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Bridging the Artificial Gap: TESOL Frameworks for World Language Education and Advocacy

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Abstract

In this position paper we present research and data demonstrating how pedagogical frameworks traditionally used in TESOL contexts can be harnessed by world language (WL) educators to scaffold language learning and advocate for emergent multilingual language learners (EMLLs). Focusing on three pedagogical frameworks–Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), translanguaging, and multilingual ecology–we discuss how we have utilized these frameworks with WL teachers and teacher candidates and offer suggestions for how they might be used effectively in WL classrooms to both scaffold language acquisition and foster a greater appreciation for and pride in multilingualism.

Keywords*: Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), emergent multilingual language learners (EMLL), high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs), world language teachers*

Introduction

We begin this paper with a vignette from previous research on translanguaging pedagogies in a rural school district (Back, 2020) to emphasize the potential power of world language learning for EMLLs.

> *Sara is a fourth-grade emergent multilingual learner (EMLL) from Syria whose home language is Arabic. Normally active and chatty, Sara often becomes distracted and unfocused during whole-class instruction, possibly because she does not yet have the proficiency in English to follow the teacher's detailed directions. However, Sara's level of engagement increases daily at 2:30, when her Spanish teacher enters the classroom, rolling in an enormous bulletin board filled with colorful images and words. Perhaps Sara notices that her monolingual English-speaking classmates become language learners like her, or maybe she has noticed the similarities between Arabic and Spanish in many vocabulary words. Whatever the reason, during Spanish class her attention is laser-focused on the teacher and her hand is always in the air, showing a marked difference in behavior from her classwork in English.*

Sara's reactions to her Spanish class illustrates how world language (WL) educators, by virtue of their subject matter, can help ensure the academic success of all emergent multilingual learners (EMLLs, also known as ELLs). As our schools and communities become more linguistically and culturally diverse (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016), WL educators have the potential to become important leaders, often in unexpected ways. Our knowledge of second language acquisition theory and practice make us well-positioned to act as advocates for all language learners, especially given that most teachers of other content areas do not receive this training (García, 2015; Salazar, 2013). Moreover, many WL educators speak the home language of EMLLs in their communities. Given these qualities, "world language teachers inhabit a unique role in which they are tasked with amplifying multilingualism, including their students' existing linguistic repertoires, in a space where English monolingualism holds power," such as classrooms in the U.S. and elsewhere (Davis & Howlett, 2022, p. 1). Similarly, Oxford (2010) argued, "Teachers of second languages should be unified in their role as language advocates" (p. 302).

However, a number of factors can limit the positive impact WL educators can have in schools. For example, unchallenged and unreflected language ideologies can create situations in which WL education promotes stereotypes rather than deconstructing them (for a review of language ideologies, see Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015). For example, in many U.S. contexts, WLs are taught as something that exists outside of the country, when in fact many languages are represented in the United States (Osborn, 2006). Textbooks play another role in promoting ideologies and stereotypes that can be harmful. For example, Padilla and Vana (2019) found the ideology of *global Spanish* indicated a lack of emphasis on sociolinguistic varieties of the language in the Spanish textbooks they analyzed. In interviews, instructors also agreed that the notes for instructors, while sometimes helpful for teaching, were also often problematic, as they "overgeneralized and marginalized instances of speakers, cultures and customs of different Spanish-speaking locales" (Padilla & Vana, 2019, p. 19).

Another challenge is that few WL educators are trained in ESL-specific protocols, such as sheltered instruction, and most have not had extensive experiences with EMLLs (Dobbs et al., 2022). Additionally, WL education and the education of EMLLs are often considered differently, in our opinion, wrongfully so. This difference is not only assumed by school administrators, but also by language educators and students, as evidenced by the frequent separation of departments teaching a *foreign language* and those teaching English to EMLLs (Davis, 1999). The separation is further reinforced in academic research, with scholars such as Davies (2008) arguing that TESOL is distinct from "other second-language teaching operations" due to its global spread (p. 298). Similarly, Silberstein (2008) stated that "English is not simply another world language," and required an additional critical approach due to its prestige (p. 301).

