A fair go: Translanguaging and assessment practices in a New Zealand junior college

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In New Zealand schools with multilingual student populations, a key concern is whether bi/multilingual students can adequately demonstrate their learning through the medium of English. In this study of a junior college in Auckland, I examine how these students may be disadvantaged in the school's implementation of project-based learning and peer assessment practices and explore how a translanguaging approach would provide more equitable assessment for the students. The article draws selectively on a larger qualitative research project which included classroom observation, audio-recording of assessment events and interviews with teachers. The findings provide evidence that there is a monolingual bias in assessment procedures that can limit what bi/multilingual students can achieve in terms of grades. There were also individual cases involving bilingual teachers where translanguaging practices pointed the way forward to fairer assessment for the bi/multilingual students. However, in order to effect a broader shift in attitudes and practices, teachers would need professional development in critical multilingual awareness.

Key words: translanguaging, bi/multicultural students, project-based learning, classroom assessment, monolingual bias

Introduction

The issue

The awareness of multilingualism in applied linguistics (May, 2013, 2019) is only slowly finding its way into school settings and arguably making even less progress in the area of assessment. Effective teaching, learning and assessment practices are

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dependent upon the knowledge and value systems of educators, according to Scott et al. (2014). These researchers acknowledge that in diverse classrooms any notion of fair assessment practices resides in the values that teachers place on the linguistic dexterity of bi/multilingual students. The way teachers view the language abilities of students "influences the treatment children are likely to receive in school" (MacSwan, 2017, p. 170). Too often bi/multilingual students are seen in deficit terms "painting a landscape of underperformance" (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017, p. 278).

García argues that assessment of bi/multilingual students is beset with issues of "language proficiency and content proficiency "(2009a, p. 370, italics in original). It is this dilemma that lies at the heart of assessment practices in linguistically diverse classrooms. Yang (2020) neatly sums this up:

Assessments in content areas do not solely measure emergent bilinguals' content knowledge. Oftentimes assessments also measure emergent bilinguals' academic language proficiency because they need to comprehend the language used in the assessment and use language to communicate their content knowledge (p. 217).

The content and language proficiencies are couched in terms of academic language which requires sophisticated linguistic awareness (Alim, 2005; Cummins & Man, 2007). Too often assessments in subject contents are conducted in language that is unfamiliar for bi/multilingual students (De Backer et al., 2017; Yang 2020).

The current picture of assessment practices in New Zealand

In the last 35 years, New Zealand has adopted a devolved system of education. The legislation enshrined in Tomorrow's Schools (1988) established a framework that shifted administrative control of educational resources to the school level. There is a national curriculum that was implemented in 2007; however, schools have a high level of flexibility in developing their teaching and assessment programmes especially, in Years 1-10 (ages 5 – 14). Without a prescriptive assessment regime, schools are freer to employ innovative and inclusive practices such as peer assessment (Flockton, 2012). Peer assessment implies capabilities that need to be developed in partnership with teachers, for it is the teachers who provide the support, guidance, and opportunity so that students can become confident in judging, analysing, and giving feedback (Flockton, 2012, p. 132). Conducting assessments and giving feedback requires

teachers to understand students' languages and cultures "to make sure that the cultures of all students are present in the contexts chosen for assessment purposes, just as for learning" (Absolum et al., 2010 p. 20). Making sure that the languages of students are present is especially important in conditions of linguistic diversity in New Zealand schools.

The rise of linguistic diversity

The current picture of assessment practices is premised on the rise of linguistic diversity through patterns of migration. In March 2023, net migration into New Zealand stood at 86,722. The largest numbers of migrant arrivals were from India (21,800) China (17,600) and the Philippines (17,500) (NZ Stats, 2023). Overall there are some 190 different named languages spoken in the country (NZ Stats, 2018).

A large proportion of the migrants settle in Auckland, which is the largest city by population in New Zealand and the fourth most diverse city in the world, with more than 220 recorded ethnic groups. Of Auckland's population 39 percent was born overseas, and 29 percent of residents can speak multiple languages (IOM, 2019). 123 different languages were spoken by "ESOL-funded students in the Auckland region" (Ministry of Education (2019). The most common "first languages" were Mandarin, Samoan, Hindi, Tongan, Tagalog/Filipino, Korean and Afrikaans (Ministry of Education, 2019). Such linguistic diversity was present in 2022 at Millbank – the school that is the focus of this study –where some 38 different languages and language varieties were spoken.

Table 1. Languages spoken at Millbank School (October 2022)

Language	Number of speakers
English	306
Hindi	67
Filipino (Hiligaynon, Visaya) Tagalog	42
Punjabi	26
Chinese (Mandarin)	19
Cambodian (Khmer)	12
Vietnamese	12

Dari	11
Farsi	10
Samoan	10
Arabic Cantonese, Gujarati, Sinhalese, Afrikaans, Cook Island Māori, Japanese, Malayalam, Pashto	2-8each
Bangla, Cebuano, Chaldean (Iraqi), French, Korean, Kurdish, Marathi, Nepali, Russian, Tamil, Telugu, Te Reo Māori, Thai, Tongan, Urdu	1each

Although the range and number of languages spoken in Auckland continue to rise and classrooms are increasingly linguistically diverse, there appears to be a persistent monolingual bias that runs counter to these trends.

