Translation, Code Switching, and Code Mixing in the Bilingual or Multilingual Classroom

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I went there bayâ, but you were not there man, so I went home na lang.
(Kolehiyala English: Commonly overheard among college students, usually female)

Introduction

To explore the use of translation, code-switching, and codemixing in the bilingual/multilingual ESL classroom is the primary aim of this paper. Specifically, it will explore how translation, code switching, and/or code mixing contribute to not only comprehension of L2 text but also to the development of learners' understanding of and participation in both L1 and L2 knowledge systems. Furthermore, this paper suggests that these processes of understanding and participation are manifested in the bilingual's creativity relating to contact literatures.

Translation, Code Switching, Code Mixing: Some Definitions and Descriptions

Briefly these concepts will be defined or described to situate the succeeding discussion. David Crystal (1998) states that translation is "the neutral term used for all tasks where the meaning of expressions in one language—the source language (SL)—is turned into the meaning of another, the target language (TL), whether the medium is spoken, written, or signed."

Faltis (1996) observed that much of the literature distinguishes translation from interpretation: the former referring to written text, the latter to spoken language. However, he noted that in ESL classrooms, translation typically refers to saying something in English (L2) and then repeating it in the learners' mother tongue (L1), keeping the meaning intact as much as possible. Here lies the necessary distinction between translation taught as a vocational skill

and L1 use in the language teaching-learning situation, given the TESOL nature of this paper.

Not withstanding this simplistic distinction, BassnettMcGuire's (1980) claim—in the context of specific problems of literary translation—is worth noting that the argument that the translator merely translates and not interpret is a foolish one:

> It is . . . foolish to argue that the task of the translator is only to translate and not to interpret. The interlingual translation is bound to reflect the translator's creative interpretation (italics mine) of the SL [source language] text. Moreover, the degree to which the translator reproduces the form, metre, rhythm, tone, register, etc. of the SL text will be as much determined by the TL [target language] system as by the SL system and will also depend on the function of the translation. (p. 80)

On the other hand, Bassnett-McGuire (1980) also emphasized that the central issue in any type of translation is the function of the text to be translated (p. 132)—whether it is literary or non-literary, fiction or non-fiction. In other words, both function of the translation and function of the text to be translated need equal attention. Therefore, considering these points that BassnettMcGuire has made, we can say that when the classroom teacher and/ or the learners attempt to translate, they are actually interpreting as well. The teacher employs his/her knowledge and skill in both the learners' L1 and the target language, which, in the ESL classroom context, is often the source language that is translated. The learners likewise use their interlanguage or learner language knowledge and skills for the same purpose.

In fact, along with the other four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), translation is sometimes referred to as the fifth language skill. According to Ross (2000) translation is especially important at an intermediate and advanced level: in the advanced or final stage of language teaching, "translation from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes communication and understanding between strangers" (p. 63).

Furthermore, the translator's (i.e., teacher's or learner's) 'creative interpretation' of the SL text reflected in the interlingual can be considered part of the bilingual's 'code repertoire'— alternately 'linguistic repertoire' or 'verbal repertoire' or 'communicative repertoire'—referring to the "total range of codes" available to members of a speech community or to bilinguals including their vernacular (or L1) for their linguistic interaction (Kachru, 1990, p. 57, p. 58).

In the chapter on "English in the Bilingual's Code Repertoire," Kachru (1990) described and illustrated the distinctions between code-switching and code-mixing. Of the total code repertoire, code-switching and code-mixing are two types of code alterations bilinguals are apt to make. "In switching, . . . the units from another code are essentially sentences which are preserved with a clear function in the discourse . . . indicating the bilingual's facility with several codes, and their use in appropriate contexts with relation to the participants, setting, and for specific effect . . ." (p. 63). On the other hand, code-mixing "entails transfer of the [linguistic] units of code a into code b at intersentential and intrasentential levels, and thus '. . . developing a new restricted code—or not-so restricted— code of linguistic interaction (p. 64). Expanding this definition, Kachru briefly explained the linguistic situation:

> . . . It seems that a user of such a code functions . . . in a disystem. The resultant code . . . has formal cohesion and functional expectancy with reference to a context.

