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# In the space between languages, translanguaging practices and perceptions in the university Spanish classroom

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

In the space between languages, translanguaging practices and perceptions in the university

Spanish classroom

by

Abigail Williams

A THESIS

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## **Abstract**

Translanguaging is a reconceptualized notion of pedagogy and practice that can provide strategies that enable users to incorporate and appropriate different language practices into their own linguistic repertoires. It is also an approach to the practices of bilinguals and multilinguals. It re-examines their process of learning new languages and supports their multiple and hybrid identities. This study examined the ways in which university students and teachers engaged with other languages in the Spanish classroom. The objective was to determine if and how university students and teachers ‘translanguaged’, and to explore how they perceived practices of translanguaging. Data collection involved a questionnaire for students and semi-structured interviews for both groups. Thematic content analysis was utilized to analyze the qualitative data generated. The data revealed a considerable degree of fluidity in participants’ language practice, as well as shifts in perceptions and practices that varied according to context. This study provides a clear argument for the authorization, or at least the value of introducing translanguaging to students and teachers in higher education so they can choose whether or not they want to leverage practices of translanguaging.

*Keywords:* translanguaging, second language pedagogy, Spanish, university students, university teachers, practices

## **Preface**

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, A. Williams. The study reported in Chapter 3 was covered by Ethics ID number REB19-0675 by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) for the project “In the Space Between Languages, Translanguaging Practices and Perceptions in the University Spanish Classroom” on November 4, 2019.

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I would like to first thank my supervisor Dr. Angela George. Her support was unwavering and invaluable, and I could never thank her enough. Her feedback was always prompt and thorough. She regularly talked ideas through with me and was unflappably adaptable when I would invariably change my mind. She helped me develop my arguments and would gently push me to find my best direction. Most of all she made me feel like I could finish this thesis on the many days when I so doubted myself. Dr. George, it is your committed supervision and encouragement that has got me here, and I am so very grateful.

I must also thank Dr. Yan Guo who introduced me to translanguaging. She gave me a word and I made it mine. She showed me new perspective, a place in which language learners can be empowered and have infinite possibilities of making a new language theirs, and where language teachers can support them.

Outside of campus I must acknowledge my family who were so understanding and caring during this process. Gaby and Jose, Heather, Dwight, Jessy and Mikey, and from a distance Robin, Kristal and the Cavaceres, thank you for ‘having my back’ so I could return to learning and enjoying research. To my parents, the exemplary teachers in my life, thank you for encouraging me always and for reminding me, in so many ways, that life is about its adventures.

To conclude I would like to thank the students and teachers who willingly participated in my study with such authenticity. Your generosity in sharing your experiences in the classroom with me on learning and teaching Spanish is valued and appreciated. It would be remiss of me to not also thank the people who made our sector of Languages, Literatures and Cultures function this year, Dr. O’Brien as Program Director, whose door was always open and who stimulated our new ideas, and Federica Gowen, Mariana Raffo and Katherine Guevara who kept everything running so smoothly. Lastly, I also want to thank Dr. Mary O’Brien, Dr. Roswita Dressler for serving on my thesis examination committee along with Dr. Angela George. I am very thankful for your feedback.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is first dedicated to Gaby, who is the reason I began to reflect with such depth on the ways we learn and own our languages, she gave me the starting point for this research journey.

It is also dedicated to the learners and teachers of other languages who may not always feel empowered in their classes. To the ones who feel like their dynamic, flexible, adaptable, trans-lingual practices, so much a part of their personal process, are something to be guilty for. They are not. They are a way you have to connect to a new language, and they are a way that you can make that language also be yours, one more part of your linguistic resources. Translanguaging can make all of us, language learners and teachers, feel brave enough to explore languages and to use them in ways that work for us, so we are no longer bound by them. Translanguaging is a way we can take agency back.

And finally, I dedicate this thesis to Solo, and all the Solos out there who are never going to finish their thesis; I remind them that research is really not so much about its destination as its journey.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Recruitment posters

Appendix B: Language background questionnaire for students

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview questions for teachers

Appendix D: Semi-structured interview questions for students

## **Epigraph**

*“...language is nobody's special property. It is the property of the imagination: it is the property of the language itself.”*

Sir Derek Walcott, St Lucian Nobel Laureate in Literature

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

I encountered the term “translanguaging” in a course I took on current shifts in language and literacy in my first year back at the university and I was enthralled. I finally had a label for the unofficial practices I had covertly both observed and used over my many years as a language teacher. Subsequently, after presenting a workshop to Spanish teachers in Alberta on the topic of translanguaging, it became clear to me that while there might be teachers who had heard of the topic, a general belief persisted that it was only ‘using English in the Spanish classroom’: a belief that it might be useful but should be kept to a minimum. Teachers who had heard of it did not necessarily see it as either endorsed pedagogy or practice.

The University of Calgary has an extensive Spanish language program with a wide range of students and teachers participating from diverse backgrounds. As I taught various Spanish tutorials there as a graduate student in the Languages, Literatures and Cultures program it came to my notice that, while university students appeared unfamiliar with the notion of translanguaging, they had various creative ways of using their other languages to make meaning. It seemed as if they were translanguaging, even if they do not do so intentionally. I continued to observe the flexible uses that teachers and students of Spanish made of their linguistic resources, and as I became more fascinated, I made the decision that translanguaging would be the focus of my research.

This thesis reports on a study of ten students and eight teachers in a Spanish university program. It examines their translanguaging practices in the classroom. The study also analyzes perceptions the participants hold that relate to translanguaging. In this first chapter, I provide context for this study at the tertiary level, present a general overview of the research topic and the conceptual framework, and describe the focus of the study. Finally, I provide a list of important terms, outline the structure of the thesis, and present my positionality.

## 1.2 Translanguaging

García (2009) first explained a reconceptualization of translanguaging, in her book on bilingual education in the 21st century, as the “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (p. 45). Translanguaging is characteristically understood from two perspectives. The first is sociolinguistic, in which fluid language practices of bilinguals and multilinguals are described, and the second is pedagogical, where teachers and students collaboratively build spaces where different language practices are used and acknowledged to foster creative and critical learning (Flores & Schissel, 2014). Translanguaging has been used to refer to “both the complex and fluid language practices of bilinguals, as well as the pedagogical approaches that leverage those practices” (García & Lin, 2016, p. 1). These are the two definitions that have been given preference in this thesis. In educational pedagogy, ‘translanguaging’ is not only about ways that students use their different languages, or switch their codes, but also about an arrangement that normalizes bilingualism without a functional separation of learners’ languages (Creese & Blackledge, 2015). However, despite the abundant benefits of translanguaging proposed by scholars, many educators are still reluctant to incorporate it into their university coursework, and many students are unwilling to accept it in the classroom (Mazak & Herbas-Donoso, 2014).

