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RESPONSE TO THE OPPONENTS' REVIEWS

Éva Csillik:
**THE FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF PEDAGOGICAL
TRANSLANGUAGING IN HUNGARIAN HERITAGE LANGUAGE
EDUCATION**
**A Case Study of Hungarian-English Emergent Bilinguals in Early
Childhood Classrooms in New York City**

Supervisor:
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Dear President! Dear Opponents! Dear Committee!

I would like to begin by thanking my opponents, Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor and Dr. Szilvia Bátyi, for their positive evaluation and for their undivided attention reading my PhD dissertation scrupulously. I really appreciate your critical thoughts, as well as your words of praise. Furthermore, thank you for providing your expertise, conscientiousness, and your time suggesting improvements and future directions of work.

First, I will respond to the opponent review of Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor, and then to Dr. Szilvia Bátyi's opponent review.

Respond to the opponent review of Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor

In the first part of the opponent review, Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor recognizes the topic choice as one of the strengths of the dissertation. She highlights that it is "relevant and timely, and at the same time bold"; as the research is built around the key concept of 'translanguaging', which requires further refinements even in the present-day literature". She further points out that the novelty of the topic is brought about "by the peculiarities related to age of the researched group", "by the attempt to track spontaneous speech production (during unbound play)", and "by the complex interpretation of the contextual character and specific forms of translanguaging in the environment of Hungarian institutional education in New York". In the theoretical part of the dissertation, Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor finds the attempt of the exploratory research, to analyze the translanguaging speech situations from a language pedagogy perspective, very useful. She notices that the research data pursue further objectives and educational organization goals in the future to meet the needs of today's early bilingual children in New York, with Hungarian origins. She finds this type of research attitude, namely how the translanguaging pedagogical approach can be applied in practice in the small Hungarian ethnic community living around New York City, as "felicitous due to the enforcement of the knowledge accumulated through research in further development and strive for innovation".

In the second part of her opponent's review, Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor summarizes the research methodology used following the triangulation logic as a "serried strategy representing an individual scientific performance of its own", complimenting that the "qualitative and quantitative research are effectively combined leading to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon". She confirms that "the chosen research methodology has been imposed by the approach of multiple perspectives (the characteristics of linguistic socialization, its historical background, its cultural and institutional implications, etc.) towards the case study". Here, she highlights another strength of the dissertation, the rich bibliography supporting the theoretical background that "includes a list of more than 250 items, as well as digital resources, containing an up to par processing of the most important and up-to-date pieces of the literature connected to the topic" (e.g. the main texts on second, third language acquisition and use; the sociolinguistics of language classrooms; the history and current state of US citizens with Hungarian origins, etc.). Thank you very much to Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor for all the above-mentioned praiseworthy, encouraging, and positive feedback.

In the third part of my opponent's review, Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor indicates that the structure of the dissertation built up logically; as "each chapter is introduced with a summing up forecast which guides the reader in what the chapter is about" and as "the elaboration of the dissertation is built around the three main research questions, touching upon exposition of the research methodology used in the various subchapters".

The last two sections of my opponent's review contain my opponent's suggestions; to which I respond one by one below.

First of all, I accept my opponent's suggestion that in the final chapter it would have been beneficial to present a short summary of the individual results evoking the major theses of the dissertation. Second, I am very grateful for this perception of Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor and I highly appreciate that she mentioned this in her review. It is a very useful advice for me to grow personally, all the more so, since I have lacked self-assurance amongst my personal traits since I was a child. I have been working on incorporating self-expressing assertive communication skills into my character traits in the past fourteen years --since I have been living in the United States--, but I admit that there is still place for future growth. I completely agree with my opponent's suggestion and in the future I will be working on developing a firm, clear, and self-confident tone emphasizing my own achievements in my writing.