In such a situation there is an 'absorbing' code and an 'absorbed' code. The absorbed code is assimilated in the system of the 'absorbing' code. There is rarely a situation in which the user of such a mixed code cannot identify the 'absorbing' and 'absorbed' codes. The transferred units may be morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and what are traditionally called 'idioms' (p. 64). Moreover, Kachru emphasizes that the interlocutors in a speech event in which code-switching occurs need not have common code repertoires: the code-switcher may be bilingual and the listener a monolingual. Furthermore, code-switching is usually used as a bond

of identity or as an aside to explain or to establish communicative 'intimacy.' In code-mixing, however, the interlocutors share both the codes and the attitudinal reactions to these codes.

Given Kachru's definitions and descriptions, it would seem the Philippines, code-mixing is used more frequently and largely than code-switching whether in academic or non-academic environment. A very typical example of this observation is the following utterance labeled "kolehiyala English"—which approximately means English used by college girls:

I went there bayâ but you were not there man so I went home na lang.

The Cebuano pragmatic fillers bayâ, man, and na lang are inserted in strategic places in the English sentence—I went there, but you were not there, so I went home—resulting in an utterance that is formally cohesive and functionally expected in the context implied, indicating as well that the speaker is functioning in a disystem, that of Cebuano and that of English.

Furthermore, in the Philippines the term code-switching seems to be used more commonly than the term code-mixing to encompass both switching and mixing. This is seen, for example, in titles of studies such as the one by Chona Quiteves in Silliman University and another by Borlongan in Dela Salle University. In this synthesis paper, however, Kachru's distinctions of the terms as well as the way code-switching is used in the Philippines are considered. Before proceeding, this question must be asked: Why do students use their mother tongue in class? According to Harmer (2001, in Kavaliauskien, 2009), a principal cause of this L1 use is provoked by the activity, i.e., if students are linguistically incapable of activating vocabulary for a chosen task. Another reason is that translation is a natural thing to do in learning a language, and code-switching between L1 and L2 is regarded as naturally developmental. There are other reasons, which are beneficial, to be presented and discussed below.

Code-switching, Code-Mixing, Translation: A Bilingual Learner's Language Learning Tools

I posit that code-switching, code-mixing, and translation are a bilingual's language learning tools that can be employed to comprehend and use the target language, and to understand and participate in both L1 and L2 knowledge systems. I have observed that in the process of language reception and production, bilinguals translate, and when they do, they usually code-swtich or code mix. Additionaly, when billinguals code-switch or code-mix, they also actually traslate to a large extent. For example: to translate the clause—"when bilinguals translate, they usually use code-switching and/or -mixing"—I might say

Ug magtranslate ang mga bilinguals, kalagmitan mogamit sila ug code-switching o di ba code-mixing.

This way of translating to show comprehension is more common and natural than the all-Bisaya translation which entails a much longer translation sentence that does not sound natural in the context of every-day speech such as

Ug maghubad ngadto sa laing pinulongan o sinultihan ang mga tawo nga kahibalo ug duha o tulo ka pinulongan, pwede nilang sagul-sagulon ang duha ka pinulongan sa paghimo niini.

Crystal (1998) stated that translators should work to ensure a result that sounds as natural as possible. So, while code-switching and/or code-mixing is different from translation, translation may employ some code-switching and/or -mixing in the process to create a more natural result.

Conversely, when bilingual speakers code-switch or codemix as a result of code contact or convergence (Kachru, 1990, p. 73), some of the resulting utterances may have some elements of translation. Let us examine a few examples of code-switching data lifted from Borlongan's (2009) study, "Tagalog-English Code Switching in

English Language Classes: Frequency and Forms."

Box 1

Original utterance	Closest translation
1. Make it fast! Bilisan mo!	Make it fast! You make it fast!
2. Why is this with correction already? We haven't checked. Ba't may mga check na to? Hindi pa tayo nagtse-scheck eh.	Why is this with correction already? We haven't checked. Why does this already have corrections? We haven't checked [it].