These arguments, by ignoring the existence of critical approaches in WL education (e.g., Kubota & Austin, 2007; Leeman, 2005; Osborn, 2002, 2006; Serafini, 2021) are further testament to the artificial separation of our two disciplines. It is important to note that we do not minimize the specific qualifications required to teach languages in differing contexts. What we are opposed to is the misguided and

harmful hierarchy that the separation often implies. Moreover, despite this perceived separation, in practice WL educators are frequently asked to serve as informal ESL coordinators, especially in smaller districts where a designated coordinator position might not exist (Davis & Howlett, 2022). Thrust into these roles, WL educators may find it a challenge to navigate the duties of their regular WL classes against the district demands to assess and assist EMLLs, especially if they have not considered how their education and experiences can position them as advocates for these learners. When WL educators do not speak the home language of the school's EMLLs, these challenges can seem even more daunting.

In this position paper we share insights from previous research in support of the view that educators in WLs and other disciplines ought to work together to empower all language learners. With the right preparation and mindset, WL educators can make important contributions to supporting and advocating for EMLLs, while also modeling the value of linguistic diversity to our more *traditional* populations of English home language students. Given the increasing numbers of EMLLs in our schools, the leadership of WL educators can help not only language learners, but the school community as a whole. We use examples from our own educational practices to highlight three frameworks that have traditionally been discussed in TESOL contexts: the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria et al., 2004), translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014), and multilingual ecology (García & Menken, 2015). We outline how WL educators can harness these research-supported strategies to support, advocate for, and empower all learners in their schools.

Literature review: World language educators and EMLLs

Perhaps due to the artificial separation of WL and TESOL education described previously, limited research exists on how WL educators have bridged this gap. A recent article by Davis and Howlett (2022) examined how WL educators in a U.S. secondary school used their agency to advocate for EMLLs by promoting their school's Seal of Biliteracy program. Recognizing the line between WL educators and educators of EMLLs as "socially constructed," (p. 3), the authors noted that "the [WL] teachers' voluntary engagement in joining and expanding the [Seal of Biliteracy] program was a clear indicator of their efforts toward multilingual advocacy" (p. 2). While this study focused on advocating for the Seal of Biliteracy for EMLLs, rather than pedagogies such as SIOP or translanguaging, it is important to note that these educators "fulfilled their advocacy through building bridges with students, families, and themselves, pushing their students to get involved, becoming rooted in and leveraging their school administrations, and working collectively with colleagues and community members," all of which are essential components of any sort of advocacy for EMLLs (p. 7).

Dobbs et al. (2022) examined potential solutions to what King and Bigelow (2017) have termed the "language opportunity gap" for EMLLs through a self-study of teacher educators of WL teacher candidates. In their attempts to prepare these candidates to teach EMLLs, their desire was to have their teacher candidates "envision WL classrooms as linguistically diverse spaces" (p. 239). These desires were hampered by the teacher educators' own lack of training in this area, as well as limited recognition from WL teacher candidates that EMLLs would even be present in their

future classrooms. Moreover, the teacher educators themselves were conflicted about the efficacy of Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) pedagogies (one of which we discuss later), while WL teacher candidates felt that "the target language (whether English or another language) pedagogy is going to be highly effective for all students" (p. 241). This disconnect is an example of how some TESOL pedagogies can be taken up without question by some WL teacher candidates but may be problematic for other teachers or teacher educators who advocate for a more multilingual approach to language education.

While these two articles are the only recent empirical studies that we were able to find about bridging the gap between TESOL and WL education, several position papers (García & Davis-Wiley, 2015; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Kubota & Austin, 2007) also recognize the increasing multilingualism of today's WL classrooms and recommend substantial changes to the monolingual ideologies and pedagogies that currently comprise WL education. As seen in the articles outlined previously, bridging this gap takes a concerted effort and, in some cases such as the incorporation of SEI pedagogies, requires a critical approach and extensive reflection on how to continue promoting multilingualism. In the following sections we discuss how we have used TESOL pedagogies to help our WL teachers and teacher candidates better advocate for EMLLs both in and outside the WL classroom.

