

## Multimodal conversation analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis: A methodological framework for researching translanguaging in multilingual classrooms

By Kevin W. H. Tai, London, Routledge, 2023, 124 pp., £48.99 (hardback), ISBN: 9781032397146; £13.29 (e-book), ISBN: 9781003351047

Yohana Dian Rahayu Ningsih & Barli Bram

**To cite this article:** Yohana Dian Rahayu Ningsih & Barli Bram (2023): Multimodal conversation analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis: A methodological framework for researching translanguaging in multilingual classrooms, Language and Education, DOI: [10.1080/09500782.2023.2222025](https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2023.2222025)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2023.2222025>



Published online: 08 Jun 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## BOOK REVIEW

***Multimodal conversation analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis: A methodological framework for researching translanguaging in multilingual classrooms***, by Kevin W. H. Tai, London, Routledge, 2023, 124 pp., £48.99 (hardback), ISBN: 9781032397146; £13.29 (e-book), ISBN: 9781003351047

The idea of *translanguaging* questions established ideas about how to teach and learn languages in multilingual educational environments (Wang 2019). Translanguaging emphasises the language skills that students bring to the learning environment, including their proficiencies in multiple languages, dialects, and modes of communication. It encourages educators to view these abilities as assets rather than deficits and to incorporate them into the teaching and learning process (Li 2011). This approach involves the use of all available languages, not only the target language, to support the learning of new languages and other academic subjects (García and Lin 2017; Cinaglia and De Costa 2022). By valuing the linguistic diversity of their students and promoting a more inclusive learning environment, educators can enhance their students' language and cognitive development, as well as their academic success. To fully comprehend the intricacies of translanguaging practices, a flexible methodological foundation that can accommodate many theoretical philosophies, research techniques, and data sources becomes essential. Kevin W. H. Tai attempts to clarify such a methodological framework by merging Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with Multimodal Conversation Analysis (MCA) in the book *Multimodal conversation analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis: A methodological framework for research translanguaging in multilingual classrooms*.

The book is divided into six chapters that assist readers in comprehending the specific pedagogical and methodological framework that focuses on how learners use language to bridge barriers between recognized languages and nonlinguistic semiotic frameworks during particular classroom encounters. The concept of translanguaging and the many varieties of multilingual education programs are introduced in the first chapter. It starts by discussing problematic definitions of EMI or English-medium instruction and how it differs from various immersion programs like content-and-language integrated learning (CLIL) and content-based immersion (CBI).

In the second chapter, the author explores the concept of translanguaging in bilingual or multilingual teaching. Tai reviews relevant scholarly works that investigate the use of translanguaging as a teaching tool in classrooms with multiple languages. He also emphasizes the importance of understanding translanguaging practices from various perspectives, such as ecological, sociocultural, and psychological perspectives, as well as concepts such as multimodality, multilingualism, and translanguaging space. These ideas enrich the concept of translanguaging as a philosophy of language and help readers better understand the complexities of translanguaging practices in the classroom.

Furthermore, the author discusses the goals and nature of research on classroom translanguaging. He highlights the need to examine how translanguaging practices can support language learning and teaching in multilingual settings, as well as to identify the challenges that arise in such contexts. In the final part of this chapter, the author provides a critical examination of various methodological techniques for researching translanguaging in classroom settings. Tai evaluates the strengths and limitations of different approaches, stressing the importance of researchers carefully considering their research questions and objectives when selecting a methodology.

The third chapter of the book describes how researchers might use Multimodal Conversation Analysis (MCA) to comprehend how talk-in-interaction translanguaging is constructed. MCA provides a thorough examination of classroom interaction that enables researchers to address the “how” question of communication from the viewpoints of the participants, i.e., how teachers and students structure their conversation through the implementation of various multimodal, spatial and linguistic resources. Additionally, MCA has been shown to be a useful tool for analysts to record the social conventions that speakers adhere to when interacting, such as the norm of language alternation (Spolsky 2004). The main interactional structures that MCA research has highlighted, such as adjacency pairs, repair, and turn-taking, are discussed by the author. A limited body of literature that uses MCA to explain the nature of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms is referenced after Tai describes the research procedure for using MCA to analyze translanguaging activities. This chapter also discusses several objections to and limitations of the use of MCA. One particular objection raised is the requirements for disclosing the specifics of discourse. Some argue that the demand for context-specific information is overly restrictive, as highlighted by Matsumoto (2018). These objections and concerns contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding the application of MCA in practical contexts.

In Chapter Four, Tai discusses how Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) can be used to determine why some classroom participants employ translanguaging in particular ways. Based on participants’ views, IPA seeks to comprehend their experiences. This involves the researchers attempting to understand how the participants are making sense of their environment. Although MCA provides in-depth analyses into the creation of communal spaces where students can practice their additional languages on a moment-by-moment basis, it is unable to shed light on the various aspects of teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and performance that contribute to the development of different translanguaging areas in the classrooms. This chapter also explains the three primary conceptual underpinnings of IPA: idiography, hermeneutics, and phenomenology. Researchers can establish a more comprehensive study of the reasons behind how certain individuals co-construct their interactions by examining the remarks or reflections that classroom participants make about their translanguaging practices. Tai examines the theoretical underpinnings of IPA and then tries to explain the steps involved in data analysis. This chapter also addresses some IPA-related restrictions.