In the first example, Bilisan mo! is actually a possible translation of **Make it fast!** Similarly, the second example Ba't may mga check na to? Hindi pa tayo nagtse-scheck eh. is a possible translation of **Why is this with correction already? We haven't checked.** Noticeably the word check inserted in Ba't may mga check na to? is a code mixed vocabulary item which serves as possible translation equivalent of the word correction. In the second clause, **check** is assimilated into the L1 by accommodating it into the L1 structure in the code-mixed utterance, *Hindi pa tayo nagtse-scheck eh.* In the L1 morphological structure (in this case Tagalog), nag- is a verb prefix, *–tse-* is an infix (of the mixed base *nagcheck*; also a partial reduplication of the syllable onset in the word check), and s- in *scheck* is a phonological item of accommodation from the L1 attached to the syllable onset of check—these elements make up the assimilation and accommodation processes involved in code-mixing which expresses a present perfect meaning in the English translation, **We haven't checked.** The present perfect meaning is further conveyed by the pragmatic element, eh.

The second clause also illustrates the first point that when translating, code-switching and/or -mixing is actually employed.

Using Poplack and Sankoff's (1988, as cited in Borlongan, 2009) typology, Borlongan categorized this type of code-switching as smooth switches in the form of repetitions. In Poplack and Sankoff's definition, smooth code-switches involve 'changing the language of the sentence only at syntactic boundaries which occur in both languages' (as cited in Borlongan, 2009, p. 34). Switches of this type include switches between a main clause and a noun clause, an adverbial clause, a relative clause, and coordinate clauses, switches to

a prepositional phrase in the other language, and switches between a verb (in the L1) and an English subject. The preceding examples are by Crystal's (1998) definition, the preceding examples look more like categorized as smooth code-switches.

However, by Kachru's definition of code-switching, the preceding examples cannot be strictly described as such because they do not convey a distinct discourse function, and there is no clear indication that the switch is an aside for explaining or for establishing communicative intimacy, or as a bond of identity. In fact translations.

In the Philippines, as well as in other ESL and EFL contexts, there seems to be a prevailing negative attitude toward the use of L1 ESL classrooms, whether in the form of translation, codeswitching, or code-mixing to negotiate meaning (i.e., interpreting and expressing) particularly in the tertiary level. Learners are discouraged from using their first language in group and pair work activities. A range of practical reasons for avoiding the use of the first language in the classroom has been proposed: "Teachers wish to encourage the use of the second language and want learners to begin to think in the second language, and not to rely on their first language. This presupposes the idea . . . that if the first language is not actively encouraged in the classroom it will not be used at all" (Wigglesworth, 2005, p. 3). In other words, teachers want classroom activities to maximize learners' use of the target language in order to enhance learners' opportunities for interaction in their second language and to encourage learning of the target language. In reality, however, this is quite unlikely and, as commonly observed, the learners often use their first language actively to help other learners in their classroom (e.g., the case of Korean or Persian learners helping each other using their own language in English Orientation class in Silliman University). It is quite likely that allowing, or even enabling, some limited use of the first language in the classroom may mean that its use becomes "overt rather than covert," according to Weschler (1997, as cited in Wigglesworth, 2005).

Therefore, teachers need to acknowledge and accept students' use of L1 as a learning tool because whatever teachers say or do there is no doubt students will use their vernacular, as Kachru (1990)

referred to the L1. Mehta (2010) recognized this fact stating that majority of students, even though their reading and listening comprehension levels are well advanced, keep on mentally translating from L2 into L1 and vice versa. Teachers should be conscious of the positive significance of L1 use in the classroom even as they should also be wary of the possible reliance on L1 that may result if L1 use in the classroom is not properly monitored or supervised.

Indeed, according to Borlongan (2009), more progressive ideas as regards the use of code-switching in Philippine education have recently been espoused by some scholars and educators, more prominently by Professor Allan B. I. Bernardo of De La Salle University and Dr. Isabel Pefianco Martin of the Ateneo de Manila University. Bernardo (as cited in Borlongan, 2009) proposed:

> 'codeswitching [encompassing code-mixing] can be a legitimate and potent resource for learning and teaching for bilingual students students and teachers, and that we should relax our language prescription in formal school environments to allow students and teachers to benefit from the use of this efficacious resource of developing knowledge and understanding.' (p. 163)

Pefianco-Martin (2006a; 2006b as cited in Borlongan, 2009) provided empirical support for Bernardo's (2005) proposal through an examination of tertiary-level classroom discourse. She audio- and video-taped two classes of first year general education science in two private, non-sectarian universities in Manila. The analysis of classroom discourse transcriptions revealed that code-switching does not hinder facilitating learning in Science and achieving proficiency in English. In fact, Pefianco-Martin's data suggested that codeswitching is useful in teaching and learning, as it motivates student response and action, ensures rapport and solidarity, promotes shared meaning, checks student understanding, and maintains teacher narrative.

