material facilitated critical thinking and comprehension and gave participants access to explore independent interests as well as collaborate with other students, texts, and teachers. This research is specifically significant because the technologies used were not programs designed for language learning, but rather technologies adapted school-wide for classroom use. Research like this supports the application of technology if implemented correctly as working in various content areas, like the adult education technology curriculum this project intends to promote. By drawing on the asset-based foundation for teaching and learning with technology,

researchers have verified an important factor in supporting multilingual students in the context of multimodal learning models. This research has also supported technology for equity through its innovative use of smartphones and tablets as tools that can bridge the gap for language learners by using common global digital technologies. Through the planned implementation of Carhill-Poza's integrated model transformative benefits were seen within the students, teachers, and classrooms.

In Kobrin et al.'s (2021) study on the professional development of adult educators integrating technology, there were several key components found. Researchers concluded that integration needed the following five components: to be ongoing, experiential, collaborative, inquiry-based, and practitioner-centered. As all of these components proved beneficial for the learning of adult education teachers, it may be inferred that these practices can and should be extended to adult students as well. The research shows how using these same components to build a parallel structure where similar learning practices are used for both students and teachers alike is beneficial in an ALE environment. By creating spaces that can then be seen equally, they can foster an environment of equity and inclusion, one in which the teachers' and students' perspectives are not viewed as separate, but instead as a larger part of the community of practice (Smythe, 2022). In turn, helping to demonstrate the use of technology within these spaces that is truly representative of digital equity for all. As technology is a field of constant innovation and change, staying up to date with the practices modeled for adult learners to include the teachers in the same category represents a path toward full community collaboration and equity.

### ***Tech Tools***

Several technology tools currently exist that can be used to enable students to interact across languages. These include the translation and multimedia response tools like those available in Google Classrooms, or OneNote for classrooms (Allman & Guethler, 2021). For teachers, implementing the specific tools within the systems can have an additional benefit because often they are already familiar with these platforms, so it is only a matter of demonstrating and promoting specific functions available within the systems they already use. For example, helping to provide dual access to languages for both teachers and students is a key component of translanguaging pedagogy, and access to these tools comes within both Google and Onenote platforms. Also, by using the software's dictionary or voice typing features, support of translational translanguaging practices could help with students' use of academic vocabulary as seen in the research of Allman and Guethler (2021). In another example, Kobrin et al. (2021), one teacher simply reframed the use of the Google search engine to help support students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In this workforce training program, students were able to use the Google search engine to complete digital mind maps, and then they used it again to find professionals in their field of interest. Using this information, the students were then asked to contact them over email and request additional information or possibly even request an informational interview. Not only did this study help showcase practices promoting the students' use of technology independently, but it also exhibited how to scaffold the technology used throughout a lesson (Howell et al., 2023; Kobrin et al., 2021).



Finally, as a note of caution when using any technology tools the cost-benefit analysis of the usefulness of apps and programs is an important factor for consideration. There are hundreds of apps designed for students wanting to improve their language skills and not all of them are equally as useful (Alhamed, 2021). Many of the programs are often expensive, so it is important to thoroughly research and vet the technology to match the participants' needs and desires. In addition, Howell et al. (2023) mentioned taking precautions even with the numerous free resources available, as the software may come with additional risks like data mining or selling personal information to third parties. Teachers and students alike should work to educate themselves on some of the risks before implementing any new technology tools (Howell et al., 2023).