Strategy 1: Using SIOP for Lesson Planning and Delivery

WL educators have a wealth of knowledge and experience that they can use to support EMLLs. However, we know from experience that it is important to reflect critically on what we already know and where we might need to learn more to best support all language learners. An example of a set of principles that are helpful to support EMLLs is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria et al., 2004). Many of the instructional components of sheltered instruction are already used in WL classrooms, while others can easily be adapted by educators who have language teaching and learning knowledge.

The first component of SIOP, "lesson preparation," contains six features, many of which WL educators already apply to their teaching. For example, "clearly defined content objectives" (f.1) and "language objectives" (f. 2) are helpful for students in all classrooms. WL educators also use "appropriate content concepts" for the age and educational background levels of their students (f. 3) and certainly are champions in using "supplementary materials" to make lessons clear and meaningful (f. 4), as illustrated by the Spanish teacher's colorful bulletin board in our introductory vignette. WL educators know how to "adapt content" to various levels of student proficiency (f. 5) and plan and implement "meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities" (f. 6). Similarly, WL educators also know how to "build background" (Component 2) by "linking concepts explicitly to students' background experiences" (f. 7), "linking past and new concepts" (f. 8), and, especially, by "emphasizing key vocabulary" (f. 9). As seen in the table below, these and other SIOP protocols overlap productively with the standards and practices already well known to most language educators, mainly ACTFL/CAEP and high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs).

Table 1
Crosswalk for SIOP Protocols, ACTFL/CAEP Standards, and WL HLTPs

SIOP Protocol	**ACTFL/CAEP Standard**	**HLTP**
Clearly define content objectives Clearly define language objectives	Candidates can effectively plan classroom-based instruction	Design lessons and tasks that have functional goals, to include specifying clearly the language and activities needed to support and meet the communicative objective.
Provide frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion Integrate all language skills into each lesson	Integration of standards in planning, classroom practice, and use of instructional resources	Design and carry out interpersonal communication tasks for pair, small groups, and whole class instruction.
Provide meaningful and authentic activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities Integrate all language skills into each lesson	Integration of standards in planning, classroom practice, and use of instructional resources	Design and carry out interactive reading and listening comprehension tasks using authentic cultural texts of various kinds with appropriate scaffolding and follow-up tasks that promote interpretation.
Regularly give feedback to students on their output Conduct assessment of student comprehension and learning	Assessment of languages and cultures – impact on student learning	Provide appropriate feedback in speech and writing on various learning tasks.

While we have only looked briefly at two of the eight components and nine of the 30 SIOP features, we assure WL educators that the remaining SIOP components (comprehensible input strategies; scaffolding techniques; interaction; practical application; lesson delivery; and review/assessment) are equally relevant and important to WL education. Both of us have used SIOP with pre-service WL educators, who have found it very helpful in their lesson planning, implementation, and assessment. It is important to note that language educators at first often feel

that SIOP does not pertain to WL education. We want to emphasize that SIOP is not only useful for language educators, but it also provides an excellent opportunity for WL educators to be mentors for their colleagues in promoting research-based practices that support language development. Moreover, given that, as Dobbs et al. (2022) have noted, "the opportunity to further develop language skills through the school curriculum is typically limited to learning English" (p. 237), WL instructors can model how these skills can be developed in other languages.

Strategy 2: Using Translanguaging for Linguistic and Cultural Comparisons

The notion of translanguaging has gained much ground recently in both TESOL and bilingual education. As an asset-based practice enabling multilingual learners to draw from their full linguistic repertoire to make meaning, translanguaging has been conceived of simultaneously as a normal practice for multilinguals, a pedagogy, and a theory (Cinaglia & De Costa, 2022; García & Li Wei, 2014). Translanguaging allows EMLLs to use their home language in the classroom to help their acquisition of English. By using their home language, students can reflect more carefully on the differences and similarities between their language and English and master complex academic content more easily.

