Translanguaging: An Expanded Notion Involving Affect and Vitality

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Abstract

During recent years, the concept of translanguaging has increasingly been discussed in the context of multilingualism. According to García and Li this concept includes other modalities, such as body language and facial expressions (2014). In this article we explore whether it is possible to expand the concept of translanguaging further to include "affect" and "vitality" as conceptualized by Daniel N. Stern (2010). To explore this issue, we used two short episodes in which we captured the interactional processes of one-year-olds on film. In line with Stern, we propose the interactions between the children show a kind of non-conscious meaning-making and implicit relational knowing, involving a felt quality of affect and vitality that promotes the children's abilities to participate, and their attunement to the affective states and rhythms of others (Lyons-Ruth, Bruschweiler-Stern, Harrison, Morgan, Nahum, Sander, Stern, & Tronick, 1998, Lyons-Ruth, 2000; Stern, 2010). This concept of affect and vitality expands the notion of translanguaging, as well as paving the way for what Erin Manning (2013, 2016) and Isabelle Stengers have called an "ecology of practices" (2005).

Keywords: Translanguaging in Preschool, Affect, Vitality

Introduction

Anyone who has been close to a group of children in a preschool has surely been amazed by the feeling of wonder and ambiguity around what is happening when one child, during mealtime, suddenly begins to loudly and diligently thump with a spoon or a fork on the dining table, and the rest of the children, almost explosively, join in the first child's thumps and rhythms. Most often a situation like this raises questions such as: What is happening here? What are the children participating in? Are they just playing around, creating noise and disorder as a way to attract attention from the other children or the adults, and/or as a way to initiate communication? Or are they just imitating each other or exploring sound? Or might it be that a more subtle and dynamic process is going on here?

These are questions that occurred to us during the course of an empirical study on *multilingualism* and *translanguaging* when we found situations like the one we described above, in the empirical material recording, to the interactions of one-year-olds, situations that seemed to elicit expressions of affect, intensity and vitality in the children (Novosel, forthcoming). This observation led us to begin exploring how other researchers, who had observed similar situations, had analyzed what might be going on among the children. We related what we found to its didactical implications for work in early childhood education.

Related Literature

The Concept of Translanguaging

During recent years, the concept of *translanguaging* has been used increasingly in relation to multilingualism (Brandstetter 2020; Harju & Åkerblom 2020; Lin & Lo 2017; Mary & Young, 2017; Pointer & Gort 2016). Ofelia García has defined translanguaging 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 communication potential" (2009, p.140). In relation to this García and Li state, "Translanguaging for us includes all meaning-making modes" (2014, p. 29) and hence, translanguaging also includes other modalities. In his theory of multimodality Kress mentions modes such as gestures, postures, gazes, font choices and color, images, video, and even the interactions between them (1997).

In the present article, we explore whether it is possible to further expand this concept of translanguaging to include the more subtle and dynamic processes that we understand are going on among the children in the situations we have described above, i.e.: how can *translanguaging* be understood in relation to expressions of affect, intensity and vitality in the children.

Philosophical and Theoretical Frame of Reference for the Present Study

The study of the more subtle and dynamic processes of life has a long tradition in science, philosophy and art. Terms such as "affect" (Spinoza); "pure experience" (James); "the pre-linguistic" (Wittgenstein); "embodied cognition" (Thompson & Varela); "primary and core consciousness" (Edelman); "background consciousness" (Damasio); "shared manifold of intersubjectivity" (Gallese); "implicit relational knowing" (Stern); and "epistemological silence" (van Manen) are visible signs of this tradition. During recent decades, there has also been a growing interest in these subtle and dynamic processes among researchers within different scientific and philosophical fields. Although starting from different ontological and epistemological perspectives, these philosophers and researchers demonstrate a common interest in the here-and-now, to a greater or lesser extent, focusing on *event*, *movement*, *relation* and *affect* as conditions for theorizing the social (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Manning, 2013; Massumi, 2002, 2015).