Foreign language pedagogy has historically been centered on languages as detached entities, ‘things’ that should function separately and independently of each other. According to García (2019), language education continues to be primarily monolingual and as a result, monoglossic. A monolingual dominant view is that only one language should be focussed on at a time, and that there are prestigious forms of the language that hold more value than others (García & Lin, 2016). García and Li (2014) in their book on translanguaging, write about its benefits, including that it can: promote a deeper and fuller understanding, help in the development of all languages, promote differentiated instruction by allowing students to find individual ways to make meaning and to express their creativity, strengthen a sense of identity. Despite a list of a myriad of benefits of translanguaging, many educators and institutions of higher education still subscribe to monolingual ideologies, leading them to approach the native language

through a subtractive lens in which learner's previous language is detracted to make space for the new one (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2016).

There is now a more contemporary perspective that has been gathering impetus, and it is one that views learners as having a single linguistic repertoire where their different languages coexist or 'translanguage' (García & Wei, 2014). García and Leiva (2014) described translanguageing as both an act of bilingual performance, and a pedagogical approach for systematically teaching multilinguals. They claim it encourages these learners to use the totality of their language knowledge to engage in educational learning. This can happen because there is a linguistic interdependence that fosters positive benefits of transfer in language learning (Cummins, 2008; MacSwan, 2017). It is alleged that because multilingual approaches and translanguageing pedagogies are based on the use of the whole linguistic repertoire they can provide more opportunities to improve communicative abilities as they use all the resources that multilingual speakers have in their linguistic repertoire (García & Li, 2015). Bilinguals are not thinking in their languages, they are using one language of thought (Li, 2018a).

### **1.3 Focus of the study**

In writing this paper I wanted to explore theories and studies that backed the exclusive use of the target language in the university foreign language classroom. I found there was little empirical evidence that existed to support this hypothesis. In fact, it seems to be taken for granted that only the target language should be used, and that using other languages while translanguageing is often perceived to be detrimental to students' language development (Palmer et al., 2014). As is the case when one ideology has been imposed on another without reflection, it usually comes down to a question of power (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). Bourdieu, in particular, saw the view of teaching that only used the target language as restrictive, both with respect to school language and also to language education policy.

In most bilingual situations, one language group is usually in a position of more power than the other. Keeping the two languages separate is common policy, and it often creates a linguistic hierarchy with one language considered the powerful majority language, and the other minoritized. By making use

of flexible language practices, translanguaging can transform controlled ways of speaking and language use. How can translanguaging alleviate some of the inequities that bilingual students face in monolingual education systems and even in some bilingual education programs? The first step is to collect data from the ground level which is at the core of this study. We know students use other languages than the target language, we need to understand when, how, why, not just what. Exploratory studies like this one can be first steps in the search for ideas that lead to future studies in the area of translanguaging at the university level, where there is a dearth of studies. It is our responsibility as educational researchers and researchers in applied linguists to explore the ways that a space can be created in multilingual classrooms where all students' language practices are valued (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

#### **1.4 Definition of important terms**

This section provides definitions for the key terms in the title of this study that may have alternative definitions. For the focus of this study, these have been chosen as the most fitting. Definitions of other key terms are explained throughout Chapters 2-5.

- **Perceptions:**

- beliefs or opinions that a person holds based on how something seems to them; their ability to notice and understand things that are not obvious to other people, (Oxford Dictionary, 2020);

- it is the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted; it is intuitive understanding and insight (<https://www.lexico.com/definition/perception>)

- **Translanguaging practices:** transformative practices that involve a dynamic and functionally integrated use of different languages and language varieties; more importantly they are a process of knowledge construction that goes beyond language(s), (Li, 2018a).

- **Bilingualism and multilingualism:** bilingualism is the knowing and using of two autonomous languages, while multilingualism is the knowing and using of more than two languages (García & Wei, 2014 p. 11).

- **Dynamic bilingualism:** is when the language practices of bilinguals, which are complex and interrelated, do not emerge in a linear way or function separately since there is only one linguistic system (García & Wei, 2014 p. 14).
- **Code-switching:** involves the alternating use of several linguistic systems between or within sentences, (Smith & Murillo, 2015; Anderson, 2017).
- **Target language:** is the language which a person intends to learn; in this study, the target language refers to Spanish.

### 1.5 Positionality statement

I left the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia at nineteen with a strong sense of identity. I have been travelling to different countries ever since. Over most of my life I have lived and worked in countries that do not have English as their first language. I speak three languages and I have had classes in five languages. This means that I have been exposed to a variety of teaching and learning practices, techniques and strategies. For over twenty years my work has been with first, foreign, and second languages in Spanish, English and Italian. As a teacher of ‘another’ language, I have invariably been given the official rule that I was only to teach in the target language. The norm I observed however was that other languages were still furtively and consistently used in the classroom, and yet still, students and teachers were able to meet language goals. There was always guilt, a guilt that I shared with students, that we were ‘cheating’ in some way; a situation that never allowed us to feel completely comfortable as we surreptitiously found varied ways to learn through our languages.

At this university where my study is being carried out at this time, I am a graduate student, a language student and a teacher. Even if I were not working directly with any of my participants in a language classroom, I am part of their community. I translanguage, and I am an advocate of dynamic, flexible classroom strategies and practices. This does not mean that the strategies and practices are unstructured, and it does not mean that I speak English in the class all the time. I am convinced that translanguaging can be empowering and should be deliberately employed in bilingual and multilingual classes. I knew however that I had to be careful to not allow this conviction to influence interviews with



the participants. I was in no position to judge teachers or students who might appreciate traditional methods or celebrate with them if they innovated with the use of languages. I wanted to be as passive and as unprejudiced as possible during data gathering and analysis. However, in a co-construction of knowledge this is not necessarily possible. Each person connects to their own “best practice”, and it is the sharing of these practices that makes them richer. As I conducted the interviews, I realized that the journey, as a language learner and teacher, can be long and vary by individual and there is a close connection to identity. Through reflection it was my aim to cultivate a space of understanding and appreciation among participants as we acknowledged each other and our contributions as we shared our experiences.