Although translanguaging has been positioned as a viable practice for emergent multilinguals learning English, it is often viewed as less viable in U.S. WL classrooms, where concerns about maximizing target language use may conflict with encouraging the use of a student's entire linguistic repertoire in the WL classroom. We would argue that, rather than reducing their exposure to the target language, translanguaging, if used intentionally and thoughtfully, enhances students' curiosity of and preparation for the content in the target language. Moreover, translanguaging has close ties with ACTFL's Comparisons Standard, which encourages students to reflect on the similarities and differences between the students' home languages and the target language. Strategic use of translanguaging might even benefit students whose first language is English; one participant in Seltzer (2022), describing how her Spanish teacher did not allow students to ask questions or discuss problems in English, stated, "I can hardly remember anything that I learned in those last two years of Spanish because I was never able to solidify that information in my native language" (p. 120). Observations such as these suggest a potential role for translanguaging as an important scaffold for acquiring additional languages.

Most importantly, translanguaging has a significant equity component for both EMLLs and language teachers. Lee and Canagarajah (2019) discussed how practices such as translanguaging promote "an orientation towards language diversity and difference from a nondeficit perspective," which can help language teachers move beyond the beliefs surrounding native and nonnative teachers that have permeated much of the field (p. 352). Seltzer (2022), in her study of preservice and in-service teachers, demonstrated that, as educators engaged in conversations about translanguaging, "they explicitly problematized monolingual ideology within their own teaching practice as well as within the broader educational system" (p. 129). Thus, by encouraging the use of translanguaging, WL teachers demonstrate to students that their home languages are valued and that they are supported in developing these aspects of their identities, while also contributing to creating a

culture of appreciating all languages and cultures, rather than supporting the notion of language hierarchies.

In terms of strategies for promoting translanguaging, many WL educators have collections of books, magazines, and other resources in the languages they teach that can be shared with EMLLs. Streamlining textual resources to fit with other content areas also benefits WL classrooms by reinforcing ACTFLs Connections Standard; that is, content in both languages allows students to make connections more easily between WLs and other disciplines. WL educators can also access a wealth of online resources, including authentic videos, dictionaries, and websites from target language cultures, which can be used to further scaffold EMLLs' acquisition of content knowledge. In WL education, teachers can provide opportunities to students to further investigate topics of interest to students in any language they want to use. This could partially be done outside the regular classroom time. When students return with information about the topic, the teacher can assist them in sharing this information in the target language.

In addition to resources, WL educators, using their knowledge of the target language and culture(s), can facilitate comparisons between the EMLLs' home languages, English, and the target language. Celic and Seltzer (2013) provided an extensive series of translanguaging strategies that can be used in the WL classroom, including allowing students to read and discuss in their home language before writing or sharing out in the target language; drafting or developing writing projects in the home language and writing the final draft in the target language; or using bilingual dictionaries or home language internet resources to master content. If WL educators know the home languages of these students, they can more easily track these learning processes in that language. Even if WL or other educators do not know the home language, translanguaging is still an excellent strategy to help build vocabulary and content knowledge, as it allows EMLLs to capitalize on what they already know in order to acquire both content and language.

Strategy 3: Fostering Cultural and Linguistic Diversity through Multilingual Ecology

Like translanguaging, multilingual ecology empowers student languages in the school setting (García & Menken, 2015). It promotes pride in multilingualism through oral and written language practices throughout the school building in a variety of ways. For example, school-wide texts such as signage, artwork and bulletin boards are displayed in the languages of educators and students. Greetings and parts of the morning announcements are given in a different language or languages each day. Administrators and other school personnel speak to students and each other in their home languages and in English. These actions encourage multilingual flexibility and help emergent bilinguals feel comfortable in their school environments. They also help EMLLs sustain their diverse identities rather than having to adapt to an artificially monolingual society.