Moreover, I accept my opponent's further suggestion to rethink the objectives for development, according to the general recommendations and the specific visualization of further innovation in the given community. As we know, changing the culture of a school is a lengthy and obstacle-filled process. This is no different in heritage language schools that teach the national affiliation of the Hungarian diaspora and the Hungarian language abroad, thousands of kilometers away from the homeland. The initial steps of introducing innovative pedagogical principles can be challenging in a small closed community that tries to maintain their spiritual unity with the Hungarian nation wholeheartedly, but far away from its homeland. In such community, the primary challenge is to introduce the "growth mindset" to those who have been reigned with a "fixed-mindset" for decades (see Dweck, 2016[1]; Brock & Hundley, 2017[2]). This presumes that the key to the Hungarian national belonging is patriotism, the solely usage of the Hungarian language, the maintenance of Hungarian traditions, customs, holidays, and cuisine. Therefore, the members of this small Hungarian community may not be ready to new, innovative ideas and initiatives the way I originally suggested in my dissertation (pp.142-146).

I also re-thought Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor's first question "how the pedagogical principles of translanguaging could be transferred onto the level of the classroom in such a way that they serve the necessities of the community in question". As a Hungarian descendent language educator, the following initiatives at the level of the classroom (micro level) are realistic, feasible, and serve the necessities of the community that could be transferred:
(1) to introduce the new translanguaging pedagogical approach through other examples of Hungarian descendent heritage language learners, for instance, by sharing the results of other

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[1] Dweck, C. A. (2016). *Mindset. The New Psychology of Success*. How we can learn to fulfill our potentials (parenting, business, school, relationships). New York: Ballantine Books.
[2] Brock, A. & Hundley, H. (2017). *The Growth Mindset Playbook*. A Teacher's Guide to Promoting Student Success. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press.

heritage language schools where the effectiveness of the already applied translanguaging pedagogy has been measured successfully by students' performance in learning the Hungarian language (see Heltai, Jani-Demetriou, Kerekesné Levai & Olexa, 2017; Heltai & Kulcsár, 2017[3]).

(2) to familiarize administration and currently contracted but unskilled teachers with language learning strategies and innovative teaching practices; and by doing so, to popularize translanguaging practices and pedagogy in heritage language schools of the Hungarian diaspora. For example, the following list of strategies and best language teaching practices (I have been using with English Language Learners in the past fourteen years) could be put into practice in the case of Hungarian Language Learners in the school community in question or in other similar communities around the world:

- Empower young language learners by tying the curriculum to the interest of the learners, to such every day topics that students can relate to
- Hungarian language learners should not be learning the fundamentals of the Hungarian language in isolation; they should be applying their Hungarian language skills to rich academic content
- Use visual aids, such as pictures, drawings, charts, diagrams, maps, real objects, gestures, and the total physical response (acting out) method
- Incorporate hands-on activities with manipulatives (e.g. Math)
- Provide sentence frames or sentence starters
- Model activities for students to visualize the task instead of solely giving verbal instruction
- Use repetition, simplify language, speak slowly, increase wait time, emphasize vocabulary, and avoid idioms and slang
- Pre-teach key vocabulary words and concepts before introducing a new task, topic, or unit of study
- Establish routines in the class
- Create a culturally responsive, print-rich classroom environment (linguistic landscape) by displaying multilingual/multicultural signs, posters, photos
- Differentiate tasks based on (1) the level of Hungarian acquisition of the students, (2) student choice of task, and (3) learning styles of the students
- Provide multiple entry points to students to access content (see Gardner, 2006)[4]
- Allow peer learning, partner and group work
- Connect students' prior knowledge (brainstorm, list, web) and build background knowledge to content (text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world)
- Compare and Contrast linguistic features of Hungarian and English, and display these
- Use bilingual texts (Hungarian-English) or present texts both in Hungarian and in English

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[3] Heltai, J. I., Jani-Demetriou, B., Kerekesné Levai, I., & Olexa, G. (2017). „Olyan gyerekeket kaptam, akikről azt hittem, hogy buták": Transzlingváló osztálytermek Tiszavasváriban. *Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, 67 (11-12), 28-49.
Heltai, J. I. & Kulcsár, S. (2017). A romani beszéd és az óvoda: Beszédfejlesztési stratégiák és integrált kétnyelvűségi ideológiák Tiszavasváriban. *Anyanyelv-Pedagógia*, 10 (4), 47-59.
[4] Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple Intelligences. New Horizons*. New York: Basic Books.