### **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis has been divided into six chapters. The current chapter introduces the topic and describes the focus and structure of the thesis. The following five chapters include a literature and theoretical review, the methodology, the findings, discussion, and the conclusions. The literature review presents research on the foundations of translanguaging and explores recent literature on translanguaging in higher education. The final section of the literature review identifies gaps in the literature and states the two research questions that guided this study. The methodology chapter describes the setting of the study and the study tasks, and also presents information about participants. The findings chapter presents the data collected from the study and is divided into findings from teachers and findings from students, and the discussion chapter analyzes the findings. The final chapter identifies and discusses the major limitations of this study and also explores the implications and future directions as a result of the findings of this study.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a brief explanation to contextualize the term ‘translanguaging’. It then delves into the origins of bilingual education, with a subsequent section that refutes the *bilingual ideal* and criticizes the monolingual approach to language pedagogy. An explanation of the multilingual turn that drives translanguaging is presented, and bilingualism and translanguaging are discussed as a reconceptualization of bilingual pedagogy and practice. Translanguaging is defined and its key theories and paradigms are explored. This review of the literature ends with a look at translanguaging specifically in higher education.

A review of the literature will trace the origins of the term translanguaging back to two main studies on this topic, which are widely cited. The first is on work, in an unpublished thesis, by the researcher Cen Williams who referred to a purposeful, planned strategy to move between Welsh and English in the same lesson (Williams, 1994; Lewis, et al., 2012). In these language classes, students would move between their first language and additional language; the input from reading and listening was in one language, and the output of speaking and writing was in another language. This strategy was proposed over thirty years ago to reinforce education as part of minority language revitalization, and its Welsh label “*trawsieithu*” morphed over time into the ‘translanguaging’ tag. The second article most commonly cited is by Ofelia García (2009), a researcher of bilingualism and the education of minoritized learners. She used the term to refer to how bilingual people fluidly use their linguistic resources or repertoires, not the same as their languages, to make meaning and communicate. *Linguistic repertoire* can be defined as the entirety of an individual’s language behaviour, including their language practices, skills, experiences and communicative interactions, all of which are fluid, dynamic and adaptable (Busch, 2012). It was not that people filled in gaps in their knowledge with another language when they did not know a word, but it was about how they did so.

## **2.2 Origins of bilingual education**

At the root of bilingual education was the philosophy that only direct contact with a second language and sole instruction in that language would result in eventual proficiency. In an article rethinking pedagogical assumptions in Canadian French immersion programs, Cummins (2014) confirmed that bilingual education and second language immersion programs had long been operated under the premise that the bilingual student's two languages should be kept rigidly separate. Weinreich (1974), an early researcher on bilingualism, had affirmed that competent bilinguals did not alternate between their languages, and that furthermore, they had the capacity to keep their languages separate from each other. It was believed that a proficient bilingual needed to be able to focus on one language at a time. If not, their two languages would have to compete for different spaces in the brain (Cummins, 2001). García and Li (2014, p. 12), citing work by Haugen (1974), posited that languages occupied these separate spaces because bilinguals were considered to have different language skills that were parallel and separated from each other.

Cummins (1981) had referred to a "Separate Underlying Proficiency" model that assumed that the two languages, that corresponded to nationally sanctioned, standard named languages, such as 'Spanish' and 'English', operated independently in learners with no transfer occurring between them. Based on the argument that bilinguals had two separate language systems, it was further held that there was a limited linguistic capacity in the brain and bilinguals had to share this space between their languages. This resulted in the expectation that bilinguals were to be "balanced", and operate as two monolinguals in one, that is, they were assumed to operate as monolingual speakers of each language (Grosjean, 1982). These accepted underlying theories that languages should be kept separate, which created what Cummins called the "two solitudes" in bilinguals, is an assumption that is based on monolingual language ideologies and has had a number of ramifications for the teachers and learners involved in bilingual pedagogy. On the one hand, it made it unacceptable for students to use another language in class as this was labelled "linguistic interference" (Jarvis, 2008). The concept of interference has led an insistence on the separation of the languages and has had one of the biggest impacts on language education (García & Otheguy,

2020). The general understanding was that anyone studying another language did so because they wished to acquire the linguistic characteristics of an educated native speaker of the additional language being studied (Cook, 2007). This speaker was assumed to be a monolingual user who used the prestigious ‘standard’ variety of the language. On the other hand, it was implicit for teachers that the instructional use of the target language should be emphasized and enforced. For example, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) with its twelve thousand, five hundred language educator and administrator members from all levels, recommends that learning take place through the target language for 90% or more of classroom time (<https://www.actfl.org/>). ACTFL bases this on the principle that learners need as much as possible exposure to and active engagement in the target language for them to learn. They liken learning a language to learning to ride a bicycle as they say, ‘learning is best achieved by doing’. This is a common assumption in language teaching that has persisted under the umbrella of what was called the “monolingual principle” (Howatt, 1984), in which the students’ first language was excluded and, for all intents and purposes, vilified.

The result of these first concepts was that language classes were viewed as rigid structures that included grammar and vocabulary, and teachers, usually native speakers, were jealous guardians of the exclusive contact students had with only the target language. The principles of these theories maintained the long-held view that languages should be pure, conserved like perfect cookies cut by an exacting language cookie cutter mold with precisely measured borders and specific forms, and then safely guarded in their respective cookie boxes. When speaking an additional language, it was expected that the first language be forgotten. It could be said that the goal of bilingual pedagogy was to make a type of bilingual-monolingual; being bilingual meant that one was expected to become a double monolingual with separate languages.