More Benefits of Using L1 in the ESL Classroom

In the past two decades, the monolingual approach (English only policy) has been questioned and re-examined, in consideration of the fact that it is more based on political grounds than on methodological ones (see Kachru, 1990; Auerbach, 1993; Cole, 1998; Lucas & Katz, 1994; Murray & Wigglesworth, 2005). Since then, there has been a movement to promote the use of the mother tongue (L1) in the language classroom. Scholars have expressed several justifications for its use in the language classroom of adult EFL/ESL learners.

Firstly, the mother tongue is the learners' linguistic schemata (Manara, 2007). The mother tongue is a resource from which learners draw their existing knowledge and through which they perceive the new language. L2 learners refer to their knowledge of L1 in order to help them learn the L2. Their L1 is the resource in understanding the target language. Auerbach (1993) asserted that students' linguistic resources can be beneficial for learners at all levels of proficiency. She emphasized that allowing the use of the L1 in early second language acquisition facilitates the transition to to English. Nation (2001) also supported this argument concerning L2 vocabulary acquisition through translation to be a very effective strategy for speeding up vocabulary growth.

Secondly, L1 use is a preferred learning strategy. Atkinson (1987, p. 42) stated that the mother tongue use in the form of translation technique is a preferred learning strategy for most learners. This idea had been expressed earlier by Danchev (1982, as cited in Harbord, 1992) who stated that "translation is a natural phenomenon and an inevitable part of second language acquisition even where no formal classroom learning occurs" (p. 351). Hence, the learners' activity of correlating any L2 structure or lexical item with the ones in their L1 is unavoidable. They will spontaneously do this activity with or without the teachers' permission, such as what is highly noticeable in a group work.

Thirdly, L1 can be used as a tool for thought. Vygotsky (1986) in his book *Thought and Language* (as translated) asserted that thought and language (originally "speech") are inter-functionally

related; therefore, the mother tongue would quite naturally serve as a tool to help students think about and make sense of (i.e., mediate their thinking about) the structures, content and meaning of the target language texts they read. Upton and Lee-Thompson's (2001) study found that L1 use to mediate L2 reading comprehension is not only a reading strategy (i.e., translation as a strategy) but also a tool for creating a cognitive space in which the readers can facilitate their own understanding of the text. Anton and DiCamilla (1998) pointed out that collaborative learning using the L1, as seen from the perspective of individual and social constructivism, enables the learners to complete the meaning-based language tasks assigned to them by performing three important functions: construction of scaffolded help, establishment of intersubjectivity (students'attempt to mutually define various elements of their task), and use of inner speech. They stated that "language is the principal semiotic system that mediates our thinking, both within individuals and between individuals" (p. 18). Swain and Lapkin (2000, as cited in Wigglesworth, 2005), investigating the role of the first language in the task-based interactions of second language learners in immersion classrooms, found that while approximately 25 percent of the language learners used to conduct the task was in their first language, only about 12 per cent of these occurrences were off task. As such, it can be surmised that learners were using their first language in positive ways that were helpful in their second language learning, providing them with a tool which allows them to

> make sense of the requirements and content of the task; to focus attention on language form, vocabulary use, and overall organization; and to establish the tone and nature of the collaboration. … Judicious use of the L1 can indeed support L2 learning and use. To insist that no use be made of the L1 in carrying out tasks that are both linguistically and cognitively complex is to deny the use of an important cognitive tool. (p. 7)

Therefore, banning the use of L1 in the classrooms removes two important and powerful tools for learning, i.e., the L1 as a tool

to mediate the learners' thinking about a subject and to facilitate effective collaboration among the learners.