## **Conclusion**

Findings from this review of literature have brought together the areas of adult education, translanguaging, and technology. The articles analyzed have demonstrated the strong connections between the equity and inclusion goals of ALE and the practice of translanguaging within these spaces to promote the use of technology for all learners. Some of the specific translanguaging practices seen helped to empower multilingual learners and promoted equal access to knowledge for adult learners. These pedagogies, when thoughtfully implemented within their contexts, had many positive effects like creating inclusive learning environments, facilitating language learning, and increasing student participation (Kim & Weng, 2022). However, challenges were also observed and the desire from teachers for more systematic and hierarchical support was a commonly occurring issue. Moreover, the benefits and challenges of translanguaging pedagogy as well as technology integration present a need to be clearly defined within ALE structures

on a larger scale to become viable practices and methods used by teachers. The micro-level practices need to be supported throughout the structural framework to create a cohesive connection between all the levels and build up true equity and inclusion throughout the various domains. Finally, problems in determining the multiple meanings of translanguaging were also evident (Singleton & Flynn, 2022), and in coming back to the initial question at hand in the context of adult technology learners, translanguaging as a pedagogical practice can be beneficial with careful consideration for the specific contexts and approaches utilized. In advocating for continuation of these practices there is also the awareness that this theory, while generally seen as positive in practice, needs to be further researched in other areas of academics. That is to say, it's not universally seen as a strategy that works in all contexts. Therefore more research is needed to help determine the long-term efficacy and practice of this pedagogy as well as more support from the higher-level institutions that are mentioned at the beginning of this chapter to support the teachers and organizations who are truly working to achieve inclusion and equity for all.

Technology-integrated curricula like that which will be used for this project have provided an invaluable resource for adult learners. Not only in cultivating support for adults of all types to increase technology skills but specifically for those who are not native speakers of English. Many of these tools and applications can be used to broaden the support for ALE with the right implementation practices. In addition, this work can help to push for more equity within adult education for those who don't meet the more traditional monolingual standards that many adult programs and tools rely on and promote. Ultimately the ideas presented in this review of research lead back to the initial

research question; *How can teachers best support translanguaging instructional practices in an adult technology curriculum?* By supporting the goals of the GDP and SGD four in creating a truly inclusive and equitable education system for lifelong learning. In chapter three, the discussions and method for implementing the translanguaging pedagogies within the specific technology curriculum are developed, as well as a timeline for the project and analysis of the populations intended for implementation of the created curriculum support activities.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Project Description

#### Introduction

The following chapter describes my curriculum enhancement project. To begin, there will be an overview of the research that was significant for this project. Next, I describe the setting where the curriculum supports are intended for use, including the intended audience of the project. After that is a description of the three curriculum activities supported by the research which will be the authentic, student-centered materials created for this capstone project. This is followed by a discussion on how this project will be assessed to measure student learning and a timeline. Finally, I end with an overview, and what to expect in Chapter Four.

#### Research Overview

This chapter begins with research that was relevant to my question: *How can teachers best support translanguaging instructional practices in an adult technology curriculum?* To investigate this question, I looked at the three themes of adult education, translanguaging, and technology together and how they connect to the common goal of teaching practices that promote inclusion and equity. The integration of translanguaging pedagogy and digital tools in ALE represents a continuously moving target, as these fields combine to meet the diverse needs of the adult learners they serve. For adult education teachers it is important to understand their role in promotion and access to these practices that will encourage the use of new digital tools and pedagogy, to create meaningful change within the bigger systems and networks of ALE.

### ***Translanguaging Pedagogy***

While mixed findings were explored, in general research supported translanguaging pedagogy as beneficial if implemented and supported in the right contexts (Kim & Weng, 2022). Overall, the research supports the following three design elements for best practices of pedagogical translanguaging that will structure the updates created for this curriculum project. First, by providing translation support, students' metalinguistic awareness often increases, which can empower multilingual learners to participate and help dismantle compartmentalized approaches to instruction (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). Second, embracing the fluid use of other languages can increase scaffold support for English language learners, and help with comprehension and explanations of academic material. The use of other languages in class will also help to build classroom rapport through collaboration and engagement (Kim & Weng, 2022). Finally, the use of culturally relevant texts and materials will promote the diversity of learning and reinforce an atmosphere of collective learning and problem-solving. These supports are designed to help all students, but specifically English language learning students, learn and engage better with the material of the technology curriculum email unit as described in the next sections.