### ***2.2.1 Initial bilingual pedagogy methods***

Early bilingual pedagogy methods were inconsistent with the way the bilingual and multilingual mind functions, and greatly influenced by monolingual principles (e.g. Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Cook,

2007). Cummins (2007) outlined the assumptions of the monolingual principle: that instruction should be carried out exclusively in the target language without use of students' other language or languages; that there was no place for translation between languages in the teaching of language or literacy; and, last but not least, that within immersion and bilingual programs, languages should be kept rigidly separate. The original grammar translation method focused on students learning grammatical rules and vocabulary lists 'deductively', and then applying those rules by translating sentences between the target language and the first language (Howatt, 1984). Translation was the most important classroom activity. There was very little spoken communication and listening comprehension involved in the grammar method, and as language communication became the aim, the 'direct method' was developed. Its main principle was that learners should be taught in the target language, so no translation was allowed, and so grammar was taught inductively, while oral and listening skills were to be the focus of instruction (Cook, 2001). So much did it reflect what people believed to be the most natural way to learn languages, it was often called also the 'natural' method' (Cummins, 2007). The direct method of teaching gained its popularity because it was alleged that in this way the first language would not 'dilute' the target language and so not interfere with learning (Jarvis, 2018). Other methods that developed over time, like the communicative approach, with its emphasis on communicative activities in the additional language, and task-based learning which focussed on significant tasks in the target language, upheld this view (Cook, 2001).

These methods did not consider the first language, only ways to minimize its use (Cook, 2001). In many studies and evaluations, the ability to separate languages was, and is still, considered a main proficiency benchmark to measure bilingual linguistic proficiency and competence (Dijkstra & Van Heuven, 2002). To learn a language, one is expected to stay in its box, and the subsequent language learning will be linear, acquired and used separately. This monolingual idea of language learning positioned languages as detached skills that functioned independently from the context in which they were used, and it dominated the field of applied linguistics, greatly influencing the beliefs about how

language teaching should be carried out and language learning should happen (Cummins, 2007; Hall & Cook, 2012).

Then, researchers started to question the foundation of this accepted monolingual approach to language learning. Cook (2010) claimed it was based on assumptions that seemed logical but were empirically untested. Two of the central beliefs that she queried were that using the additional language exclusively was more ‘natural’ and similar to the learners’ first language acquisition, and that students could only learn a second language well if they were exposed to it, only and exclusively. In studies on classroom-based research, researchers found that this did not match the reality however, and that teachers were allowing their pupils to use other languages that were not the class’s language of instruction, and themselves “smuggling other languages into the classroom” (Probyn, 2009, p. 123). Cook (2001) claimed that teachers “resorted to their second language despite their ‘best intentions’, often feeling guilty for straying from the second language path” (p. 405). Even regular users of different languages have been found to experience a sense of guilt when asked about using other languages than the target languages in the classroom as Barnard and McLellan (2014) found in their study on Asian perspectives in a university in England.

Research has shown that while participants profess to believing that translanguaging is a natural tool, they still hesitate to accept it within the professional realm or to teach it intentionally in the classroom (Anderson, 2017). This is a reflection of the extent to which the monolingual principle has been internalized as ‘common sense’ by students, teachers and policymakers, despite the fact that classroom practice often does not reflect this standard. In their discussion on the literature, Palmer et al. (2014) found that language teachers could limit dynamic ‘other’ language practices of bilingual students and that language ‘hybridity’ was not always welcome in the classroom. However, their study of two dual language teachers in a school in Texas, a unique context, found that the dynamic bilingualism that was regularly leveraged in these teachers’ classrooms was facilitated by their own experiences growing up in bilingual communities. Teachers were doing what felt right. Teachers took the time to assess their

students' language practices and to listen to them so that the students could be involved in classroom pedagogy. This revealed a wide variety of bilingual and multilingual language practices and reflected a plurality of student engagement. This is the type of reflection over recent years that has led to the refutation that of the notion that there are ideal coordinated bilinguals in classrooms, with two completely separate linguistic systems, and who do not mix their languages at any level.

### ***2.2.2 Refuting the bilingual ideal***

The bilingual ideal was directly contested by Grosjean, (1989) who said that bilinguals were not actually two monolinguals in one. He reported that psycholinguists had been focussing on how a bilingual's two languages were activated one at a time, and so had been giving little attention to the simultaneous activation of the two languages. For decades, Cummins (1979, 1981) had argued that cognitive and academic proficiencies in the first and second language were manifestations of the same underlying dimension. Exploring the 'ideal', he posited that, as a bilingual's languages are interdependent, knowledge and skills learned in one language could transfer to the other if the necessary conditions for language learning were provided. Cummins' theory of the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) proposed a core cognitive interdependence in learners that was shared, or 'common', across languages, making the transfer of cognitive and academic or literacy-related proficiency from one language to another possible. He used the image of an iceberg which might look like two or more fragments above water but below water was one mass, made up of different segments that were linked, like branches from a tree trunk. Even where languages were not similar, like Urdu and English for example, there were insights about how one language could foster language learning in another, and on the ability to decode or make meaning from a language (Cummins, 2007). Knowledge and abilities from one language could be potentially available for the development of another through metalinguistic development, which will be explored in the next section. This would mean, that in an immersion program, for example, developing reading and writing skills does not just mean developing skills in the target language, but it is also developing a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is related to the

development of literacy in the learner's own language, a hypothetical 'two-for-one'. Cummins' concept of 'linguistic interdependence' claimed that the instruction in one language could promote general proficiency which could then be transferred to the additional language if there were enough exposure to it, particularly in the case in which the languages shared similar linguistic features. Linguistic interdependence in the brain could foster positive benefits of transfer in language learning. This concept was pointing to a more dynamic view of bilingualism.

Further research has found the cross-linguistic relationship between students' first and additional language(s) and verified that proficiency in the first language can be related to academic achievement in the second (Riches & Genesee, 2006). Vallejo and Dooly (2020) suggested that encouraging bilingual education means language resources could be used in more innovative ways. A meta-analysis of studies showed that students in bilingual programs had more successful results than those in English-only programs on tests of academic achievement (Krashen, et al., 2007). Research by Bialystok (2001) showed the cognitive benefits of being bilingual on metalinguistic awareness and on creative thinking. However, while it was evident that the use of the learner's first language had a positive effect on their academic achievement and cognitive growth, conclusions could not be made that these bilingual programs were more successful than other forms of bilingual education. It had become clear that bilingual programs needed to give students a more analytical view of language, and to foster metalinguistic awareness to support more divergent and creative thinking. This was however age-dependent as Bialystok focussed more on younger participants.