The monolingual bias and translanguaging

The monolingual bias

Despite the linguistic diversity of New Zealand classrooms, teachers are predominantly monolingual: over 80% speak only English (Major, 2018). "The meeting point of a monolingual teaching force is in multilingual classrooms" (Barros et al., 2021, p. 1). In classes where students are speakers of a variety of languages, and the native-speaker teachers do not necessarily know the language(s) of their students, this situation can influence assessment decisions, and benchmark a standard of academic English by which bi/multilingual students are judged (Genesee, 2022; Piller, 2016).

Assessment practices that focus on content knowledge without due regard to the language practices of linguistically diverse students are construed as having monolingual bias. Such a bias is exhibited when "schools insist on monolingual 'academic standard' practices" (García & Li, 2014, p. 47). The complex repertoires of bi/multilingual students are restricted as they need to use academic English to comprehend and communicate content knowledge. (Yang, 2020, p. 217). The monolingual bias has real and material consequences for bi/multilingual students in terms of marginalisation, underachievement, and despondency. I argue that understanding students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds is insufficient to counter the pronounced monolingual bias, where it is a taken-for-granted norm that

assessment will be conducted for content knowledge in the dominant national language (Barratt, 2018).

One way to counter monolingual bias is through translanguaging (TL) practices, whereby students can draw on all their linguistic resources in completing assessments. TL, which is discussed further below, can provide fairer and more equitable assessment for these learners (Scott et al., 2014). However, research on TL and assessment has rarely been undertaken in a New Zealand context (Wang & East, 2023). This study, then, sets out to obtain evidence of the effects of monolingual bias and the prospects for a TL approach in a particular school.

Translanguaging

TL was originally used in the context of schools in Wales, where bilingual students were given opportunities to use both Welsh and English in the same class. The term was introduced into wider usage by Baker (2001). It has come to be defined more broadly as "*the act performed by bilinguals* of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential" (García, 2009b:140, my italics). Performativity is the essence of translanguaging theory, in which the users adapt their linguistic resources to create meaning (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017; Li, 2017; Sánchez et al., 2018). These linguistic repertoires include all the skills and knowledge that a person brings to bear to make meaning in contexts and for specific purposes (Blackledge et al., 2015: Li & García, 2022; Martínez, 2014).

At this point, I should explain that I use the term "bi/multilingual" to refer to the students in this study, in preference to either bilingual (e.g. García 2009a; García & Kleifgen, 2010) and multilingual (e.g. Canagarajah, 2011; Wang, 2019). For many individual students, there are just two languages involved – the home language and the school language (English) – but students in New Zealand schools also come from more complex linguistic backgrounds, so that their linguistic repertoire may draw on several languages and dialects. And of course classes composed of such students are definitely multilingual in nature. The more generic term bi/multilingual indicates that assessment regimes should cater to specific needs of students in specific contexts.

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To date, there has been limited published work on translanguaging in New Zealand education. Some research on this approach has been conducted in the context of early childhood and primary school immersion programmes in Māori and Samoan (Seals & Olsen-Reeder, 2020; Tamati, 2019). In mainstream education, Finikin (2022) reports on her two-year action inquiry project to introduce translanguaging into her work as an ESOL teacher in a primary school. However, the present study on translanguaging as applied to the assessment of the academic achievement of older students is breaking new ground.

Translanguaging pedagogies

Multilingualism and the multilingual interactional practice of translanguaging interface with dominant language school-based assessment in interesting ways, throwing its monolingual conceptual framing into sharp relief. The monolingual underpinnings of such school assessments have implications when considering approaches that will be inclusive of multilingual learners.

Language use in schools is a study of dynamic discursive practices in which pervasive language norms may be challenged (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; García, 2009a; Martin-Beltrán, 2010). An educational system that is characterised by respect for difference implies a critical examination of the purposes and languages of assessment (Scott et al., 2014). Bi/multilingual students use language creatively and critically as they adapt to different contexts and purposes (García & Li, 2014; Li, 2011). The adaptability and creativity of bi/multilingual students should be built into flexible assessment practices.

As a counter, a TL stance accepts as linguistic fact that in multilingual classrooms students will use all their linguistic resources to create meaning (García et al., 2017). It is important to include bi/multilingual voices and perceptions in the design of assessment (Wang & East, 2023). As teachers learn about students' needs, they can adapt the assessment design and adopt a more critical stance toward assessment of bi/multilingual students (García et al., 2017).