### ***Digital Tools***

The selected technology tools for this project will focus primarily on Google apps. The use of these six additional Google software programs will be integrated into the activities at various times and with specific intentions. These include Google Docs, Forms, Slides, Drive, Translate, and Meet. These tools were selected as they fit well with the Gmail platform that the unit is based on, and all of these apps are free as part of the

Google-provided products when students create a Gmail account. Providing students with access to these tools both inside and outside of class as many of them often have personal Gmail accounts. In addition to the Google apps, materials will include one additional platform Padlet to support student translanguaging during the word wall activities. The Padlet platform will be used for prompting student collaboration as well as backchanneling in the digital word wall activity.

### **Setting**

This project is intended for use at the adult education charter school where I currently work. This school serves primarily adult immigrants here in the Washington DC area. The specific class is for beginner technology students with around 20 adult students ranging from 20-80 years of age. Many students enter the class with no or very limited technology experience. There are a significant number of seniors as well, with about a third of students over 60 years old. The two biggest populations of students are Spanish- and Amharic-speaking, but there are generally a few other speakers of languages like French, Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese, and other native languages. All of them have tested into an intermediate level of English based on a school-wide assessment for entry into this class. The class meets three days a week for approximately three hours and students are also given two hours of asynchronous or homework to complete in addition. Students are provided with a school laptop that they can use during class and at home when needed. This class is one semester long and covers four units on computer basics or fundamentals, internet, email, and Microsoft Word using the Northstar Digital Literacy assessments for testing. This capstone project will provide three enhancement activities

designed to support learning during the five-week email unit. Additionally, the second activity may also apply for class use during the entire semester.

### ***Audience***

The intended audience for this work is the current and future adult students, as well as the teachers and staff of the charter school where I work. Since this class is focused on computer basics, the email unit is an ideal place to try and implement these supports. Email is a communication norm these days and an important skill that supports conversations about languages and communication very naturally, which showcases the use of authentic materials and experiences for students when learning. Email is also a transferable skill for many of the adult students at the school, as they are immigrants who are working on job searching and learning to communicate their needs here in the United States. These materials can provide the opportunity for adaptation and use by other teachers and students throughout the school.

### **Curriculum Activities**

This project will consist of three support activities that are centered around pedagogical translanguaging and technology integration during the five-week curriculum unit on email basics. The first activity is a student Digital Literacy Action Plan (DLAP) developed by Riggs (2022). This four-part plan for creating goals is designed to help students increase learner agency, integrate digital literacy skills, and differentiate learning, all important aspects of teaching in an adult education environment. The second activity will be an ongoing multilingual word wall. This activity will span the entire unit and is supported in two models, one in-class and one digital to strengthen both multilingual and multimodal student participation (David et al., 2022). Finally, the last

activity will use translated email texts to help students examine and identify the common parts of an email (Cenoz & Santos, 2020). The translated email texts, all examples from former students will be used in combination with annotation and collaborative tools to further engage students in the various digital applications available for practice (Howell et al., 2023).

In addition to the planned activities listed above, the integration of the four types of technology tools recommended by Howell et al.'s (2023) study will be applied. These tools originated from the innovative uses of technology during the pandemic, and work to democratize adult learning. There are several benefits of the tools, including the ability to open opportunities for students' voices, students working with others, and anxiety management. Also, these practices will promote representative learning decisions by both students and teachers alike (Howell et al., 2023) in alignment with the best practices of translanguaging pedagogy. The four tools as categorized by Howell et al. are collaborative, backchannel, annotation, and polling. As mentioned earlier, the collaborative tools will come in a couple of forms, primarily when using the Padlet word wall and Google Meet discussions. Additionally, throughout the unit, the focus on backchannel tools will demonstrated by the continual use of new terms on the multilingual word walls. Also, the class will have ongoing discussion pages posted each week on the class Schoology page which is part of the overall model in the school's learning management system. These discussion spaces will provide additional opportunities for students to ask questions throughout the unit and check in with the teacher and other classmates. Next, the annotation or social tools will be provided by the comments features of Google Docs and take place during the third activity on email



translations. Finally, at the end of the unit practice polling using Google Forms will help students consolidate learning and comprehension of material by summarizing the unit terminology and vocabulary.