A Specific Strand of Child Research

It is worth noting that in the field of child research there has been a strong tradition since the early 1970's of exploring such subtle forms of experience by examining the dynamic features occurring in parent-infant relationships, and especially in mother-infant relationships. Influential representatives of this tradition include Mary Bateson, Daniel Stern, Colwyn Trevarthen (Malloch & Travarthen, 2008) and Stein Bråten (2007). This child research tradition is the philosophical and theoretical frame of reference for the present study, as we have found it provides a useful framework for exploring situations like the one presented above. This tradition has also inspired many other scientists in recent years, and today it crosses many different disciplinary fields, such as dynamic neuroscience (Ammaniti & Gallese, 2014), research inspired by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1988) and the sociologist and philosopher Felix Guattari (Manning, 2013; Massumi, 2002, 2015). Using this child-research tradition as a framework; however, presupposes a quite complex conceptual apparatus; as such, we will begin by describing some basic concepts Stern used in his research as a foundation for his analysis of what he, in his later work, conceptualized as *dynamic forms of vitality* (Stern, 2004, 2010).

Daniel Stern and the Micro-dynamics of Everyday Life

Already in the 1970's, Stern (1977, 1985, 1990) had begun to explore and conceptualize the subtle and dynamic aspects of experience in everyday life by trying to describe and conceptualize the dynamic forms of affect and vitality in the emergent relatedness in child-caregiver interactions. In his final book, *Forms of Vitality*, published in 2010, Stern asked why there has been such a sharp divide between talking and acting, and between the verbal and the nonverbal. Why has the word and the symbolic been given such a remarkably elevated and protected status,

despite the fact people experience dynamic forms of vitality in almost all waking activities? According to Stern, we are immersed in the immediacy, and this immediacy is phenomenologically tangible and a ubiquitous part of all experience. In Stern's own words, it can be seen as a "manifestation of life, of being alive" (Stern, 2010, p. 3). In *Forms of Vitality*, Stern stressed this even more clearly by asking: "Why did nature plan for babies *not* to speak and *not* to understand words for the first year or so of their lives?" (Stern, 2010, p. 110). He answered this question himself by saying children need to learn most of the basic processes, in which forms of vitality play a significant role during their first twelve to eighteen months in order to grasp the workings of interpersonal exchange. In accordance with this thinking, he stated it is highly important for children to learn all these dynamic features of experience before language arrives to "mess it all up" (Stern, 2010, p. 110), since language will likely have a restrictive force in such differentiation. Although language does help to anchor families of dynamic forms, its categorical function too easily hinders movement's dynamic flow and non-verbalizable vitality and intensity.

Movement and its four daughters.

In *Forms of Vitality*, Stern also placed a stronger focus than before on the temporal and dynamic qualities of experience by emphasizing the primacy of movement and its integrative and organizing act as an emergent property, with fluctuations in excitement, interest, and aliveness. He extended and reorganized his ideas by stressing the global and holistic qualities of experience and maintained that forms of vitality as a whole emerge from the experience of movement and what he calls "its four daughters": time, force, space, intention/directionality (Stern, 2010, pp. 5, 17). The organization and spontaneous integration emerging from this holistic experience of movement and its daughters represents a constant and underlying lived experience present in our everyday lives and in communication throughout our lives.

According to Stern the dynamic forms of vitality are obscured by the felt quality of the emotions accompanying them, such as anger, sadness, happiness, fear, shame or surprise; hence, they are hard to describe and grasp. Grasping them means they become accompanied by a train of thought and absorbed into its content and explicit meaning, not to the feel of the emergence of the thought. As an example, Stern has taken a smile as a form of communication to another, and said a smile, "performed without a vitality form, would only be a conventional sign. It would lack the full signature of its force and nuanced temporal enactment for it to be a real-life communicative act, fashioned for that moment and containing aliveness" (Stern, 2010, p. 28).

Forms of vitality are a-modal.

The fact that Stern considered the particular characteristics of vitality affects as not having specific emotional content, implied he early began to theorize that forms of vitality are not perceived through a specific modality. These forms are a-modal, which means they are modality non-specific and emerge in between all senses, in between sight, hearing, touch and smell, which implies that there is no direct representation between the different senses and the event (Stern, 2010, p. 26). It is rather a momentary change of activation in the interaction, a microscopic arousal and dynamic shift that may be experienced as affect and as a shared rhythm, an *activation contour*, existing during milliseconds in some a-modal form. This activation contour can force you to find a margin, a maneuver, you did not know you had, and could not have just thought your way into. It expands you, independent of "content" or "meaning," and as Stern argued, it is the "infant's progress toward the experience of an emergent other" (Stern, 1985, p. 59; Manning, 2013).