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Translanguaging principles and assessment

In this section, I look at a set of principles on translanguaging that could help guide assessment practices that involve bi/multilingual students in a school like Millbank. There are four translanguaging assessment principles:

1. The flexibility principle, in which the teacher recognises existing strengths and accomplishments of bi/multilingual students and adapts instructions and assessment processes (David et al., 2021; García & Li, 2014; Sánchez et al., 2018). It allows a teacher to use flexible assessment practices to respond to students' needs (García et al., 2017, p. 97). In addition, assessment accommodations can be used to increase fairness in assessing bi/multilingual students (Yang, 2020). These may be direct linguistic supports, which may include simplifications and translations, or indirect ones, such as adjustments to test procedures, schedules, time, and environment (Yang, 2020, p. 221).

2. The integration principle, in which both languages and content are used to showcase the learning of bi/multilingual students (García, 2009a; Yang, 2020).

3. The principle of collaboration, in which assessment weaves languages and language practice in collaborative ways. It can include peer assessment of learning by students (García et al., 2017) or collaboration by teachers in introducing inclusive assessment practices (Scott et al., 2014; Shohamy, 2008). Collaboration between teachers can also enhance translanguaging practices (Liu et al., 2020; Stille et al., 2016).

4. The criticality principle, which is to develop critical evaluations of assessment practices, including the use of TL approaches. Critical questions in assessment concern who is being assessed by whom and for what purposes. These critical questions were brought into focus by Reynolds and Trehan (2000). They critically evaluated participative assessment in which students assessed each other. They found that such assessment practices introduced complex sets of power relations that privileged some students over others. These power relations were played out in summative peer assessment practices valorised at the school that is the focus of the present study.

The study

The school

The research reported in this article was conducted at a junior college in Auckland, New Zealand, referred to here as Millbank School, which caters for students in Years 7-10. It is culturally and linguistically diverse, with a school roll of about 450 students, comprising 5 percent Māori, 24 percent Indian, 15 percent Chinese, 9 percent with Pacific heritage, and many other ethnicities.

The school was opened in 2017 and espouses integrated, cross-curricular project-based learning (PBL), which is related to experiences outside the classroom, described as authentic learning. It has a commitment to PBL, which the school refers to as transdisciplinary authentic inquiry projects (TAIP). The students are valued for the experiences they bring to the class. They are expected to apply knowledge gained and produce an outcome. In many respects, the experiences of implementing PBL approaches at Millbank School confirm to some of the advantages and difficulties reported in the literature (Donnelly & Fitzmaurice, 2005: Ford & Kluge, 2015; Krajcik & Czerniak, 2007). However, the literature remains relatively silent on the use of PBL in complex multilingual classrooms.

Assessment practices

Assessment of academic content knowledge at Millbank School is a form of local practice (Pennycook, 2010), which must be understood within the local environment. Knight (2006) contends that securing reliable judgements on understanding of the subject matter is difficult due in part to variations in the interpretation of processes and products of assessments (Knight, 2006, p. 439). These difficulties are further compounded when assessment is conducted in conditions of linguistic and cultural diversity (García & Li, 2014).

Millbank School adopted criterion-based performance indicators which are expressed in the acquisition of virtual curriculum badges (See Appendix B). The students present evidence from their projects to "pitch" for badges after a project has been completed. The oral presentation is often to a panel of their peers under the auspices of their teachers. The curriculum badges can be awarded at emerging, effective, and

exemplary. Gibson et al. (2015) make three big claims about the use of badges in education. It can motivate students to engage with materials and activities; it can confer status through validation and accrediting processes; and it can provide authentic evidence of learning (Gibson et al., 2015, pp. 408-9). Abramovich et al (2013) generally concur with the motivational aspects of badging as a tool of assessment but with a significant caveat that the effects of educational badges vary with learners of different abilities (p. 229). They thus caution that instructional designers must consider the ability and motivations of learners when choosing what badges to include in their curricula. Using peer assessment also raises issues of power relations and the privileging of some students over others (Reynolds & Trehan, 2000).

The research project

This article draws on a doctoral research project which was a qualitative study of the language practices of bi/multilingual students and their teachers at Millbank School. The study was conducted at the school between 2019 and 2021. The participants were six students and eleven teachers. The data were collected from classroom observations, audio-recordings, and interviews in 2020 and 2021. The details of the participants in the whole project are given in Appendix A.

Other students were recorded in classroom interactions and there was also a focus group of student participants.

Findings

For this article, I have selected two perspectives from the larger project to illustrate, first, how a monolingual bias in current school assessment practices can affect bi/multilingual students through underachievement and frustration, and then to show how that bias can be ameliorated.