### ***Activity One: Student Learning Plan***

To begin there will be a four-part plan which is based on the Riggs (2022) model of DALP. While the original model uses a graphic organizer for students to chart their goals, planning, and learning strategies, this plan will break the activities into four specific lessons, starting with goal setting, second planning, followed by learning, and finally reflection. During each process of this plan, students will work with a different Google app as a way of identifying and incorporating the variety of tools available on the platform. Furthermore, the emphasis on Google apps will reinforce the benefits that are provided by Gmail account holders which ties back nicely to the unit focus of email.

**Part One: Goal Setting.** In this activity during week one of the unit students will create a mind map of their goals related to email. The goals will be developed using the DLAP plan to help students align their individual goals with the digital literacy skills they need by enabling them to choose objectives, resources, and devices they want to explore. Again, this allows the space for them to connect the goals back to the digital skills necessary for achievement. As an example, a student might write work as a general goal which is then tied to the skills of using a phone to send emails to their boss or coworkers. This helps students in making the connection between the goal and the bigger picture of technology within that goal. This mind map will also be a visual reminder for each student throughout the unit. In theory, this goal setting should be open to various devices and options for students to choose from however, given the range and nature of the

students in my setting, this map will be scaffolded for students. Devices will include school laptops, smartphones, or tablets, and students can decide which device will be their primary focus as they work on improving email communication. Another important aspect of the student goal-setting activity will be including a personal photo chosen by each student. This personal photo will help center the work on their unique voices and bring an element of their individual stories to the lesson (Shufflebarger, 2022). Finally, it will be good reinforcement for the use of multiple devices as many of the students will choose a picture from their phone or take a selfie, which will need to be inserted into the document on the laptop or tablets used in class.

**Part Two: Planning.** After the initial goal-setting activity, students will move to step two, planning. This will come as a list of materials and resources that students can choose from related to their goals. For example, some students may be focused on setting up or organizing their email accounts, so they will find practices that are related to accounts and settings from the main resource page. This will be a chance for students to work on their skills in copy and paste as they will need to look at the resource list provided and choose from it five to eight resources that they plan to practice that support their goals. This resource list will be provided as an email attachment as well as copied in students' Google Drive to help facilitate the activity copy and paste tasks with a Google Docs graphic organizer template for goal planning. Once they have the Planning Doc with the resources they plan to explore, this page will then act as a timeline and guide them through completing each activity. Additionally, many of these resources will also have language support available within them. For example, a reference for a specific YouTube video that has Spanish translations would be one resource they could select for

practice. Again this reinforces the translanguaging atmosphere of fluid language boundaries that are used throughout these materials.

**Part Three: Learning.** To build on the document and timeline that students made in step two, after completing each activity students will fill out a short Google Form about what they learned. This will give them a chance to independently measure and analyze the tools they have chosen to help them reach their initial goal. This process along with the graphic organizer in step two is measured from a flexible learning standpoint, so a student may realize that they need to go back and adjust the activities they selected because it was too easy or too difficult for them. For example, they may learn that the video they chose about how to send an email attachment feels too advanced, so they should go back to the resource page and choose something simpler to start, like a vocabulary matching game. Giving students the agency and opportunity to focus on the resources that best meet their needs, and adjust in real-time to the tools they are using is an important step in building their overall digital literacy.

**Part Four: Reflection.** For the final portion of the student plan, students will focus on small group reflections. This reflection discussion will allow students to work with others in the class that had similar goals as them and will take place on Google Meet. Additionally, this meeting will allow students to work on authentic practice with sending emails, and reinforce many of the skills practiced in class as they work together in small groups to set up a time for their reflection discussions. These short chats about their experience in the class and their overall learning during the email unit will take place at the end of the unit before student testing. These reflection discussions will be guided by a set of questions related to students' thoughts on the processes, resources, and

achievements that they made in class. Specifically identifying the tools or activities that they enjoyed working with, and also those that were not as good for them.