The infant's capacity for A-modal perception.

In relation to infants, Stern suggested the infant's experience is more unified and multimodal than adults (Stern, 2010, pp. 111-112). Being a-modal, infants take in sensations, perceptions, actions, cognitions, internal states of motivation, and states of consciousness more directly, and experience them in terms of intensities, shapes, temporal patterns, vitality affects, and categorical affects. It is easier for infants to take information received in one sensory modality and translate it into another sensory modality, which may imply infants possess strong feelings of being alive and vital. With the acquisition of language, new experiences and exchanges made available to the infant, and the a-modal form of perception, which previously had a primary role, becomes secondary. Despite this, it remains a key element in perception and in the relationship with others during the whole life.

Forms of vitality are lived experience.

Stern's understanding of dynamic forms relates to his phenomenological thinking, in which the world and our responses to the world are first and foremost experiential. They are *lived experiences*, preceding reflection and recognition – i.e., pre-cognitive, and the lived body inhabits space and time through being situated in time and space happening now and thus cannot be verbally recounted as it is happening. An attempt to do this would disrupt its happening.

In this context, Stern (2010) refers to the pragmatic philosopher William James who argued "activity" had no imaginable content except the experiences of process, obstruction, strain, or release. James stated, "The sense of 'activity' is synonymous with the sense of 'life,' in the 'broadest and vaguest way'" (Stern, 2010, p. 35). Stern compared this statement with Einstein's answer when he was asked whether he thought in words or pictures: "Neither, I think in terms of forces and volumes moving in time and space" (Stern, 2010, p. 6).

A physicist's language for viewing dynamics is thus viewed as "the process of change or rapid evolution of forces in motion," and as "the changing happenings of the universe" (Stein, 2010, p. 6). Therefore, it follows that the dynamic forms of vitality can be felt without any appreciable cognitive processing occurring, but during development, these forms usually become more contextualized "and fitted to local conditions by cognitive appraisal processes and emotional coloration" (Stern, 2010, p. 71) something, which in its turn, influences children's encounters with others, and above all, children's unique manner of being alive.

Affect attunement and matching of vitality forms.

To conceptualize the affective experiences and dynamic forms of vitality recognized and confirmed by the caregivers, Stern used the concept of *affect attunement* (Stern, 2010, pp. 41-43). He attributes this concept to Trevarthen's and his co-researchers' (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2008) concept of *communicative musicality* – musicality, not as we usually think of it, but as "a duet of movements, composed of pulses that are formed by timing, in its rhythmic sense, and its temporal contouring, and the development of force in time" (Stern, 2010, p. 53).

Interestingly, affect attunement signifies a *sharing* and *matching* of the child's affect, intensity and vitality across different modalities, creating feelings of agency and efficacy for the child. The degree of intersubjectivity this proposes is more than "faithful imitation" (Stern, 2010, p. 42). It is rather the earliest and most direct path into another's subjective experience, and as such, it cannot be shared through language or through emotions. Affect attainment is a kind of backbone of vitality dynamics, implying that being with another is accomplished by sharing the vitality dynamic flow, which exists on a scale of milliseconds. It is a sharing, a kind of feeling "with," and not empathy, which Stern defines as feeling "in." (Stern 2010, p.53).

In this context, Stern (2010, pp. 47-49) also referred to what he called the "crucial" discovery by those researchers working within the field of mirror neuron theory, i.e., the discovery that neurons in our brain discharge both when we perform a motion, and when we see (Rizzolatti, Fadiga, Gallese, & Fogassi, 1996, 2002) or hear (Kohler, Keysers, Umilta, Fogassi, Callese, & Rizzolatti, 2002) someone else doing it. Stern placed a great deal of trust in this research, and he advocated further study of mirror neurons as he thought they might give a form of proof of his own long-term research. As a matter of fact, some of the neuroscientists mentioned here also refer to the work of Stern and his fellow researchers.