Perspective 1: The effects of the monolingual bias

The following extract occurs as a small group of three students are involved in the process of pitching for a virtual curriculum badge. S1 and S2 have been assigned the role of the panel assessors) and CG is the student being assessed. A monolingual

teacher is also present. The students are all Chinese-speaking bilinguals and initially they talk in Chinese, but at the beginning of this excerpt they switch to English:

1 S2: You have got to have some English now.

17 second pause as S1 and S2 [looking at the presentation on CG's iPad]

 2 S1: Wait

75 second pause [Further examination of presentation and collecting of thought]

3 S1: Ok now can we go on. I guess she has all of it but not as good as she could have done (3 second pause)

4 S2: Ummm

5 S1: [Addressing CG] You didn't really show your learning goals, for example in literacy we have like weekly goals. And in maths we have planning to show ways you work towards your goals. And then numeracy umm like every week for your numeracy you receive a slide thing and you put your goals in so you can show that. And then goals that you have on Linked is also a way like of showing your goals. That like if you're aiming for Exemplary you show I mean how explain how it helps your learning. Does that make sense?

6 CG: How are apps?

7 S1: Umm what

8 CG: How are apps? Help you?

9 S1: Yea.

Silence 68 seconds

10 S2: What is she saying?

11 S1: I don't know?

12 S1: Maybe no badge- is that kind of harsh?

13 S2: Yea.

14 S1: She didn't meet the set criteria. No goals she doesn't explain.

15 S2: No she just kind explained. I guess she just explained said I can make learning goals harder and better. Her learning goals are doing better.

16 S1: She didn't show any learning goals that she has made.

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17 S2: Right – Emerging?

18 S1: Yea wait can you write that down?

The switch from Chinese to English occurs in line 1, since there is a requirement to use English as the serious business of assessment begins. This reflects the fact that the teacher is checking their conversations. In an interview, the teacher explained how she verified assessments:

> I'm not the person who passes off the badges. They are accountable to themselves. I tick the box on the computer screen. All the evidence has to be there, but I've observed it as well.

Although the teacher explained how assessment decisions had been devolved to the students, the authority still rested with her (Reynolds & Trehan, 2000) and that meant that English had to be used. This monolingual bias had the effect of silencing CG, who is marginalised during the assessment. Students S1 and S2 refer to CG in the third person in lines 10, 14 and 16. S1 in line 5 comments on CG's shortcomings on failing to show learning goals. The only utterances from CG on lines 6 and 8 are about apps. One criterion of the badge states "I can use a range of tools (both digital and non-digital) for organisation." This may be what CG is referring to when she says in line 6 "How are apps". However, after a long pause, S2 asks S1 "what is she saying?" and S2 replies that she doesn't know (lines 10 and 11). There is no indication that students S1 and S2 seek clarification from CG, even though they share a common language. The discussion is about whether to award any badge at all, and S1 and S2 eventually decide on awarding the lowest grade (Emerging) as "She didn't show any learning goals that she has made" (line 16). CG has thus failed to show her content knowledge in an unfamiliar language.

Monolingual bias can have other consequences in undermining confidence and efficacy. In this next extract, a bi/multilingual student explains how the assessment processes affect him:

> I always expect to do well but the result is not good. I just expect that I will do OK but turns out that I am not able to do well. I always go into bidding feeling good and confident, but then I come out feeling weaker.

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The learner suggests a dissonance between what he thinks he can show and the disappointing results which make him feel "weaker". It is a dispiriting experience with social and emotional consequences. In monolingual assessment settings, such students are often disadvantaged and must suppress a big part of their linguistic repertoire, while monolingual students suppress only a fraction of theirs (Otheguy et al., 2015).

A bilingual teacher at the school talked about how difficult it was for the bilingual Chinese speaking students to achieve equitable outcomes from assessment practices:

> Because English; English What do we expect of them? You know our school; assessment what should I do in this assessment? What are they expecting? Some newcomers did not understand the requirements of the assessment...One student I know. She works very hard and very intelligent. But language is a barrier and affects her grade.

The negative effect of monolingual bias marks bi/multilingual learners as deficient if they are not able to speak English in an acceptable academic register.

Perspective 2: Ameliorating the monolingual bias

There was some evidence in the data of intentional teacher actions undertaken to mitigate the consequences of the monolingual bias. These actions reflect a number of TL principles, including flexible assessment activities, integrating language and content, collaboration, and criticality.

Flexibility of assessment activities

The ESOL specialist teacher differentiated assessment for emerging bilinguals in her classroom. She developed personalised assessment badges which were tailored to showcase their learning by simplifying the language of the task and the assessment criteria.

> I have specifically made a badge for them. I use information from various areas to build a badge so there are many varied ways to get a badge.

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The ESOL teacher acknowledged the ability to differentiate assessment in a variety of ways that would allow students to show achievement and gain badges.

On the other hand, the bilingual Chinese-speaking teacher unpacked assessment criteria for Chinese-speaking students in their own language to better show their achievement:

> A lot of the time I have to use Mandarin but as soon as they understand the criteria, they start to have their own plan how to do it. And when they produce their badge bidding like [making] slide [shows] then the confident ones will try to use English. That's their progress like. I must understand the criteria in Chinese do the slides in English. That's one step further. And later, we expect them to all use this in English.