***Activity Two: Multilingual Word Wall and Kahoot Summary***

One focus area for beginner technology students is expanding vocabulary and learning the content-specific language for successful digital navigation of material. To help promote this, the second activity will focus on creating two multilingual word walls, using common email vocabulary. One version of the word wall will exist in the classroom and will be used as an introduction to the important vocabulary at the beginning of the unit. The same wall will also be available on Padlet which students can access online. This activity will be ongoing for students to add additional words throughout the unit, either in person or online versions to promote student choice. Here the initial walls will be created with 26 words that the teacher has prepared ahead of time in all the languages spoken in the class. Next, the students will periodically add to either the digital or in-person version of the wall, as they discover new words that are important during their practice. For example, the teacher will prepare a word like *attachment* on the wall, and students may then expand on that by adding *file* as another word that could apply as a type of attachment. Additionally, the word walls will be scaffolded into the unit's discussion on email etiquette, where students will each create examples during the discussions on email greetings and closings.

At the end of the unit, the teacher will choose several terms from the walls to review as a class. The words will be added to a Google Form that will help summarize and consolidate the terms for students' understanding. Here the Google Form has space to use student examples, and their specific wording of the terms to help reinforce their

language and comprehension of the new vocabulary. Depending on the number of words, more than one Google Form can be used, and it is also possible to differentiate the terms into more than one Form for the creation of more focused vocabulary practice depending on student participation.

### ***Activity Three: Email Translations***

The third activity will take place during week three of the unit when students will be working on email formation and etiquette. The students will be analyzing email examples that are written in languages other than English. For example, the sample emails will be distributed in the most common languages of students in the class which are Spanish, French, and Amharic. Students will then use these texts to make important determinations about the five parts of an email. These listed parts include the email address, subject, greeting, body, and closing. This activity will be aided by an online annotation tool to help students have time to examine the emails individually in each of the languages provided and make connections between the texts. Then in the next steps, the English translation will be provided for the entire class to work on together as a group. Students will be focusing on the areas of greetings and closings and making important connections to email audience and attitude with the various non-English examples. This activity will be duplicated with two different email examples, one formal email as well as one informal. Each email example is also an authentic source that was written by a former student. The two email types will help reinforce the act of comparison and allow students to see the different email types and settings that are an important part of etiquette in various languages. Students' use of comparing the features of an email across multiple languages will help them to better understand the format and

nuances of email etiquette in a multilingual class environment (Cenoz & Santos, 2020). These emails will give students a chance to not only practice the proper formation but also compare the language and sentence structures of the emails as well to better understand and develop awareness of the similarities and differences across languages.

### **Assessment**

This class uses the assessments from Northstar Digital Literacy for student reporting and promotion. At the end of the unit, students take the Email Basics test provided by Northstar Digital Literacy. Since these activities are in addition to the curriculum provided for the unit, the creation of an alternative assessment is not necessary. However, all the tasks are aligned with the measures from the Northstar Unit, standards as well as the Carlos Rosario standards from the email basics task rubric. In addition, the students' Google Meet discussions in small groups that are part of their student learning plan activity can potentially be recorded. These videos would also provide insight into the efficacy of the activities if students give permission and are comfortable recording their conversations for the teacher to use and reflect on further.

### **Timeline**

This project has taken place over two semesters and after finishing GED 8400 this spring, I will continue to GED 8490 this summer completing the project and Chapter Four. I will be working on the material creation for the curriculum activities in the order showcased above. Starting with the student learning plan, followed by the multilingual word wall, and finally the email translation activities. I will be using the class's current curriculum as a guide, and plan to implement these enhancement activities in the fall 2024 school year.