Research Methodology

As noted in the Introduction, we observed a couple of episodes in a study of the interactions between one-year-olds that made us ask: What is happening in the explosive moments going on among these children? In this section of the article, we will describe and analyze two of these situations. As a framework for the analysis, and for directing our questioning, we are using Stern's and his colleagues' theoretical and philosophical framework. The episodes chosen occurred within a larger ethnographic study on translanguaging, in which seven children aged one to five years were shadowed using field notes and video-recordings[i]. For the present study, we played the videos in slow motion in order to observe the details in the selected processes of the episodes. This practice made us aware of processes we might have overlooked otherwise, all in accordance with Stern's thinking (2010, p. 40, with reference to Stern, 1977). Although the focus of the analysis of the children's interactions have been on two of the shadowed children (Daria and Yasin, both one year old), the analyses also include other children with whom the shadowed children were interacting. For the two focus-children the Swedish language was quite new as other languages were spoken in their homes and they had recently started preschool (their first semester).

Ethical Considerations

In line with the ethical requirements of the Swedish Research Council, this study addressed four requirements: information, consent, confidentiality obligations, and usefulness (Swedish Research Council, 2017). We have also been highly aware of the importance of developing an "ethical radar" (Skånfors, 2009) while working with young children, as a base for interpreting children's informal permission. An internal ethics committee at the university reviewed the design of the study. To avoid identification, the names of the children were changed; the teachers and the children's parents gave their consent. In the university to which we belong, we are not able to show the faces, gestures and actions children were engaged in. For the purpose of this study, we found this highly problematic, given that the dynamic processes and experiences of vitality and affect that we were studying are subtle processes played out in the now-moment through gestures and a shared rhythm – a non-verbal, and non-conscious bodily rhythm and intensity that can only be felt. Following Stern, the change in the body's perception of activation and vitality, the activation contour, may be experienced as a rush, a surging up, a fading in, acceleration and cresting, or a rapid attack, all of which are visible in the shifts of excitement, interest, and aliveness (Stern, 2010, pp. 12-13).

Conceptual Framework for the Analysis

The conceptual framework for the analysis of the two episodes is based on Stern's idea that dynamic forms of vitality, as an integrative and organizing whole, emerge from the experience of movement and its four "daughters": time, force, space, and intention/directionality (Stern, 2010, pp. 5, 17). According to Stern, the experience of movement exists during a very short stretch of time, and the stimulus can be visual, auditory, or tactile (Stern, 2010, pp. 12-13). We can never be sure; however, if the explosive moments we observed among the children in the episodes below are a demonstration of forms of vitality (Stern, 2010, p. 108). It may be that many

other processes are going on, such as imitating, mimicking, feelings of joy or the copying of each other's behaviors.

Two illustrative episodes

First Episode (23 Seconds*)*

> A group of five one-year-olds are sitting at a low table in the dining room. They are eating slices of pear. After eating for a while, the boy at the end of the table, Marco, suddenly starts shaking his head rapidly with his gaze directed toward Yasin. Yasin is looking at Marco and raises his eyebrows; he starts shaking his head, then he looks at Mateo, who is also shaking his head, and then back to Marco. Yasin's shaking accelerates, his shoulders move, and his mouth opens up in a smile that shows his teeth, and his eyes are joyfully sparkling. After some milliseconds, Yasin looks at Mateo and Fatma in front of him, directly after he turns his gaze toward Marco and starts shaking his head again, with his whole face involved in a big smile. Fatma and Peace also look at Mateo and shake their heads slightly. Fatma smiles, looks away, and Peace directs her gaze toward Fatma, and turns her head back and forth. Yasin's shaking continues to a crescendo and then he stops and looks at the slice of pear that he has held in his hand the entire time. For a few seconds they are all shaking their heads. Then it fades away and they all stop.