The book’s fifth chapter draws our attention to a fundamental argument for why using MCA and IPA together is a good strategy for researching the nature of translanguaging in educational settings. Tai demonstrates how MCA and IPA can be used in a genuine research effort in this chapter. The combination of MCA and IPA, as shown in this chapter, can illuminate the intricacies of the practice of translanguaging and the sociocultural variables that influence teachers’ resources for meaning-making. Toward the end of the chapter, the author describes how his reflexivity and positionality as a researcher impacts his perception of ethnographic data.

The final chapter outlines the methodological contributions and implications of research in applied linguistics and education. Tai discusses how MCA offers a comprehensive approach to analyzing communication that takes into account various modes, such as language, visual elements, and gestures, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of meaning-making processes. On the other hand, IPA delves into individuals’ lived experiences and subjective perspectives, allowing researchers to explore the intricate nuances of language use and its impact on educational contexts. These methodologies have greatly enriched our understanding of language and education, providing valuable insights and opening up new avenues for future research. The book’s last chapter also discusses potential directions for future research because it is important to develop a more complete understanding of how translanguaging practices may also cause some students to hesitate engaging in class discussions.

“Multimodal Conversation Analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: A Methodological Framework for Researching Translanguaging in Multilingual Classrooms” is an informative, practical, and well-written book on the theory, implementation, and evaluation of IPA and MCA in the classroom context. However, while the book presents a rigorous methodology for researching translanguaging in multilingual classrooms and provides insightful analysis of the data that have been collected, Tai does not explicitly emphasize the connections between the findings and the broader implications for policy and decision-making in the last chapter of the book, which primarily focuses on methodological implications. This may have been a deliberate choice, in the hope of encouraging researchers to interpret and apply the findings within their specific educational contexts, taking into account the unique needs of multilingual learners and the requirements of local policymakers and practitioners who support them.

This book offers a fresh perspective on the study of translanguaging and provides a comprehensive methodological framework that will undoubtedly inform and inspire future research in this field. Moreover, this book will be useful for academics who undertake translanguaging research in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms since it provides a concise discussion on the methodological techniques for examining translanguaging practices in multilingual classroom situations.

Another strength of Tai’s framework in this book is its flexibility in accommodating multiple data sources and research techniques. The framework can be applied to various types of data, including audio and video recordings, field notes, and transcripts, and it can be used in conjunction with other qualitative research methods such as ethnography and case studies. This flexibility enables researchers to customize their approaches to the particular needs associated with their studies and the setting they are operating (Cenoz and Gorter 2022).

Conclusively, with the help of well-illustrated excerpts, it is made crystal clear as to how integrating IPA and MCA allows researchers to examine how the teachers themselves make sense of their practices of translanguaging during specific periods of any classroom interactions, as well as how translanguaging practices are formed in multilingual classrooms. Thus, this book is highly recommended, as it is an invaluable resource for researchers and practitioners alike who seek to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments, especially multilingual environments.

## Acknowledgements

The first author expresses her sincere gratitude to Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP), an Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, for sponsoring her master’s degree study and supporting the publication of this book review.

## Funding


The first author expresses her sincere gratitude to Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan (LPDP), an Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, for sponsoring her master’s degree study and supporting the publication of this book review.


## ORCID

Yohana Dian Rahayu Ningsih  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0082-8460>  
Barli Bram  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2102-9676>

## References

- Cenoz J, Gorter D. 2022. Pedagogical translanguaging and its application to language classes. *RELC J.* 53(2):342–354. doi:10.1177/00336882221082751.
- Cinaglia C, De Costa PI. 2022. Cultivating critical translingual awareness: challenges and possibilities for teachers and teacher educators. *RELC J.* 53(2):452–459. doi:10.1177/00336882221113659.
- García O, Lin AMY. 2017. Translanguaging in bilingual education. In García O, Lin A, May S, editors. *Bilingual and multilingual education. Encyclopedia of language and education.* Cham: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-02258-1\_9.
- Li W. 2011. Moment analysis and translanguaging space: discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain. *J Pragmatics.* 43(5):1222–1235. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.035.
- Matsumoto Y. 2018. At challenging but 'learning' moments: roles of non-verbal interaction resources for dealing with conflicts in English as a lingua franca classroom interaction. *Linguistics Educ.* 48:35–51. doi:10.1016/j.linged.2018.08.007.
- Spolsky. 2004. *Language policy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Wang D. 2019. Translanguaging in Chinese foreign language classrooms: students and teachers' attitudes and practices. *Int J Bilingual Educ Bilingualism.* 22(2):138–149. doi:10.1080/13670050.2016.1231773.

Yohana Dian Rahayu Ningsih  
*Faculty of Language and Literature Education,  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (The Education University),  
Indonesia*  
 [yohanadianr@upi.edu](mailto:yohanadianr@upi.edu)

Barli Bram  
*English Education Master's Programme,  
Sanata Dharma University,  
Indonesia*  
 [barli@usd.ac.id](mailto:barli@usd.ac.id)

© 2023 Yohana Dian Rahayu Ningsih and Barli Bram  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2023.2222025>