**Summary**

This project is designed to support the ideals of true equity and inclusion in adult education to better support English language learners in an adult basic technology class. The translanguaging and digital tool design elements of the activities provided add to the email unit curriculum. They provide support that is intentional in centering students' values and increasing their metalinguistic awareness to participate more fully and communicate better when using emails. In summary, this chapter has provided a research overview and timeline. It has given a detailed description of the curriculum enhancement activities, as well as a discussion about the settings for these activities, and an outlined plan for assessment. Looking ahead, Chapter Four will explore the learnings and reflections from this capstone project, as well as suggestions for additional research in the fields of adult education, technology, and translanguaging.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusion

#### Introduction

Technology has become an increasingly important part of our everyday lives, including in the way that most people now communicate. As the standards for knowledge around technology continue to grow, so must the education and use of these important resources. This curriculum enhancement project aims to add to this knowledge base and combine these resources for use with adult language learners. Technology skills are important for adult students' success not only in school but also in personal and professional settings. The need for adaptability and flexibility of students in adult education are additional important factors for success, and the resources and materials used by teachers must match those needs. These aspects have led me to the project research question; *How can teachers best support translanguaging instructional practices in an adult technology curriculum?*

This chapter continues with a reflection on the major learnings during the creation of the project. After that a review of the literature that helped to guide this project. Next, it reflects on the implications and limitations of the work. This is followed by a summary of the benefits to the profession. Finally, it concludes with a summary reflection on the process and work.

#### Major Learnings

Throughout this project there are several things, I have learned about myself and my teaching practice. First, in examining the current research in ALE there are a large number of factors that work together to enable my work. While it is easy to focus on the



impact that I as a teacher have directly with students, understanding the bigger picture and implications of this work in a global context has given me a new perspective.

Thinking even more about how the plans and resources I create can be shared to help create positive change in other spaces is something that I gained through this experience.

Additionally, the openness to change and adaptation are two major takeaways.

Much of the research that I analyzed showcased new and innovative ways that educators are using technology and language. For example, the use of Google search by Kobrin et al. (2021) to help students practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Also, the innovative use of students' languages by Cenoz and Santos (2020) to scaffold language learning and reading comprehension. While working on the materials and resources for this project those principles of how can others use and adapt these materials were a driving factor and something that came from my understanding of the research I examined.

Finally, one concluding point is that being able to navigate a technological device, whether it is a learner's cell phone, computer, laptop, or tablet, is necessary in today's world. Given the use of technology both in and out of the classroom, these devices are only going to become more prominent and important in education. In looking at all of these factors, I believe that the curriculum support materials I have created are in alignment with the goals and research, and truly support a classroom environment that can enable the best practices of translanguaging and technology use to further the learning of students as well as teachers within my community.

## Revisit Literature

Students desire to learn technology has increased immensely in the last few decades (Allman & Guethler, 2021; Howell et al., 2023), and as more people continue to gain access and use technology in everyday life, learning to use this technology is even more important. From email communication with teachers and doctors to online check-ins, and two-factor authentications, so many simple everyday tasks have moved into the digital world. These tasks becoming an integral part of our daily lives, and play a valuable role in modern education. As technology use continues to develop, so must the research and use of this technology in education. Looking back at the research that was used to develop this project, the convergence of three major aspects of a multilingual adult technology student's needs were combined. These aspects centered around technology, adult education, and translanguage theories.

Technology and digital pedagogies have blossomed in the past decade, and as many integrated educational models have become more mainstream the benefits of such models can be quantified. Students' gains in interactions across languages, using different devices like smartphones and laptops, problem-solving, and even critical thinking are all established benefits found in the research (Allman & Guethler, 2021; Carhill-Poza, 2017; Kobrin et al., 2021). As the plethora of benefits of technology use continues to grow, it is ever more important to consider the use and accessibility of these technologies for students.

In the world of adult learning and education (ALE), access to technology is not always available, and this is oftentimes compounded negatively when looking at language learners in these settings (Boren, 2019; Cenoz & Gorter, 2019; Rodriguez et al.,

2021). This project lives in the micro-level space of an ALE multilingual literacy program in Washington DC, and while the benefits of this work and its intended audience are specific, the implications for extended use are exponential (Benavot et al., 2022; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). Specifically when thinking about how literacy and technology have become evermore intertwined, and are often now seen as coexisting factors in various ALE settings.