The teacher used the Chinese language to unpack the criteria as a crucial step to empower students to showcase their learning and scaffold them into using academic English. She espoused a TL approach as a bridge to understanding through one language and producing in the other as the students gained confidence. The expectation was that at some later time they would use English to understand the criteria and pitch for their badges.

Integration of language and content in assessment

Later in the interview, the bilingual teacher explained how she encouraged Chinese-speaking students to present their assessment in Chinese; as a result, they achieved higher grades of badges:

> So, I start to run Chinese badge bidding, so those Chinese speakers who want to do their bidding in Chinese can come to me and they can do it in their first language. And surprisingly, they are keen to do it and they do well. One or two of them got 'Exemplary'. They often get 'Effective'.

The invitation to integrate their home languages into assessments was appreciated by the students when reflecting on their success during later discussions. As one student said,

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> Chinese 就是在的时候是讲给 commitee 听的，然后我们就是说中文，用中文提问，就是我也不知道怎么讲，就是 badge 的时候用中文 Chinese was spoken to committee (assessment panel) at the time, and then we just spoke Chinese and asked questions in Chinese. Even I don't know what to say, but when it was badge, we used Chinese.

Employing bilingual teachers certainly helps ameliorate the monolingual bias in assessment practices, as noted by the Education Review Office (2018, p. 53).

Assessment collaboration between teachers and like-language resourced students

There were instances of collaborative assessment discussions between teachers. One teacher explained a reciprocal arrangement she made with a bilingual teacher which she referred to as "cheating":

> So when I say I cheated I leave my Chinese students with her as she has the ability to translate and talk to them in their language. Some of those learners who are more comfortable in Chinese have also done their pitching in Chinese with her. And she has awarded the badges that way. It has doubled her workload a little bit as a first-year teacher, but I have taken some of her learners into my MAC [homeroom]. So we kinda swapped a few kids around yea.

It was beyond the scope of this study to quantify to what extent such informal collaborations occurred amongst teachers.

There were also instances of recorded conversations where bi/multilingual students were collaborating on assessments. One such example took place in the preparation for a badge pitching on a science project. Two Chinese-speaking students were presenting a slide show and writing notes to showcase their learning to a teacher-led panel of three students. In this excerpt translations are provided by a bilingual assistant where the two students are speaking in Mandarin in all lines, except lines 17, 19, and 20, where the students are speaking in English:

1 Student 1: 你知不知道这个问题？Do you know this question?

2 Student 2: 知啊 I know Ha ha ha!

3 Student 1: 那你同不同意这个观点？有没有证据啊？So, do you agree with his point of view? Is there any other supporting evidence?

4 Student 2: 额，应该是这样，利用这些句子 Er should be like this, use these sentences to support your point.

5 Student 1: 好吧 OK

6 Student 2: 我自己感觉因该可以解决这个问题 I reckon I should be able to solve this problem.

7 Student 1: 哦，你知道啊 Oh, you know. What about this?

8 Student 2: 你别挑了，就是这里 You don't have to do anymore. It's all here.

9 Student 1 我觉得我们返回看这里，应该会有一些新的想法 I think we should just check it again as there may be some good ideas we missed.

10 Student 2: 你看下这里，这里有很多观点 Look here. There are some great points here.

11 Student 1: 你是试试看这里 Check this one out.

12 Student 2: 这里是的原文的嘛 This is just the original text.

13 Student 1: 无所谓啦 That doesn't matter.

14 Student 2: 收到，放心啦 Roger that. No worries.

15 Student 1: 好啦，搞定 Alrighty then. All done.

16 Student 2: 如果搞错了，怎么办？ But what if I've made a mistake?

17 Student 1: Eh? Eh?

18 Student 2 怎么不够时间了？ Have we got time?

19 Student 1: Oh shit!

20 Student 2: We are fucked but have to go on.

21 Student 1: 怎么这么难呢？ Why is it so hard?

As they go through the assessment process, these bilingual students begin with an understanding of what to include and have some confidence about the assessment

(lines1-8). They conclude in line 15 that the work to show their learning is complete. However, as the discussion progresses, they begin to lose confidence as they review their assessment in case they have missed something or made a mistake (line 16). This is a turning point, and they start swearing in English as an expression of panic in lines 19 and 20. They are running out of time to make corrections and conclude by asking "why is it so hard?". Some of the apparent difficulty may lie in mediating between languages and being asked to justify their learning in English and under the monolingual gaze of the teacher.

Criticality and assessment practices

There was little evidence of teachers engaging in critical reflection on the implications of assessment for learners in terms of who benefits and who loses. However, one teacher was more attuned to critical reflection, maybe in part as she was reclaiming her Māori heritage and language. She brought a critical lens to the linguistic complexity and ambiguities in the assessment criteria:

> But the criteria is really literacy dense. It's really literacy dense. A lot of the language in there is very ambiguous. Even four years down the track I am still needing to know myself what interpretation others are making of it. I mean none of us are stupid I can read the criteria and make my own perceptions of what I believe that criteria looks like, but even I still find that there are broader things that's happening. And it's overwhelming for the kids to start with.