- Provide Home Language Support (English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, etc.) and allow students to use their L1/L2/Ln in the classroom (code-switch or code-mix)
- Use technology (if available), such as Smart board, interactive language learning games/websites, etc.
- Give positive reinforcement, feedback, and praise

This lengthy --sometimes bumpy-- process would worth the energy and effort invested in order to increase motivation of students learning Hungarian as their heritage language, and on the long run, to attempt to revitalize the Hungarian language in this small community. By introducing the benefits of translanguaging practices and the above-mentioned best practices and teaching strategies to school administrators would ensure that Hungarian language learning is not only accessible for those Hungarian descendent young children who know the Hungarian language to some degree, but also for those Hungarian descendent young children who do not have the opportunity to learn Hungarian at home (e.g. children growing up in mixed marriage families like Chinese-Hungarian, Russian-Hungarian, Mexican-Hungarian, Vietnamese-Hungarian, etc.).

Furthermore, after re-thinking Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor's second question "what are the premise for a unitary language choice and language use in the institutional culture", I have to mention the "growth mindset" concept again, as I have referred to it previously. A "growth mindset" would particularly supposed to make changes expecting a positive future outcome of revitalizing the Hungarian language in this small ethnic community. According to Dweck (2016), a "growth mindset" would thrive on the challenges and would see possible failures not as evidence of unintelligence, but as a heartening springboard for growth and for stretching existing abilities.[5] Brock and Hundley (2017) describes it as to learn from feedback, criticism, and failure, to try to put more effort in the work, to get inspired by others' successes, and to keep wanting to learn and do better.[6] On the other hand, people with the "fixed mindset" expect everything good to happen automatically. They avoid facing the challenges because all difficulties will magically get resolved (e.g. sort of the way it happened to Cinderella, whose miserable life was transformed by her prince).[7] If the Hungarian ethnic community collaborate on a common goal to evolve the "growth mindset" collectively, then a unitary language choice and language use in the institutional culture would be possible to form. Only an enthusiastic, goal-oriented driving force applying the "growth mindset" concept forming the school culture would make it possible for Hungarian descent young children, regardless of their Hungarian language skills and backgrounds to feel welcomed, accepted, respected, and valued on Saturdays as members of this very small Hungarian ethnic community.

I thank my opponent from the bottom of my heart for her time, thought-provoking feedback, encouragement for future innovations for a "useful and applicable frame in the formal training

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[5] Dweck, C. A. (2016). *Mindset. The New Psychology of Success*. How we can learn to fulfill our potentials (parenting, business, school, relationships). New York: Ballantine Books.

[6] Brock, A. & Hundley, H. (2017). *The Growth Mindset Playbook. A Teacher's Guide to Promoting Student Success*. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press.

[7] Dweck, C. A. (2016). *Mindset. The New Psychology of Success*. How we can learn to fulfill our potentials (parenting, business, school, relationships). New York: Ballantine Books.

of linguistic attitude of several Hungarian communities living in minority or in dispersed communities around the world". I am very grateful for my opponent for evaluating my dissertation topic as "innovative", for considering that "its relevance has a scientific and social importance", for her encouragement for future innovations in the community in question, and for recommending and supporting the public defense of the dissertation.

I respectfully thank my opponent, Dr. Erika-Mária Tódor, in advance for accepting my answer.