In examining the third contributing theory of translanguaging pedagogy the research has showcased mixed results in comparison to the clear benefits of technology use and practice. The principles behind the use of translanguaging pedagogy are in clear alignment with those of technology use and ALE in creating an equitable and inclusive learning environment (Benevot et al., 2020; Cenoz & Santos, 2020). However, the application of these practices and the context of learning often showcase significant challenges of implementation (David et al., 2022; Singleton & Flynn, 2022). Thus demonstrating a common question often faced by educators, whether translanguaging pedagogy is a hurdle worth overcoming, or in some circumstances something that is more ideologically desired and not functionally practiced.

In this section, major points and conclusions from the literature were used to help form the base for this project. As seen in the past few years, technology in education is here to stay. One additional question that remains is how that technology can be adapted to continue pushing forward the goals of equitable and inclusive education models that will dominate in the years to come. In the next section, the limitations and implications of this project are discussed.

## **Implications and Limitations**

There are several positive implications gained from this project. First, the project works to create an atmosphere of comfort and access to common technology tools for adult learners. The use of technology tools from Google allows for accessibility of students both in the classroom as well as outside. This also creates a space where students can easily share and collaborate using these resources in their communities. Providing students with an opportunity to further engage, and increase independence when working with this technology.

The materials, while designed for a specific class, also provide a lot of great resources for anyone wanting to improve email knowledge and communication. They are formatted in a way that is easy to share by using QR codes for all resources when available. This means that both within my school community and the larger professional community of ALE these material resources are now a tool that anyone can share for use. Since the project focused on using all free and open-source resource materials that are specifically designed for low and intermediate-level learners, different-level students can access and choose what materials they may need.

In the creation of this project, the design was intentional to help contribute to a community of learning. The ideas represented showcase how some of the best practices in the areas of technology, translanguaging, and ALE overlap and can be used to create classroom materials that better meet the needs of the multilingual adult students in this space. Even though these materials don't represent a change to the larger systemic guidelines and policies, they do contribute on a smaller community scale. The materials

shared can also have possible implications in some of the practices and policies around technology and language use at my current workplace Carlos Rosario with the hope of continuing this important dialogue within the community.

This project is focused on skills and resources for students learning to use technology. While the materials created are a great resource, they are unfortunately only available for students who have access to technology devices and the Internet. This limitation leaves a small group of students who lack device and Internet access unable to participate. Additionally, the use of translations throughout the materials for students was very time-consuming, and in classes that have several languages spoken other than those widely available, the use of all language translations may not be possible.

### **Future Research**

This project has many implications for further planning and the use of materials not only in the Computer Basics class but also with many of the other classes at Carlos Rosario. The expansion of how to better plan and implement technology is an area that will continue to develop as more teachers, classes, and students are exposed to plans and materials created. For example, the use of the Digital Literacy Action Plan (Riggs, 2022) could be expanded to other classes like ESL and GED within the school as a way to gain more insight into the effectiveness of these strategies. Additionally, the use of many of these materials is already widely available for students to use on smartphones. Allowing for research into how to apply these materials using these specific devices an additional area of need, and further research since smartphones are the device type that most ALE students have access to and are familiar with.

**Benefits to the Profession**

My goal in creating this project is to make my current classroom space truly inclusive and equitable for all students. The materials created will hopefully help students in my class and others within the community gain more knowledge and confidence when using technology. By giving them valuable resources to improve their language and technology skills while simultaneously building their independence as learners. Moreover, I hope the materials will benefit the teachers in my community as well, by sharing resources that can easily be adapted and changed, and promote the ideas of new ways to incorporate technology and language skills into their learning settings.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provides conclusions and reflections about the capstone project and process. First, it summarizes the major learnings and reflections made throughout the process. Next, it examines the literature and its importance in shaping this project's overall goals and objectives. Then, it describes some of the project implications and limitations. Finally, it ends with recommendations for future research and the benefits to the community and profession.

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