She mused that unpacking such criteria is challenging, even for teachers who are not "stupid". She also brought this critical gaze on TL practices in the case of Student B. In the following extract Student B is pitching for his badge in English. He is awarded the lowest badge of Emerging. It may be this underachievement that has driven his later desire to pitch for his badges in Chinese.

G = Peer assessor

B= Student B who is being assessed

1.G: We give you Emerging.

2.G I'll tell you why. The problem is your second one. Because look here what it's asking you. Your thinking strategies and the tools is all to help deepen your learning. Because what you showed me was just a calendar and I don't know how calendar can deepen your learning.

3.B: Deepen learning?

4.G: So basically like going into your learning like learning new stuff or deepening old stuff.

In his extract Student B is only getting Emerging for his badge because he is unable to fully explain and justify his evidence. This may be the result of linguistic or content issues. Student B feels that being assessed in his home language may result in better grades and thus appeals to his MAC [home room teacher] to allow him to be assessed using his Chinese bilingualism. The MAC teacher was surprised by this request because B had successfully pitched for badges in English for the last three years. It turned out that he aspired to get Effective and Exemplary grades, rather than just Emerging.

> So, when he came and asked me that I said "why"? So, I said to him, "You know we want you to be using your English more, so you need to ask yourself that question and know the answer. Why do you want to do it? I'm going to put one constraint out there which is at least one of those needs to be done in English. Because it feels like you will be going backwards to do it in Chinese. But ultimately, it's your integrity and your decision to make." He pitched in English, and I think he did go and do one in Chinese.

Through discussion, the teacher allows for the student to negotiate and justify his decision to be assessed using his home language. The teacher was conflicted: on the one hand, she wanted Student B to be a confident user of English in school discourse while on the other recognising his Chinese bilingualism. By allowing the student choice to pitch for his badge using his linguistic repertoire, the teacher adopted a more TL stance. The teacher had a more tolerant stance to B's language, although she would have preferred him to develop his academic English to succeed in school.

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Discussion

This paper has explored how the project-based assessment presently in place at Millbank School is to a large degree a monolingual construct which does not acknowledge bi/multilingual students' language strengths and indeed fosters a deficit view of their abilities. However, the data presented also shows that this assessment regime offers affordances to specialist language-informed teachers who are able to exert agency to better accommodate multilingual students. These teacher actions are compatible with translanguaging principles, suggesting their potential usefulness as a tool in developing better assessment practices.

Translanguaging Principles

Translanguaging challenges traditional notions of language separation and encourages the fluid use of multiple languages in communication. It emphasizes the idea that individuals have a repertoire of linguistic resources at their disposal and can draw from these resources as needed to effectively convey meaning. Translanguaging assessment principles include flexibility, language integration, collaboration and criticality. These principles can guide educators and policy makers to make assessment practices fairer more equitable.

Flexibility

Accommodations or allowances are common features internationally of school assessment practices for bi/multilingual students. These may be defined as the "support provided for students for a given testing event either through modification of the test itself or through modification of the testing procedure to help students access the content in English and better demonstrate what they know" (Abedi et al., 2004, p. 6). In discussing the efficacy of different accommodations, these authors concluded that the most effective was simplification of complex language features (p.17). Such accommodation chimed with the teachers in this study. The specialist ESOL teacher was clear about offering different assessment conditions for emerging bilingual students, because, as one teacher in the mainstream commented, the language of assessment criteria is "literacy dense" and "ambiguous".

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A linguistic accommodation that is more inclusive for bi/multilingual students is to include their home languages. This accommodation may be used to clarify instructions and judgement criteria. In this study, a bilingual teacher explained how using the students' home language to unpack assessment criteria was beneficial for bi/multilingual students: "A lot of the time I have to use Mandarin but as soon as they understand the criteria, they start to have their own plan how to do it." An extension of this linguistic accommodation is to be assessed in home languages. The opportunity for such an accommodation is dependent on the availability of same-language assessors. In this study, the bilingual Chinese-speaking teacher offered to assess bi/multilingual students who could access Mandarin. This accommodation improved outcomes for these students. However, such accommodations raised issues of gatekeeping.

Gatekeeping is about who should be eligible for home language assessment accommodations. In the context of large-scale testing regimes, Abedi et al (2004) assert that "native language" assessment is only efficacious for those who have received content knowledge in their home language (p. 9). This restriction would eliminate most bi/multilingual students in New Zealand where the medium of instruction is English. Such a restriction would be unfair in this context. Gatekeeping was also expressed by the teacher in allowing Student B to complete an assessment in Chinese but on condition he completed the assessment in English as well. Linguistic affordances and integrating content and language as assessment practices are contingent upon teacher beliefs.