What happened in this brief episode? What triggered in the processes between the first child, Marco, enacting the situation, and the viewing child, Yasin, and the other children who joined in? Marco's rapidly shaking his head and directing his gaze toward Yasin may be a strategy of drawing attention and a way for him to get in contact and to initiate a communication with Yasin. Yasin responds to this communication by joining in through directing his gaze back toward Marco, but also by synchronizing his shaking with a smile, i.e., with another gesture. The other two children sitting close by at the table immediately take part in the ongoing activity, like a form of ongoing communication among all. Apart from functioning as communication, the children's facial expressions and their gazes may be expressions of joyfulness or forms of imitation and mirroring.

If we go beyond communicating and imitating through gestures, gazes and smiles, and instead direct our analysis of what happened according to Stern's conceptual framework, then the mutual attention and explosive actions among the children would be understood as a kind of matching of dynamic forms of vitality when the children are looking at each other and all join in shaking heads, the bursting in explosive shaking. Then Yasin, with a big smile, matches the shaking of the other boy – a shift of affect and a form of attunement and "sharing" of dynamic forms through different modalities. What is going on could then be seen as distinct and independent from emotions, and better captured by dynamic, kinetic terms, such as "surging," "fading away," "fleeting," "explosive," "crescendo," "decrescendo," "bursting," and "drawn out."

We cannot know, however, what this feels like or means for the children. According to Stern's thinking, they will feel the dynamic forms of vitality, e.g., a rhythm, intensity and activation contour shared among all five children. In accordance with this idea, a sense of mutual understanding appears in the intersubjective interaction affecting the children's development and their sense of self.

Second Episode (90 Seconds*)*

> A group of one-year-olds is in the dining room. Daria is sitting on a chair at one of the low tables. Yasin is sitting on the floor behind her, in the opening to the larger play room, where she cannot see him. Daria holds a small plastic glass from "the family corner." Yasin is holding a large plastic bottle (1.5 liter PET) with plastic pearls in it. Daria looks first into the camera and then at people talking behind the camera.
>
> Daria: "Aua. [pause] Aua."
>
> She looks into the camera again. Yasin starts shaking the bottle. The pearls in the bottle rattle. Daria looks toward the window. Yasin pauses his shaking. Daria puts the glass to her cheek, turns it**.** As Yasin starts shaking the bottle, first loosely, and after a short pause more intensely and energetically, the shaking accelerates. Daria takes the glass away from her face and looks into the camera, while Yasin gets up on his knees— presumably to acquire more power—and begins shaking the bottle intensely. He has a look of concentration on his face, with his tongue sticking out. Daria looks away from the camera, eyes still not on the boy, and starts shaking her glass. Both children are shaking simultaneously. Daria is looking around the room and toward the camera, but not at the boy. Yasin pauses. He moves his hands up and down gently without the bottle making a sound. Daria starts shaking the glass again after a break. With her eyes, she follows a preschool teacher who walks by with Peace on her hip. Peace is following the rhythm by making sounds as if she were singing to the sound of the rattling bottle: "ø ø ø æ æ æ." Peace joined in with the same rhythm, though using a different modality, since she is singing her vowels. Yasin and Daria are matching her rhythm with their movements. When Peace stops singing for a short while, Daria and Yasin stop with the shaking. Then Peace starts again and Daria accompanies her with the movement. Daria stops shaking, looks into the camera. Yasin turns the bottle upside down and looks at its bottom. He drops the bottle to the floor with a sound and he picks it up. Daria turns the glass and looks to the camera.
>
> Daria: "Ajejajajejejaj" (Maybe she is singing too).
>
> Yasin picks up the bottle; he starts shaking it again and he smiles. Daria lifts up the glass, turns it and looks at the bottom of the glass. Yasin spins the bottle, turns it and continues shaking it. Daria puts the glass upside down on the table, looks into the camera, and picks it up again. Yasin shakes the bottle and Daria shakes the glass. It is like a concert and they are all in it together, synchronizing their sounds and movements, sharing the intensity, the rhythm, the moment. Peace leaves the room and quiets. Then Yasin and Daria mimic the sound for a short while. They then stop and walk/crawl away.

This second episode differs from the first episode as the children attune in different modalities, such as visual, auditory, and tactile. They are also using objects, the bottle and the glass, which can be seen as mediators and "actants" (Latour, 2005). When Daria is shaking the glass, she is not able to see Yasin, since he is sitting behind her. However, we can see a matching of the vitality form (Stern, 2010, p. 41). Daria translates the sound of the rattling bottle into a movement matching Yasin's. Peace translates the sound into another sound; she sings with the same rhythm. However, besides mediation and actants, and beyond the auditory, the sight, and the sound, we observed during the now-moments this takes place with the same rhythm, intensity and duration.