Furthermore, the weblog devoted to some plenary sessions of the IATEFL Conference in Aberdeen on April 18-20, 2007, has summarized the major ideas presented by a well-known British linguist, G. Cook (Cook, 2007 online):

> . . . English teachers tend to take a monolingual approach thus neglecting the importance of translation in the process of teaching English. The ESL classroom cannot follow the motto 'One nation, one people, one language,' a somewhat overrated statement since it implies that a classroom is a state. Quite contrary to that, the L1, i.e., the mother tongue of the students, should by all means be acknowledged. The importance is highlighted even more by the fact that the students' culture is part of their language and by neglecting their language, the teacher, in a monolingual classroom, neglectstheir culture which leads to the danger of neglecting their identity as well. What is more, there is no valid database that could confirm the standpoint that the monolingual approach in teaching is the best one. The disregard of the students' mother tongue can in fact de-motivate the students and be counterproductive. Therefore, there is neither a scientific nor a pedagogic reason to exclude L1 from the teaching process. There are probably more reasons, utilitarian and political, to make the use of L1 quite valuable in the process of teaching English.The former reason implies that the students would be motivated to think more about appropriate equivalents in their own languages and the latter one, of course, emphasizes the importance of cultural diversities and tolerance among nations.

In other words, as Mattioli (2004) opined, "rigidly eliminating or limiting the native language does not appear to guarantee better acquisition, nor does it foster the humanistic approach that recognizes learners' identities" (p. 24).

As teaching-learning tools, translation, code-switching, and code-mixing need to take into account a number of different aspects,

Juliet V. Padernal
....
157

such as grammar, syntax, collocation and connotation. Uncritical use of these tools may give learners insufficient, confusing, or even inaccurate information about the target language. It becomes really useful in English classes if these are exploited in comparing grammar, vocabulary, word order, and other language points in English (L2) and the student's mother tongue (L1). According to Ross (2000), if students are aware of the differences, language interference (i.e., negative transfer) and intervention from their own language are likely to be reduced.

I will use a very common and simple verse to illustrate this point. Boxes 2 and 3 below show a few linguistic differences between Bisaya (Cebuano: Negrense, the L1) and English, the L2, in the song "I Have Two Hands."

Box 2

English and Bisaya versions of the song "I have two hands" (as sung in my speech community)

English Version	Bisaya/Cebuano (Negrense) Version
I have two hands, the left and the right	May duha ko ka kamot, wala og tuo
Hold them up high, so clean and bright	I-isa's taas, limpyo kaayo
Clap them softly, one, two, three	Ipak-pak, usa, duha, tulo
Clean little hands are good to see	Limpyo'ng kamot tan-awa ninyo

In Box 2, the following items can be observed, among others: Line 1:   1) the difference in word order between L1 (Bisaya: v-s-o) and L2 (English: s-v-o); 2) the collocation of a number word (e.g., *usa, duha, tulo*, etc.) and the particle ka followed by a noun word (e.g., *tawo, lugar, butang*) as in *duha ka kamot* (other examples: *usa ka kamot; tulo ka buok; upat ka adlaw*).
 Line 2:   1) the word order of adj-adv intensifier in L1 (*limpyo ayo*) vs. adv intensifier-adj order in L2 (so clean and bright).
 Lines 3 and 4: 1) the absence of sila, the Bisaya equivalent of the objective case pronoun them (referring to hands) as complement of the verbs hold and clap, in the Bisaya version.

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SILLIMAN JOURNAL

Line 4:   1) the absence of the Be Copula equivalent (e.g., are) in
Bisaya.

Box 3
"I Have Two Hands" with literal Bisaya translation

Line 1	I	have	two	hands,	The	left	and	the	right
	Ako	*may/ aduna*	*duha*	*kamot*	*Ang*	*wala*	*og*	*ang*	*tuo*
2	Hold	them	up	high	so	clean	and	bright	
	Guniti	*sila*	*pataas*	*taas*	*Kaayo*	*limpyo*	*og*	*hayag*	
3	Clap	them	softly,	one	two	three			
	Ipal-akpak/ idapo	*sila*	*hinay-hinay*	*usa*	*duha*	*tulo*			
4	Clean	little	hands	are	good	to	see		
	Limpyo	*gagmay*	*kamot*	---	*Maayo*	*mo*	*tan-aw tan-awon*		