Response to the opponent's review of Dr. Szilvia Bátyi

In the first part of the opponent's review, Dr. Szilvia Bátyi also finds the topic choice of the dissertation as "the novelty of the research" since "the topic of translanguaging practices of emergent bi- and multilingual children (Hungarian heritage speakers) in early childhood educational settings has been hardly investigated by any previous research". She further recognizes that due to the fact that "translanguaging as a new field of applied linguistics is still developing its own terminologies, theories and methodology" made this research challenging; meanwhile, my opponent believes that I have successfully taken the challenges, and I have developed appropriate methodologies to find the answers to my research questions. She also highlights that "the literature review, the chosen methodology, the analyses of the results and the conclusions are well-written".

Dr. Szilvia Bátyi further highlights the importance of choosing the most appropriate instruments for the research methodology (observations, recordings, interviews and questionnaires) that "provided enough data for the qualitative longitudinal study to see the full picture of the forms and functions of translanguaging used in the classroom and the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers and parents". She finds the qualitative design strongly justified. Moreover, my opponent declares "the description of the well-structured step-by-step data analyses procedure" as "an extremely valuable part of the research" due to the fact that I developed a framework for data analyses on my own. Additionally, my opponent considers the data analyses procedure praiseworthy and "a perfect example of how the triangulation of the methods can help explore patterns in qualitative data".

Last, my opponent corroborates that the sampling size should not be considered a shortcoming but a strength in my research, "as it allows the investigator to zoom in on individual cases". My opponent's confirmation was inspirational to read since other scholars has debated the validity and reliability of the research due to the sampling size.

Thank you very much to my opponent, Dr. Szilvia Bátyi, for her recognition of the strengths of my dissertation, for her praising words, and for her encouraging compliments.

In the second section, my opponent comments on the shortcomings of the dissertation; to which I answer consequently below. My opponent declares that the most critical remarks are connected to the structure of the thesis. I completely agree with my opponent and fully accept her suggestions. Therefore, in case of future publication(s) of the thesis (e.g. in the form of a

monograph), I will definitely take into consideration all changes to be made as my opponent, Dr. Szilvia Bátyi, proposed. Such as (1) numbering the subchapters, (2) including the problem statement and structure in Chapter 1 titled as *Research Problem* only and moving the rest of Chapter 1 (*Purpose of the Study*, *Significance of the Study*, *Delimitations and Limitations*) to Chapter 2 to be part of the literature review, (3) moving the *Background and Need* part right before the *Research Questions* in Chapter 2, (4) incorporating the definitions of terms to the body of the text instead of highlighting them separately as a glossary, (5) taking more attention on following systematic referencing --to only use surnames of the authors in the text-- and making sure that all parts of the thesis are properly referenced, e.g. *Sociolinguistic Goals and Socio Educational Collaboration in the Hungarian Ethnolinguistic Community* (pp. 46-48) where further references should be made from Fishman (1966)[8], (6) including Maria Polinsky's work such as '*Heritage Language Speakers and their Languages*'[9] and Silvia Montrul's work such as '*The Acquisition of Heritage Languages*'[10] in the dissertation, (7) indicating that the opposite views of "translanguaging-as-right" and "translanguaging-as-problem" (p.55) are own elaborations to define the positive and negative attitudes of scholars in the field towards 'translanguaging' that I have detected, and attempted to introduce these newly created terms to the field, (8) re-naming the second research question by replacing the word *influence* with the words *are related to*, (9) merging the subchapters, *Research Context* and *Research Site*, in Chapter 3 into a shorter description of the school, and (10) creating a new subchapter under the title *Translanguaging at an Early Age* in Chapter 2 to justify the choice of the participants.

I am immensely grateful for my opponent pointing out the problems with including a hypothesis in the dissertation in the form I did. I admit that I debated myself the necessity and relevance of including a hypothesis for the same reasons as my opponent claimed its useless nature, such as (1) there is not enough previous research for the strong grounding of the research, (2) due to the exploratory aspect of the research it is superfluous, and (3) the theory was created at the end of the research. I was uncertain whether or not a hypothesis would be in need in such research that is built upon the triangulation method; therefore, I included it anyways. Thank you very much, Dr. Szilvia Bátyi, for clarifying the redundant nature of it. My shortcoming originated from the fact that Dr. Szilvia Bátyi summarized the following way: "as the young field of translanguaging still suffers from some methodological shortcomings and could not offer her the means the means to approach". Even if my opponent found this challenge as one of the strength of the research, at the same time, this clearly shows that it could also fall short. With my opponent's reassurance, it is evident that these individual thoughts could be either completely left out from the dissertation or I could include them in the subchapter titled *Recommendations for the Future* in Chapter 5. These ideas could lead as future direction for further research to compare the existing data with a new set of data collected from a control group where no translanguaging would be allowed. Overall, I completely agree with my opponent that these thoughts in the form of a hypothesis is just not supportable.