Translanguaging

We wanted to explore whether it was possible to expand the concept translanguaging to include *affect* and *vitality*, i.e., to explore how translanguaging can be understood in relation to affect and vitality. In the episodes above we can see how the children are making meaning as they tune in to one another's affect and translate from one modality to another with remaining rhythm, e.g., a sound from a bottle turns into another child's movement and to a wordless song performed by a third child, all with the same intensity. Applying an expanded understanding of translanguaging, this event may be a sign of an a-model form of meaning making.

Consequences for Preschool Didactics

How can a preschool's didactics be directed if the intention is to attend to forms of vitality and affect attunement? As stated earlier, there is a tendency in pedagogical situations to view local occurrences as less didactically important than means-ends operations for accomplishing a goal or achieving a result. According to Stern's and his fellow researcher's thinking, educators have to start in the directly immediate experience by trying to stay open to life-giving encounters, processes and non-predictable becomings - to what is unfolding and emerging and to what Stern has conceptualized as "*the intentional emerging process*" (Stern, 2010 p. 126). This concept implies that we have to put thoughts about intentions, goals and results into the back of our minds and transition to an inquiry about processes - toward the rhythms in which children may sense the dynamic forms of vitality, through which they are carried and moved, and that make them feel vital and alive.

What does this imply for the everyday work with children in a preschool? We would argue that we have to transgress the strong emphasis on "the child," and instead of directing our attention toward the general and underlying causes of an action, and on children's needs and wants, we have to direct attention toward movement and the event, and to what is happening now, in the immediate experience. However, to stay open to what is happening, to the occurrences and the hubbub of life, is not easy, since in education we are used to focusing on and considering situations retrospectively, when they are already completed, and when we are able to reflect, talk about and translate what is happening into its content. As a result, the dynamic forms of vitality, i.e., the *"implicit relational knowing and the feel*," that Stern has explored is interpreted and put into verbal or symbolic representations, and most often described as children's non-verbal behavior. Hence, the emergence of thought and creativity, which gives the feel of "staying alive," is not given attention. Moreover, we too-easily fail to follow the important affect attunement, and the formative potential in the here-and-now that, according to Stern, are so important for children's future social interactions and learning.

Supporting the Inter-subjective Capacity of Attunement through Eventualizing Existence

Drawing upon the work of Michel Foucault (1991) our suggestion is to *eventualize experience* by dwelling with direct experience and with the dynamic events, unfolding in time. One way to do this would be to create preschool didactics and a learning environment characterized by an ability to pay attention to and "listen to" the processes going on through an attuned and affirmative gaze, rather than a distant and judging gaze. The capacity of the teacher to stay attuned is a sign of how the learning environment opens up for children's experiences and for implicit relational knowing, which is the foundation of a specific kind of meaning-making and learning, as well as a measure of quality and results. However, listening from this perspective is more difficult than we think. It is a listening to that which "tries to make itself heard" (Readings, 1996, p. 165), and is open to being affected. Otherwise, affect attunement and communicative musicality are hindered.

Philosophical and theoretical support for this idea comes from Emanuel Levinas (1969; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Levinas, like Foucault, has problematized the idea of the event. Levinas has claimed sensitive listening means one receives from the other something beyond the capacity of the self and self-consciousness. Sensitive listening is pre-individual; it allows for difference, and it is formed before categorization, calculation, assessment and recognition before similarity/identity (Taylor, 1987).

In order to understand this kind of listening, which Levinas understood as an encounter with the other and a responsibility, requires one to differentiate between *the said* and *the saying* (Levinas, 1969). The said defines the complexity of the linguistic structure of language; it exists essentially through naming and recognition, is independent of a specific subject, and governs all so-called rational thinking. Saying, on the other hand, inhabits the actual event, which cannot be represented and assimilated, but instead dethematizes. It is characterized by singularity and multiplicity and allows for the experience of unpredictability and for the ethical responsibility that every human being accepts when acting (Taylor, 1987). In accordance with Merleau Ponty's (1945) phenomenological thinking, Levinas claims we are exposed to singularity and multiplicity through sensory and bodily experiences (Kemp, 1992).