### **2.3 Metalinguistic awareness**

Metalinguistic awareness has been defined as "the ability to objectify language and dissect it as an arbitrary linguistic code independent of meaning" (Roth, et al., 1996, p. 258). It is the ability to think about the language itself, as opposed to simply using the language system to comprehend and produce sentences. It allows learners to reflect on and manipulate the structural features of spoken language as this reflection and manipulation is how meaning and nuances, as well as how inferences beyond meaning, are



conveyed. Language cannot be considered absolute as meanings can be changed when words are moved around. Metalinguistic awareness objectifies language as a process or a system, as well as an artifact, which allows learners to be aware of language structure so they can reflect on it and manipulate it while it is being used (Li, 2018a). Metalinguistically aware learners understand that words and sentences can have more than one meaning, which leads to flexibility in their thinking about what the appropriate meaning may be. It can empower them and give them agency, and not only individually but in their groups. When students are referring to the same language they are using, they are demonstrating some degree of metacognition and thinking about how they are using their language (Bialystok, 1993; Li, 2018a). This notion of metalinguistic capabilities being available to learners from their first language became widely accepted, largely supported by the contributions of Jim Cummins. However, this, one of Cummins' initial frameworks, was seen as lacking recognition for language being contextual in its use, and also for failing to acknowledge the complexity of learners' linguistic repertoires, with their multiple codes and modes of expression (Jewitt & Kress 2003; New London Group, 2000).

#### **2.4 Criticism of the monolingual approach**

At the core of the monolingual approach is the principle that languages are distinct and separate entities, like those cookies in their boxes, each one protected in a space of its own. As the multilingual turn was evolving, Bourdieu (1991) strongly criticized the position of structural linguists who he claimed treated languages "like an end in itself" (p. 31). He claimed if a language was taught only as an external artifact it was not taking its speakers enough into account; it was focussing on the 'end' and not the 'means'. Bourdieu posited that the diversity and depth of the human experience disqualified the existence of a homogeneous language and speech community. He also stated that linguistic theories did not consider the influence of society, culture and history on language, but tended to limit language to an encoding and decoding of proper grammar, and linguistic distinction was being used to shape and maintain social and political power relationships. Bourdieu asserted that people were freely and often unwittingly subordinating themselves to the ideas of others about what the world was like, to the point of

'habitus', where these ideas were being seen as natural and obvious, and then embodied. The implication of this was that individual agency and diversity in language use was being denied.

Bourdieu's (1991) critique of linguistic theories caused a shift in thinking as he focussed on the subjective experiences of individuals and their socio-cultural, historical interactions as part of language use. He was opposed to the ideas of Saussure (1983) and Chomsky (1965), which formed an important part of the foundation of linguistic theory, as he claimed that these were based on the distinction that enabled language to be constituted as an autonomous and homogeneous object. While this allowed for linguistic analysis it did not paint a true picture of language use. He was firmly opposed to the forms of semiotic analysis of language by Saussure (1983) as, in his opinion, they focused exclusively on the internal structure of language without considering the external influence of society. He also challenged the position of Chomsky's (1965) 'ideal speaker' concept and the notion of a homogeneous speech community as taking for granted and overlooking reflection on the relationship between the speaker and the language. Bourdieu's aim was to show that language was a social-historical phenomenon and that linguistic exchange should be analysed as the result of the meeting between each speaker's way of being, their habitus, and their nuanced outer world.

Bourdieu's critiques were supported by Makoni and Pennycook (2007) who conjectured that languages were social-historical constructions that changed over time. They also argued that "languages do not exist as real entities in the world and neither do they emerge from or represent real environments; they are, by contrast, the inventions of social, cultural and political movements" (p. 2).

Canagarajah's (2007) notion that languages are not fixed can be sustained if one considers how languages have emerged historically, for example, the development of 'British-English' in Britain and 'American-English' in the United States, of Spanish in Spain and Castellano in Latin America. First languages were dominant in specific geographical locations, and then the formation of the modern nation states aligned with the language, like French in France. These language hierarchies and ideologies, which portrayed

named languages as static, standardized competencies one might “acquire”, greatly influenced the dominant models of bilingualism throughout the 20th century (Turner & Lin, 2020).

Returning to the cookie analogy, Bourdieu (1991) had opened a door to thinking about who controlled the cookie molds and decided in which box the cookies should be put, and, perhaps most importantly, who had or did not have access to them. He was proposing that the learner should be placed at the center of learning not as a recipient of an external language grammar but as a thinking participant and agent in its acquisition. A conceptual shift was occurring, and its origins could be found in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), a prominent Russian language philosopher. His theory of heteroglossia posited that language is inseparably bound to its context because life is a dialogic, shared event and living means participating in dialogue. He explored the notion that language emerges from the actions of its users who have individual ideals and perspectives, and heteroglossia described the co-existence of these multiple meanings, perspectives, and values in language. He based his ideas on the psycholinguistic notion of ‘*linguaging*’ that refers to a process of using language to gain knowledge, make sense, articulate thoughts and communicate.

We *language* when we notice and contemplate language uses and then produce metalinguistic commentary (Swain, 2006). This concept applies in general to language practice; it is not a particular bilingual or multilingual theory; it is a way to solve problems through languages. As we interact, we make meaning of the world. Language then is not something we are taught; it is something we construct as we make meaning while we are *linguaging*. Language was being turned from a noun into a verb, something active and dynamic that people did, not used. Most importantly language was being seen not as a structural phenomenon but as a practice and a process. In a changing post-structuralist world this thinking was suddenly very relevant and led to researchers considering how the purist stance on language learning could be reconceptualised to create more inclusive, accessible sociolinguistic spaces that were available to all (Li, 2018b).

One of the steps taken was to change the labels given to language learners and second language learners, both terms that imply a deficit position of not knowing, to the term *emergent bilinguals*. Turnbull (2016) proposed a reframing of foreign language education through a bilingual framework. He built on García's (2009) definition, which had focussed more on younger learners, to include adults who were learning later in their lives. Turnbull (2016) defined an emergent bilingual as "any person who is actively in the process of acquiring knowledge of a second language and developing bilingual languaging skills for use in a given situation relevant to their individual needs to learn the target language" (p. 1043). This reconceptualized definition focussed on the "ongoing process of gaining language knowledge and developing second language skills as a potential recourse for making and conveying meaning in situations relevant to the individual speaker's situation" (p. 1043). It was a sign of changing epistemology, however, García's (2019) argument with Turnbull's (2016) reframing was that multilingualism had still been referenced in terms of sanctioned named languages.