There are several ways in which WL educators can help lead the way in cultivating a multilingual ecology at their school. The examples below come from data collected for Back (2020). After the author held a professional development seminar on multilingual ecology, one elementary school educator (Sally) worked on specific strategies for her school. During a parents' night dinner, Sally set up a table

where parents and students could write down greetings and other short phrases in their home languages. The response was overwhelming. Sally was inundated with suggestions and discovered many home languages that she was unaware of, including among families whose students were not designated as emergent bilinguals. These greetings and short phrases, in languages such as Chinese, Russian, and Arabic, were posted on the school's hallway walls. Sally also used Google Translate and parent volunteers to translate signage for the bathrooms, office, school nurse, and cafeteria. Finally, Sally put up a bulletin board near her classroom with images of children experiencing different emotions, and had these emotions translated into several different languages. She expressed how she thought it would help children articulate how they felt, even if they didn't know English, because they could point to the picture. Sally also mentioned how students' eyes light up and how excited they become when they see their languages on the school walls.

Parents' nights and open houses are great opportunities for WL educators to not only talk about the languages they teach, but also to promote respect and enthusiasm for multilingualism in general. Parental input on items as simple as greetings in their home language provides WL educators a glimpse into the languages spoken and understood by their students at home. Even in school districts that are predominantly monolingual in English, having different languages posted throughout the school–not just around the WL educators' classrooms–can help develop intercultural citizenship for all students as they become aware of the many languages spoken around the world.

Another example more directly involves students. Most WL educators are familiar with establishing and running language-specific clubs, yet clubs that celebrate speakers of all languages are also valuable in promoting intercultural understanding and fostering relationships between emergent bilinguals and monolinguals. Martin-Beltrán et al. (2019) reported on a "language ambassadors" program in Maryland, where high school students recruited from both ESL and Spanish courses got together for regular conversation practice. The authors found that these conversations expanded learning opportunities and positioned emergent bilinguals as experts, allowing them to take pride in their home language and cultures.

A similar program took place in a Northeastern U.S. elementary school (Back & Wagner, 2020), where two preservice educators organized a weekly language ambassadors club for third and fourth graders. Activities included training students to teach their homeroom classes greetings in different languages and learning from their EMLL peers about the different languages spoken in the school. Similar to Martin-Beltrán et al.'s (2019) findings, students took pride in sharing their expertise in their home languages. This was especially important for EMLLs, who are usually positioned as needing help, rather than as helpers or educators. Moreover, all participants learned about many languages spoken in the school by their peers, even by those who were not designated as ELLs. The multilingual students took on their ambassador role with enthusiasm and shared what they had learned with their classmates who did not participate in the program.

Implications and Conclusions

We are aware that teaching languages with critical approaches, including teaching languages for social justice, intercultural dialogue, human rights, peace, and sustainability, can be overwhelming because each approach is important and complex. What we promote here is not the only way to address inequities. Rather, we encourage fellow educators to use their own criticality to examine misconceptions about languages and cultures and delve further into the research and practice of language education and EMLLs. In order to do so, we first need to understand that we as language educators can and do perpetuate harm if we are not willing to take a critical look at what we do. However, we also can make a difference by drawing from research and practice in a variety of fields related to language education to develop inclusive practices that help support our students and our own critical awareness of issues involved. We shared some strategies that we hope will empower WL educators to capitalize on their knowledge of language education to advocate for all language learners.

As shown in our introductory vignette, WL classrooms can be places where all students, regardless of their first language, and perhaps especially those with a first language other than the majority language, can have the same learning opportunity and might even be provided a space where they are able to shine. Our opportunity, and we would argue our obligation, to advocate for all language learners, however, does not stop in our own classrooms. If we learn to apply what we know from WL education to the education of all language learners, continue to learn from and about the various contexts in which language learning occurs, and are willing to share what we know with the larger community in and beyond our schools, we not only become advocates for all language learners, but also better leaders. A slight shift in mindset and end goals may be required, but we firmly believe that by going beyond our classroom walls and departments, our impact on promoting intercultural citizenship, multilingualism, and multiculturalism will only increase.

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