We can never tell how learning takes place ahead of time, since when an event is viewed while it is still ongoing and unfinished, which occurs during just milliseconds, neither the initiating state nor the end state is clear. As a consequence, it is not enough to choreograph and stage the classroom space from the outside, as a form of action at a distance. Instead, we have to address what is going on, and get a hint of the evoked experience and the vitality affects, which implies we have to plunge ourselves, as teachers, into the situation and follow the dynamic relational processes and the affective events, and begin to act there. To become aware of these processes and affective events one has to dis-embed oneself as a teacher from the verbal flow and the emotions elicited, which is easier while working with the youngest children.

New Openings

In their recent research on translanguaging, García and Li argue translanguaging includes all meaning-making processes (2014, p. 29). This argument works very well in relation to our exploration in this study. However, is it possible to further expand the concept of translanguaging to include affect and vitality? Following Stern's theoretical thinking and empirical work, we have seen how the world of the young child is, to a high degree, a world of direct immediate experience based on shared dynamic forms of vitality and affect, not yet expressed in words and symbols. This direct experience is, according to Stern and his colleagues, an intersubjective, practice-based form of non-conscious meaning-making and implicit relational knowing that promotes the children's ability to participate and their attunement to the affective states and rhythms of others.

An Ecology of Practices

These concepts of the dynamic forms of vitality imply we are already related and interdependent, which allows for systemic and ecological thinking. As Stern argues, didactically; this implies that the main early developmental task is to support interdependency and children's socio-affective competence rather than autonomy and independence (Stern, 1977, 1985). Similar ideas of interdependency are proposed by the philosopher, visual artist and dancer Erin Manning (2013) and the political theorist and philosopher Brian Massumi (2002, 2015). Like Stern, they have been engaged in understanding more about affect in the context of movement, perception, and experience. In their work, they have furthered Stern's thinking on affect and attunement, and like him, they have argued vitality and affect are not just a question of emotions and structures of motivation. Manning and Massumi have

also been inspired by the Dutch 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza's (e.g., see, Curley, 1994) idea that we never know what a body can do, as we become affected and we affect. When Spinoza wrote about the body, he did not differentiate between the organic and the non-organic body, rather he stated that …" a body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be *a linguistic corpus*, a social body, a collectivity" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 127). Massumi wrote, "Affects in Spinoza's definition are basically ways of connecting to others and to other situations. They are an angle of participating in processes larger than ourselves" (Massumi, 2015, p. 6). So, affect is an openness to the world through being involved and being a participant. In line with this thinking, through valuing affect, we may be able to open up new universes of existence (Guattari, 1995).

In her recent books, *Always More Than One* (2013) and *The Minor Gesture* (2016), Manning further explored the processes of interdependency between the organic and non-organic body by introducing the concepts of *more-than-human* and *the minor gesture*. Like Stern, she has proposed we be sensitive to affect and embrace the minor gesture, although it may pass almost unperceived, since the minor gesture has the capacity and power to open new modes of experience, manners of expression, and new relations. For Manning, the minor gesture is a process of becoming, moving toward the more-than-currently-human potential that can arise from the encounter. She described these processes, which are always in flux, as creative co-compositions and transformations of the field of relations which require us to attend *to things in-the-making.* Ontologically, Manning moves from talking about bodies to talking about *bodying,* from talking about the world to talking about *worlding*, and from talking about fields to talking about *fielding* (Manning, 2016, p. 2). As a consequence, and with inspiration from Isabelle Stengers (2005), Manning also moves from understanding sensibility to affect and vitality as a form of ecology to a form of *ecology of practices*. Didactically, this means we have to affirm, foster and take care of children's and teachers' affect attunement, i.e., embrace the power of the minor gesture to fashion relations, and its capacity to open new modes of experience, expressions and values.

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[i] The preschool studied is situated in a suburb of a large city in Sweden, attended by about 100 children, most of them multilingual. The recordings resulted in around 12 hours of film.