## **2.5 The multilingual turn**

An epistemological search for different answers, combined with questioning of the bilingual and monolingual perspective, gave rise to what was termed a *multilingual turn* in applied linguistics (Ortega, 2013; May, 2013). This term was used to critique the original monolingual ideologies that had dominated research in applied linguistics and second language acquisition. At its core was an inquiry into the native-speaker norms that continued to view language learners as deficit and were deeply entrenched in language pedagogy (Ortega, 2013). Could these norms be better understood, and did they do justice to language learners? Should learning an additional language mean focussing on it alone, and using it exclusively in the classroom? Was it actually the best practice? Bilinguals use their languages in specific social contexts that are "multiple and ever adjusting to the multilingual multimodal terrain of the communicative act" (García, 2009, p. 53). If individuals' languaging repertoires are unique to them didn't their independent practices and strategies deserve recognition?

## **2.6 Dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging**

### ***2.6.1 Reconceptualizing bilingual pedagogy and practice***

Ten years ago, a reconceptualised notion of bilingual pedagogy and practice was developed by Ophelia García (2009), a leading Cuban-American applied linguist. Bilingualism had been conceptualised as the storage of languages in the brain in boxes. Bilingual pedagogy had been seen in dual terms, either as additive, in which a new box is added alongside the original box as storage for the new language, or as subtractive, in which the new language box with the dominant language gradually replaces the original first language box, usually that of a minoritized language (García & Otheguy, 2020). In a historical context, it is agreed that most indigenous and language minoritized groups of people have had the subtractive model imposed on them. García's more contemporary definition did away with the idea of additive and subtractive bilingualism by claiming that neither model had proved enough to account for the nonlinear ways that bilinguals actually used and acquired language(s). She proposed that bilingualism might be better perceived as fluid and dynamic, and that linear models of language learning could not fully encompass the language practices and strategies of bilinguals. She fostered a more dynamic approach which she referred to as 'dynamic' bilingualism, primarily characterized by an active process.

“Dynamic bilingualism goes beyond the idea that there are two languages that are interdependent... it connotes one linguistic system that has features that are most often practiced according to societally constructed and controlled languages, but other times producing new practices” (García & Li, 2014, p. 14).

Two basic assumptions in this definition have been widely scrutinized: the one that suggests a move away from the idea of separate languages, and the other that language learners have only one linguistic system, or repertoire.

### ***2.6.2 Moving away from named languages***

At first glance, translanguaging is a paradigm shift from the separation of language structures to a more integrated approach. There have been critics of the translanguaging, like MacSwan, 2017, who

addressed the premise put forward by translanguaging researchers that it should not be limited by named languages, and that it goes “beyond languages”. Bourdieu’s (1991) definition of named languages as socially and politically defined constructs can be considered. Bilinguals and multilinguals are aware of the existence of language boundaries but when they translanguage they can strategically manipulate these boundaries as they make full use of their multilingual and multimodal resources; they can creatively push their boundaries. By translanguaging, learners can show their language awareness in the structural and cognitive sense, but also in the political, cultural and social sense (Otheguy et al., 2015).

Language is a lot more complex than just its labels “English”, “Spanish”, “French” (Henderson & Ingram, 2018). The idea that languages are discrete entities has been questioned by Canagarajah (2014) in his analysis of translanguaging practices, where he describes global semiotic practices that he claims defy the supposedly rigid borders between languages. Language use greatly differs depending on context, ‘where, with whom, when’, and even speakers of just one language can use different varieties, like specific dialects or registers of their language. García and Li (2014) have argued that bilinguals do not have two distinct linguistic systems in the brain, but rather one integrated repertoire of linguistic and semiotic practices which they constantly access. Bilingual speakers have choices because they have language features from all their languages that make up their linguistic repertoire. “Language features include sounds, words, word forms, nouns, verbs, adjectives, tenses, gender distinctions, syntactic rules and discourse markers e.g. marking transitions, information structures” (García et al., 2017). Bilingual speakers do have and are aware of different languages, but they leverage and mold them in unique ways as part of their linguistic repertoires.

The concept of translanguaging invites us to ask questions about what goes on in our thinking, do we speak in named languages or do we just speak? Do we think in languages or just think? Is language a discrete separate module like memory and attention in our heads? These questions posit that we could look at how bilinguals and multilinguals use their languages in combination, versus which language they use and how. Understanding translanguaging means acknowledging that named languages are social, not

linguistic entities. A person's (unique) *idiolect*, or way of communicating, is defined in terms of lexical and structural features: a named language of a nation or social group is not (Otheguy et al., 2015). Named languages have boundaries and affiliations, but these should not only be recognised based on lexical and structural features. The two named languages of the bilingual exist from an outside perspective. A bilingual's or multilingual's internal perspective is that there is only their own idiolect or repertoire, which belongs only to them, not to any named language. Notwithstanding this, Turner and Lin (2020) proposed that the naming of languages needs to be incorporated into a possible future translanguaging theory in a way that acknowledges the social construct of named languages as integral to the expansion of one's linguistic repertoire as a whole. One does not have to be at the cost of the other.

## **2.7 Translanguaging**

### ***2.7.1 Translanguaging and the linguistic repertoire***

Translanguaging is the implementation of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without particular consideration of socially and politically defined boundaries of named, and usually national and state languages (Otheguy et al., 2015). According to Otheguy, translanguaging means using one's idiolect, to transcend language labels. A person's idiolect is connected to their linguistic repertoire, which responds to another translanguaging principle that has been dissected. Speakers have only one linguistic system and individuals select and deploy features from a unitary linguistic repertoire in order to communicate (Vogel & García, 2017). When they deploy features from their full linguistic repertoire to interpret and communicate, bilinguals and multilinguals are translanguaging (Otheguy et al., 2015). A person's linguistic repertoire emerges from interactions and is deployed creatively and constructively, enabling each person's unique usage of their language.