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[8] Fishman, J. (1966b). *Hungarian Language Maintenance in the United States*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

[9] Polinsky, M. (2018). *Heritage Languages and their Speakers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

[10] Montrul, S. (2016). *The Acquisition of Heritage Languages*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

My opponent asked if I saw any relevance of students' age to the forms and functions of translanguaging in the research. As we know it from Linguistic Statistics, the researcher can manipulate the independent variable (e.g. gender, *age*, amount of sleep, etc.) in the research which then can influence a change in the dependent variable (e.g. language proficiency, reaction time, *language performance*, number of second taking the research participant to complete a task, etc.). In the case of an interventional child development research (e.g. experimental research) where there are two comparable cohort groups (one who is exposed to the phenomenon of translanguaging and one who is not), age could result significant differences. However, in the case of a non-interventional research (e.g. exploratory research), like the current research under discussion, where I had no additional cohort group (one without translanguaging practices), I did not consider the age factor (independent variable#1) to a significant degree. Besides age, I considered other naturally occurring developmental (cognitive) and individual factors influencing the translanguaging practices of the emergent bi- , and multilingual learners, e.g. neurobiological maturation, the degree of L1 activation, L1 entrenchment, relative L1–L2 dominance, education, length of time spent in the heritage language school, previous exposure to code-switching in the home, motivation, attention, etc. I also paid attention to the other independent variable of the research, the participants' different type of bi-, multilingualism (e.g. sequential vs simultaneous) (independent variable#2). Moreover, another aspect of age was also important to be considered, that is, when the onset of exposure of Hungarian (L2/Ln) occurred in the participants' life. Ultimately, to look at the relevance of students' age to the forms and functions of translanguaging was a great suggestion from my opponent, Dr. Szilvia Bátyi.

The following differences as far as the forms of translanguaging were noticed between the two different age groups:

In the Kindergarten group (participants were between the age of 4.5 and 6), the majority of the students were simultaneous balanced bi-, multilinguals. In this group, I detected that they used the forms and functions of translanguaging more often in their utterances as a result of learning both/all their languages since birth. They switched between the codes more often, with more confidence, and not only they engaged in code-mixing (unintentional) on the extra-sentential level, but also on the inter-sentential and intra-sentential levels. Some of them even developed brand new words, e.g. *hómaci* (polar bear) mixing linguistic features from both English (polar/jeges) and Hungarian (snow/hó) on the morpho-syntactic level. On the other hand, in the case of the Pre-Kindergarten group (participants were between the age of 2.5 and 4), the majority of students were sequential bilinguals, who started learning Hungarian before the age of three --the age that McLaughlin (1984) considers as the frontier of sequential and simultaneous bilingualism[11]-- but were dominant bilinguals in English since birth. Here, I did not detect as many occasions when students engaged in code-mixing as the students in the Kindergarten did. Also, they were not as confident as the Kindergarten participants were when they code-switched. As a result, I detected fewer occasions when the forms and functions of translanguaging was used in this group. They mostly engaged in code-mixing on the extra-

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[11] McLaughlin, B. (1984). *Second language acquisition in childhood: Preschool children*. Vol. 1. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

sentential (one word or phrase) level, very rarely on the inter-sentential, and almost never on the intra-sentential level. On the other hand, there were a few simultaneous balanced bilinguals in the group, who used the forms and functions of translanguaging more often in their utterances (similarly to the simultaneous balanced bi-, multilingual Kindergarteners) than the rest of the group because they were learning both/all their languages since birth.