Integration

The principle of language integration is a pedagogical approach that recognises and supports the integration of students' multiple languages and linguistic repertoires in the classroom. It can promote more inclusive assessment practices by incorporating opportunities for translanguaging in assessment design (Wang & East, 2023). While the specialist ESOL teacher provided differentiated assessment opportunities to gain curriculum badges, there was little evidence of language integration being used in assessment design except by the Chinese- speaking bilingual teacher above.

Collaboration

Collaborative approaches to assessment are premised on social relationships (Lee & Li, 2019). At Millbank School, students discuss evidence-gathering ready for their badge pitching and engage in peer assessment in the awarding of badges, giving explicit reasons and feedback. The school was proud of the collaborative nature of assessment practices in building "capabilities" of students to become competent assessors of their peers (Shepard, 2016).

However, with regard to the impact of assessment, there appeared to be a disconnect between the lofty ideals of peer assessment and the reality for bi/multilingual students who underachieved and felt frustration at not achieving higher assessment grades. It is important that these voices are heard in the interests of fair assessment.

Criticality

Peer assessment is built into the assessment practices at Millbank School but is implemented without sufficient critical reflection. A teacher commented that she ensured in assessment panels that there was a mixture of males and females, novices and experts. In short, the teacher saw assessment as a technical issue. There was no evidence of critical reflection on the assessment process and its impact on bi/multilingual students in particular, through any recognition of their linguistic repertoires.

A senior teacher extolled the virtues of peer assessment at Millbank School. These virtues were values-based, with the stated aim to build assessment capabilities and transparency in making judgements on the evidence presented by those being assessed. However, the building of assessment capabilities is couched in hidden power relations in which certain individuals have status and exert influence over others (Reynolds & Trehan, 2000). A cadre of students who have achieved accreditation at Millbank exert influence on the award of badges and give feedback. There are discursive rules in assessment practices that govern what can be said by whom and who is silenced (McLaren, 2017). A critical approach to assessment highlights the impact of assessment on vulnerable students which, as we have seen from the evidence, marginalises and silences specific bi/multilingual students. Adopting a critical TL lens on assessment would allow for linguistic and culturally diverse voices

to be heard and valued, leading to critical reflection on assessment conditions, processes, and practices.

Constraints on translanguaging and assessment

To effect broader shifts in attitudes and practices two major constraints need to be addressed; teachers' lack of multilingual proficiency and a lack of school-wide policy to address the needs of bi/multilingual students.

Multilingual proficiency is an understanding of the complex linguistic repertoires of bi/multilingual students and a viewing of these repertoires as assets. It is an acknowledgment that language practices are different for individuals and that assessment should take account of students' multilingualism. Teachers who adopt a critical language awareness make visible the social construct of school languages and deconstruct the power relations that are taken for granted. The understanding is that "language is socially created, and thus, socially changeable to give voice and educate all students equitably" (García, 2016. p. 6). Critical language awareness can challenge the hierarchical constructs of school languages and provide more equitable and fairer assessments for bi/multilingual students.

Creating school-wide policies to address the needs of multilingual students is essential for fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. These policies should aim to provide fair and equitable educational opportunities and support assessment practices for bi/multilingual students. "Accepting translanguaging in assessment would require a change in epistemology that is beyond the limits of what most schools (and teachers) permit and value today" (García & Li, 2014, p. 135). Teachers in this study were ambivalent about the need to support students' use of home languages in accessing curriculum knowledge, being aware of the pressure from parents to use a monolingual medium of instruction, and the need to provide accreditation using standard forms of English. School-wide policies are thus constrained by ambivalence and uncertainty (Jaspers, 2018).

Translanguaging can talk to policy shifts. Such a practice is the collaboration of teachers and researchers working together to co-disrupt educational practices in ways "that open up possibilities and that generate a translanguaging education policy" (García & Kleyn, 2016, p. 184). In conditions of linguistic diversity, policy as discourse

SiLA

can be expressed through mediums of instruction (MOI). Jaspers explains that teachers 'implantation of policy is bedevilled by an "ambivalence". This ambivalence exemplifies in this study between multilingualism and "the duty of transmitting a monolingual standard variety in view of pupils' access to higher education and the labour market" (Jaspers, 2020, p. 8). It is not the intention to engage in detailed discussion of professional development and policy making, which is beyond the scope of this research. The purpose is to highlight the need for further research into TL as a means to engage teachers in practices that empower bi/multilingual students and their families. Further, the intention is to engage policy development, enactment and interpretation that recognise and legitimise the voices of bi/multilingual students and their families. It also seeks to redress the balance from discussions of multiculturalism to discussions of multilingualism. In accordance with translanguaging theory, I have adopted the position that for schools to be successful at meeting the needs of bilingual students, they would need to develop broad ecologies of multilingualism that built on the home language practices of their students (García & Menken, 2014, p. 25)

Conclusion

In conclusion, loud have been the voices for fair and equitable assessment practices for bi/multilingual students. In practice, this may include a translanguaging stance to assessment practices in which such students are better able to showcase their learning by, for example, simplifying the language of assessment, allowing for bilingual assessment, and viewing students' linguistic resources as an asset. Assessment can thus adopt an asset-based approach that takes account of a wider range of linguistic practices.