### ***2.7.2 The definitions of translanguaging***

This leads to the question, what is translanguaging? It means different things for different researchers in different contexts because it is a multifaceted process. It has a layered complexity that is a reflection of its nature. First, one must be aware of the facet(s) one is referring to. It is not necessary to adhere to all facets because the definition of translanguaging is nuanced, however one should have clear which facet

one is adhering to, to minimize confusions that might arise if not as a result. This study focuses on the third and fourth definition in this list that Mazak and Herbas-Donoso (2015) provided, summarizing its five main facets:

1. It is a language ideology that acknowledges bilingualism and multilingualism as the norm of language use.
2. It is a concept of bilingualism that posits that bilinguals do not separate their 'languages' into discrete systems, but rather possess one integrated repertoire of languaging practices.
3. It is a pedagogical approach that teachers and students take which allows them to draw on their linguistic and semiotic resources in totality as they teach and learn language(s) and content.
4. It is a set of practices that is still being researched and described. It is not limited to what is traditionally known as 'code-switching', but rather seeks to include any practices that draw on an individual's linguistic and semiotic repertoires. It implies that languaging practices are always being conceptualized and reconceptualized in a perpetual process of meaning-making.
5. It is transformational as it continually conceptualizes and reconceptualizes languaging practices in a perpetual process of meaning-making. It changes the world. The acceptance of these practices that are creative, adaptable, resourceful inventions of bilinguals, "transforms not only our traditional notions of 'languages', but also the lives of bilinguals themselves as they remake the world through language". (pp. 5-6)

#### **2.7.2.1. Translanguaging as a concept**

Offered as an alternative concept, with the addition of 'trans', it goes further than just the notion of 'languaging'. The complex language practices of bilinguals were the basis for the development of a concept of translanguaging which was emphasized as an 'action'. If one imagines language abilities like a house, additive bilingualism dictates that every time you learn a new language you are expected to buy a separate detached house that you would move to when you want to access the respective language, whereas subtractive bilingualism means building a new house in the place of the old that has been broken



down. In contrast, as a manifestation of dynamic bilingualism, translanguaging means keeping your own house but giving it an upgrade by constructing on it to extend it, change its design and add on more functions. Translanguaging would also represent the tools, ideas, building methods and schedule you would use to build onto your upgraded house. Finally, it would represent the new house, a home of dynamic bilingualism that García (2009) wrote recognizes an individual's ability to adapt to the communicative situation of a specific moment, and which gives value to the complexity of the language practices of bilinguals and emergent bilinguals.

### **2.7.2.2 The 'trans' in translanguaging**

The "language" part of the term translanguaging acknowledges that languages are grammatical and have a systematic nature of communication but also that they access multiple semiotic resources, which are different means for meaning-making. These resources determine how people go beyond language to communicate and they are considered a crucial part of knowledge construction (Jewitt, 2008). They encompass the many ways knowledge can be represented, along with the mode and media chosen to do so, for example through drawing or music. Jewitt (2008) affirmed that users are constantly transforming in response to their communicative needs. The prefix "trans" in translanguaging acknowledges that it is also 'more', and that it, in its diversity and variety, can transform language. According to leading applied linguist Li (2011a), the trans- part of the term points to three main features:

- 1) trans-system/structure/space: going between and beyond socially constructed (linguistic and language) systems and structures, including how messages are contextualized and representation of values, identities, and relationships;
- 2) trans-formative capacity: translanguaging is transformative in its nature as it brings together different dimensions of the multilingual speakers' linguistic, cognitive, and social skills;
- 3) trans-dimensional/trans-disciplinary: as a consequence of reconceptualization, rethinking language of learning and language use, it gives insight into human sociality, human cognition,

social relations, and social structures, allowing attention to be given to the revelation of multilingual language users' creativity and criticality.

Li's work has been fundamental in developing translanguaging as a concept of language. He posits that it is a practical concept that can offer comprehensive interpretations of language practices that apply to the contemporary world. He highlights the need to bridge the artificial and ideological divides between the professed socio-cultural and cognitive approaches to translanguaging practices. He presented an article with the disclaimer that it was his personal perspective, though a product of collaborative work with many others, to discuss the theoretical motivations he believes maintain translanguaging, and he elaborates on two concepts that he believes are related: the Translanguaging Space and the Translanguaging Instinct (Li, 2018a).

### ***2.7.3 The concepts of translanguaging space and instinct***

#### **2.7.3.1 A concept of translanguaging instinct**

Users of a language interpret and give meaning to multiple communication cues not as singular signs but as harmonized manifestations. Li (2018) contemplates the natural drive that people have to combine all available cognitive, semiotic, sensory, and modal resources in language learning and language. It is innate, instinctual. The translanguaging instinct explores the connections to forms of the language and other nuances, and the ensuing inferences that are made. It allows for an innate space where cognitive and semiotic systems interact to construct linguistic meaning (Li, 2018a). It highlights the gaps that are found between the meanings, and while meaning is being made, as one must rely on diverse resources in different ways during one's life, and at different times when they are available.

In second language acquisition in adolescence and adulthood, when learners are at the tertiary level of education, some resources may become less available, while others can be enhanced by experience and become more prominent in language learning. This variability is where the translanguaging instinct materializes. Greater demands and complexity in life mean that to understand, there is a natural tendency to combine multiple resources and functionally differentiate them as a result of the development of critical analytic skills. This combination of resources led to the notion of multi-

competence (Cook, 1995). Language users do not understand or communicate in only one way: they nod, they gesticulate, they draw, they point, they sign, they sing, they swear, they use slang, they dance. It is this multisensory, multimodal, and multilingual nature of human learning and interaction that underlies the translanguaging Instinct.

### **2.7.3.2 A concept of translanguaging space**

Li (2011) also refers to the translanguaging space, “a space for the act of translanguaging as well as a space created through translanguaging” (p. 1223). This space does not have physical markers but is indeterminate in the bilingual or multilingual’s mind and created by them when they translanguage. The notion of a distinctive space was put forward by Homi Bhabha (2004) as a postcolonial sociolinguistic theory of identity. He referred to a ‘third space’ that manifested when the process of cultural translation between traditions took place and posited that it explained the uniqueness of each person, or context, as a hybrid. For example, a third space would form for an immigrant in the place where their previous home and their new home met. It was a space that allowed languages to merge and would result in original ideas and practice. The act of translanguaging creates a social space for the language user by bringing together different dimensions of their lives. The notion of translanguaging space embraces the concepts of creativity and criticality that are developed in this space, which are recent dimensions of multilingual practices now being more systematically explored.

“Translanguaging creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance and making it into a lived experience” (Li, 2011a, p. 1223).

Translanguaging is not simply going between different linguistic structures, cognitive and semiotic systems and modalities, but going beyond them (Li, 2018a). In their translanguaging space, bilinguals and multilinguals, are constantly developing new strategies to leverage their language knowledge to communicate in their own way. As they adjust to each of their languages, their creativity

flows, and their languages become intertwined in an individual way that belongs solely to that unique translanguaging space. For example, the blend of varieties of Spanish and English in online settings reveals many inimitable translanguaging spaces. Teachers in a translanguaging space become facilitators, who generate opportunities for language use and do not see themselves as the language authority but as another language learner (García, & Li, 2014). In this way a third new space is being constructed together.