        Box 3, on the other hand, shows that literal, word-for-word
translation is not appropriate because it does not exemplify a natural
utterance in Bisaya (It should be noted that the musical notes or the
melody is also a factor in translating this piece, thus resulting in
the Bisaya version presented above). Nevertheless, pointing out or
highlighting relevant L1 and L2 differences is deemed to facilitate L2
learning and acquisition as this will raise students' consciousness of
the non-parallel or non-equivalence nature of language , i.e., the L1
and the target language. This state of consciousness will likely
One important question is how much L1 use is enough or should be
allowed for effective L2 teaching and learning? For instance, in the
communicative approach to language teaching, there is provision for
the "judicious use" of the L1. What is judicious use and how much
L1 is judicious? Harmer (2001) suggested that four factors should
be considered, namely: 1) the students' previous experience, 2) the
students' level, 3) the stage of the course, and 4) the stage of the
individual lesson. Harmer's suggestions imply that the teacher has
to exercise his/her own judgment on the matter. For example, the
teacher may use L1 to ensure that learners understand task directions
or instructions. In a multilingual and multilevel class, the teacher

may conscript higher level students to translate for those who do not clearly understand directions given in the target language.

Translation, Code-switching, Code-mixing—and Culture in the Language Classroom

This exploratory paper will not be complete without a discussion of the use of L1 in the L2 classroom in relation to the cultural goal embedded in a language program. In this paper, I suggest or hypothesize that the bilingual speaker's creativity in relation to contact literatures is a manifestation of a learner's understanding of and participation in both L1 and L2 knowledge systems, which definitely include the context of culture. I would like to explore this thought and attempt to trace the connections between L1 use in the L2 classroom (i.e., translating, code-switching, code-mixing) and the bilingual's creativity.

Kachru (1990) underscored his point that a bilingual's creativity as a result of language convergence or code contact is not limited to literary texts; rather it applies to "all linguistic interactions in which multilinguals [identically used with bilinguals] participate" (pp. 169-170). In the Philippine context, this creativity is part of being a Filipino. To understand the bilingual's (or multilingual's) creativity, Kachru hypothesized on what is referred to as 'bilingual's grammar' referring to the "productive linguistic processes at different linguistic levels (including that of discourse and style) which a bilingual uses for various linguistic functions" (p. 164). Kachru explained that sociolinguistically speaking, this is the code repertoire of a given speech community with its range of languages/dialects formally and functionally determined, comprising a speech community member's linguistic competence. Such competence enables a bilingual to mix, switch—as well as translate—and adopt stylistic and discoursal strategies from the code repertoire available to him/her.
Further, these linguistic interactions, literary or non-literary, spoken or written, need to be understood. Kachru pointed out that to do so entails pulling down "barriers to intelligibility" at two levels minimally:

1) at the surface level of structural relationships which

provide culture-specific text-design or cohesion to the
text, e.g., collocational, lexical, or grammatical, and

2) in the reinterpretation of a text within the extended (or
altered) sociosemantic or pragmatic system. (p. 170)

Three aspects need to be considered in examining a bilingual's
grammar or code repertoire:

- how the formal features blend;
- what assumptions are derived from various cultural
  norms; and
- how these norms blend into a new linguistic configuration
  with a culture-specific meaning system. (p. 164)

Based on these concepts, it can be deduced that code-
switching, code-mixing, as well as translation—functional utterances,
they may be called—are a part of a bilingual's creative use of language
which is largely influenced by culture, language being an expression
of culture. It is part of being Filipino: a Bisaya, an Ilonggo, or an
Ilocano, or a Mindanawon, for example. Therefore, these functional
utterances are significantly valuable not only as language learning
tools but also as specimens for cultural study in the language
classroom. The cultural and sub-cultural nuances of such utterances
will emerge as teachers and students examine the blending of formal
features phonologically, morphologically, syntactically, semantically,
and even pragmatically. This exercise will also heighten students'
awareness of the structural or formal differences between their
mother tongue and the target language.

In this paper, I have attempted to show that translation,
code-switching, and code-mixing— functional utterances, showing
how English becomes part of a bilingual's repertoire, as language
learning tools—can contribute not only to comprehension of L2
text but also to the development of learne+rs' understanding of and
participation in both L1 and L2 knowledge systems, by presenting
studies and benefits of L1 use in the L2 classroom. As well, drawing
mainly from Kachru's ideas about a bilingual's creativity in relation
to contact literatures, I have explored briefly the possible connection

between a bilingual's creativity and translation, code-switching, and code-mixing, suggesting that these are manifestations of a learner's understanding of and participation in both L1 and L2 knowledge systems.

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