Countering monolingual bias in teachers is essential for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in education. Teachers should be aware of the linguistic backgrounds of their students. This includes knowing which languages students speak at home and understanding the challenges that multilingual students may face in the classroom in both instructional and assessment practices.

This paper on assessment practices, while lauding some examples of negotiated practices, has shown that assessment in this school has a monolingual bias. Assessment practices conducted with monolingual mindsets result in

underachievement and demoralisation for bi/multilingual students. To counter such negative effects, it is the use of bilingual assessment practices that has the greatest positive impact on student achievement. There were instances of two types of accommodation at Millbank School: the bilingual unpacking of assessment criteria as well as the bilingual pitching for badges. However, to sustain and embed equitable assessment practices, I suggest that adopting translanguaging approaches to assessment could help bi/multilingual students better showcase their learning and achieve the higher graded assessment badges.

Two major constraints to translanguaging and assessment were identified as, first, a predominantly monolingual teaching force, since teachers generally do not have access to the languages spoken in their classrooms, and second a lack of school-wide policies that value the linguistic resources of students. Teachers who adopt a TL stance towards their students tend to be more flexible in their assessment practices allowing for various accommodations including where practicable to be assessed bilingually. Schools also have the flexibility to create polices that enshrine translanguaging and place explicit value on linguistic diversity.

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Appendix 1

Details of the participants in the whole research project at Millbank School

Identifier	Status	Languages Identified
J	Student, Year 9	Mandarin & English
B	Student, Year 9	Mandarin, Hokkien & English
Other students identified by S1, S2 etc	Students, Years 8 and 9	Various
Research Assistant (RA)	Teacher Assistant and Translator	Mandarin, Fuzhou, English
Bilingual Teacher	Teacher	Mandarin, Cantonese, English
Bilingual Teacher	Teacher	Mandarin, Tong'an Hokkien, Xiamen Hokkien, English
Senior Teacher (Principal)	Principal	English
Senior Teacher	Senior Leader	English
Teacher	Science Teacher	Afrikaans, Tawa, English
Teacher	Food technology Teacher	Māori, English
Teacher	Food technology Teacher	English
Teacher	ESOL Specialist	English
Teacher	Science Teacher	English

Appendix 2

Sample Curriculum Badges at Millbank School

INSPIRATION 1	
JUNIOR **Learner describes the characteristics, purpose and function of the arts by comparing and contrasting how they are made, viewed and valued in a range of contexts (social, historical, political, cultural etc)** **Disciplines in the arts: Dance, Drama, Music - Sound** **Arts, Visual Arts**	**SENIOR** **Learner evaluates the characteristics, purpose and function of the arts by comparing and contrasting how they are made, viewed and valued in a range of contexts (social, historical, political, cultural etc)** **Disciplines in the arts: Dance, Drama, Music - Sound** **Arts, Visual Arts**

- I can demonstrate multi-literate understanding of features and aspects of the arts.
- I can express the developments and changes that have occurred in the arts, and provide reasons for these.
- I can reflect on my experiences with the arts as a medium to stimulate intuitive and creative thought and action that allows audiences to view the world from new or different perspectives.

- I can demonstrate multi-literate understanding of features and aspects of the arts and the reasons for these.
- I can express the developments and changes that have occurred in the arts, in a specified context/period and provide reasons for these in including modern/contemporary applications.
- I can reflect on my experiences with the arts as a medium to stimulate intuitive and creative thought and action that allows audiences to view the world from new or different perspectives.

INSPIRATION 2

JUNIOR

Learners demonstrate awareness of capabilities for living and lifelong learning

SENIOR

Learners demonstrate capabilities for living and lifelong learning

- I can step out of my comfort zone to pursue new learning experiences with a positive attitude to develop new skills and strategies.
- I can identify and explain relevant dispositions and learning habits to support my learning

- I can step out of my comfort zone to pursue new learning experiences with a positive attitude to develop new skills and strategies.
- I know when to lead, when to follow, when and how to act independently.
- I can utilise dispositions and learning habits appropriately to support my learning

INSPIRATION 3	
JUNIOR **Learners demonstrate awareness of science and the scientific world**	**SENIOR** **Learners can engage with science and the scientific world**
- I can describe an understanding of the world built on current scientific knowledge. - I can represent and communicate my scientific ideas and understandings. - I can use my scientific knowledge and skills to reflect on how science relates to my own life, my own culture and the sustainability of the environment.	- I can develop and express an understanding of the world built on current scientific knowledge. - I can represent and communicate my scientific ideas and understandings in a variety of appropriate ways. - I can use my scientific knowledge and skills to suggest solutions to problems and develop further knowledge, particularly reflecting on how science relates to my own life, my own culture and the sustainability of the environment.