The following differences as far as the functions of translanguaging were noticed between the two different age groups:

Both age groups of emergent bi-, multilingual learners were able to use all functions of translanguaging based on Halliday's (1975)[12] categories, such as heuristic, interactional, instrumental, regulatory, imaginative, personal, and representational. However, there was a slight difference between the Kindergarten group and the Pre-Kindergarten group which stemmed from the fact that some functions were used more often in the students' utterances than other functions. While in the Kindergarten group the representational, instrumental, and heuristic functions dominated slightly more; in the Pre-Kindergarten group the regulatory, representational, and heuristic functions were slightly more dominant.

Based on my classroom observations and the collected data, I can confidently state that emergent bi-, multilingual heritage learners in the Kindergarten group (simultaneous balanced bi-, multilinguals) spoke in lengthier utterances (simple and compound sentences), possessed and utilized a more varied vocabulary (more increased active and passive vocabulary), and used the forms and functions of translanguaging more naturally than the emergent Hungarian-English (sequential) bilingual students in the Pre-Kindergarten group, who mainly spoke in one-word-utterances or used simple sentences. However, I believe that these detected differences were mainly due to the developmental milestones in language acquisition and the Pre-Kindergarten bilingual students would most likely would show similar results as the Kindergarteners now in two years' time. It is essential to mention that students in the Kindergarten group were all admitted to English mainstream public schools, meanwhile Pre-Kindergarteners were not. That could also add to the detected differences in the increased language production because these students were already exposed to academic vocabulary and more complex language through every day instruction. All in all, age as an independent variable#1 together with variable#2 in this research correlated to the forms and functions of translanguaging to some degree. To gain precise understanding of the degree, further data analysis is necessary in the future.

Finally, some scholars on the field of Bilingualism who studied the phenomenon of code-mixing in early childhood second language acquisition noticed similar tendencies in code-mixing and code-switching of emergent bilinguals to what I noticed. Genesee (1989)[13] found that between the ages of 2 and 3, when children acquire more lexical and grammatical

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[12] Halliday, M. A. K. (1975). *Learning how to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language*. London, UK: Arnold.

[13] Genesee, F. (1989). Early bilingual development: One language or two? *Journal of Child Language*, 16(1), 161–179.

knowledge, frequency of mixing decreases. Then, Meisel (1994)[14] found that after the age of 3, language mixing increases again in some, but not all children. A recent study of Yow, Tan, & Flynn (2017)[15] suggested that by the time bilingual children are 5 or 6 years old, their code-switching behavior is similar to the code-switching of bilingual adults, a sign of bilingual competence; positively correlated with their lexical and grammatical knowledge. Therefore, it is secure to say that age is correlated with the forms and functions of translanguaging, that is, that the usage of the forms and functions of translanguaging increases as students age.

I am especially grateful for all the constructive feedback for Dr. Szilvia Bátyi. I am truly thankful for her time and effort to meticulously evaluate my dissertation. I highly value and respect her professional opinion which has already helped me learn tremendously. Above all, I appreciate her honest critique since it was very useful in order to rise to the occasion of future challenges! I want to express my personal gratitude for congratulating me and for classifying my research as "significant, important, and necessary". Her statements that I am "capable of conducting scientific research and writing a comprehensive report on it" and her encouragement that the "results can motivate other scholars to explore language practices in Hungarian diaspora communities" is particularly uplifting and honorific.

I respectfully thank my opponent, Dr. Szilvia Bátyi, in advance for accepting my answer.

New York, June 26, 2020

Éva Csillik
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[14] Meisel, J. M. (1994). Code-switching in young bilingual children. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16(4), 413–439.
[15] Yow, W., Tan, J. & Flynn, S. (2018). Code-switching as a marker of linguistic competence in bilingual children. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 21(5), 1075-1090. doi:10.1017/S1366728917000335