## **2.8 Translanguaging pedagogy**

Baker (2011) defines translanguaging pedagogy as the process of ‘making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages’ (p. 288). It is a process that students and teachers participate in. García and Li (2014) refer to the differentiation between pupil-directed translanguaging and teacher-directed translanguaging. The latter involving planned and structured activities by the teacher (Lewis et al., 2012). Translanguaging as pedagogy shifts our attention towards meaning construction, and as a result away from a ‘correct’ or ‘standard’ form of language use (García & Leiva, 2014). This upends, not only monoglossic language ideology (García & Lin, 2016), but the monolingual dominant view that only one language should be focussed on at a time and that there are prestigious forms of the language that hold more value than others. In a study of Basque teachers, Leonet, Cenoz & Gorter, (2017) found that they worried about spontaneous translanguaging because they thought it could weaken the target language. Translanguaging has been used to describe the “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (García, 2009, p. 45). This means that practices are neither limited nor decided by others. How does this coincide with pedagogy that is characterized by being structured in classrooms? Its structure changes. Teachers are expected to be flexible in their planning and allow for ongoing student input while students are expected to be active participants in what is ideally a collaborative process.

The main feature of translanguaging pedagogy is a purposeful design and implementation of multiple, flexible practices (Hamman, 2018). This facet of the definition is controlled by teachers, but its

aim is to foster student-led development in the language. At the tertiary level, teachers can plan moments for translanguaging and allow students to explore a variety of translanguaging practices so they can choose what works best for them. The aim of translanguaging pedagogy is to support student learning and metalinguistic awareness and to provide dynamic languaging spaces which are inclusive and promote interaction. This latter principle is grounded in the socio-cultural understanding of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), which posits that meaning-making is enhanced when students can actively engage in learning with their peers. Learning is enriched when students can work collaboratively and leverage their full, shared linguistic repertoire. As all students in the language classroom are learning in two or more languages, these bilingual classrooms provide a rich setting for dialogic translanguaging and varied linguistic expertise of participants, both students and teachers, can contribute to collective learning activities. By recognizing that students come to the classroom with linguistic knowledge that teachers may not have, translanguaging inherently entails a co-learning space (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017).

### ***2.8.1 Components of translanguaging pedagogy and its purpose***

Translanguaging practices are not meant to replace teaching in the target language, as many detractors fear, but, when purposefully designed, can complement instruction. There is a place in monolingual classes for translanguaging. For example, even if instruction is monolingual, students could have permission to be using translanguaging practices in their work, or in groups, to aid their comprehension. This idea of translanguaging as complementation pushes back on traditional notions of language acquisition that students will not be able to learn the language if they are moving between languages and classes cannot be structured. There is a structure but, in a post-structural world, it should be both flexible and adaptable. García et al. (2017) refer to three components necessary for teachers to consider for translanguaging pedagogy:

1. Translanguaging stance: a belief by teachers that students' diverse linguistic practices are valuable resources to be built upon and leveraged in their education.

2. Translanguaging design: a strategic plan by teachers that integrates all students' language practices and ensures that students can see and practice with the necessary language features, as well as the design of class materials informed and driven by students' language practices and ways of meaning-making.

3. Translanguaging shifts: teachers' ability, and willingness, to make changes to an instructional plan based on student feedback.

Furthermore, García, et al. (2017) also identify four purposes they consider essential for the strategic use of translanguaging in education: 1) to support students as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts; 2) to provide opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts; 3) to make space for students' bilingualism and ways of knowing; and, 4) to support students' bilingual identities and socio-emotional development. This speaks to a flexibility and adaptability in pedagogy, which inexorably leads to more work for teachers, which could be a deterrent. Creese and Blackledge (2010) support the idea of translanguaging as a flexible bilingual pedagogy, especially for learning and teaching based on contextual perspectives. They claim that it allowed teachers to establish links between the social, cultural, community and linguistic domains that characterize each of their students. They add that flexible bilingual pedagogy is effective because it allows responding to the local needs of the context, strengthening the language of origin together with the language of instruction, both outside and inside the classroom.

## **2.9 Rationale for translanguaging**

Translanguaging practices and pedagogy have been adopted by educators who focus on bilingual and multilingual development for all and prioritize social justice for minority learners. However, it is far off the well beaten track of long-established methods for learning another language in which a clear 'monolingual' language separation is seen as necessary for development. The use of translanguaging in education has generated much interest, but at the same time, great disagreement and wariness. Research has shown that it can be successful in enriching effective language learning (Mazak & Carroll, 2017).

There are different reasons why teachers use translanguaging that García and Li (2014) describe. It can be used to adapt instruction for learners that are at different levels and to help them build on their background knowledge, and it can be seen as helping to deepen understanding. It can foster cross-linguistic metalinguistic awareness, as well as cross-linguistic flexibility, and can strengthen identity and disrupt linguistic hierarchies. Teachers and students may be translanguaging intentionally or unintentionally in classrooms, if one considers Li's (2018) notion of the translanguaging instinct. The current study takes place in a university where translanguaging is not promoted in any way, or even mentioned. If this research is validated, then there is a high probability that translanguaging does occur. For teachers it is a pedagogical practice that can leverage the fluid languaging of learners in ways that deepen their engagement and comprehension of complex content and texts, and for students it is a practice that can enable them flexibly to negotiate meaning in all their languages while they develop deeper metalinguistic knowledge (Swain & Lapkin, 1989).

## **2.10 Criticisms of translanguaging**

MacSwan (2017) provided one of the staunchest criticisms of translanguaging. His first argument was that the “political use of languages’ names can and should be distinguished from the social and structural idealizations used to study language diversity” (p. 1). This refers to the claim of translanguaging proponents when studying language practices that named languages do not hold the position of importance that they have been purported to hold. MacSwan focussed on Makoni and Pennycook's (2007) view that languages were products of language use more than ontological systems and so he questioned the value of their merging them. The “one system with no named languages” idea is perhaps the most controversial aspect of current notions of translanguaging, particularly among linguists studying code-switching, but it is precisely where García and Li (2014) link translanguaging to the post structural turn in applied linguistics.

Code-switching does not fit neatly into the concept of translanguaging because bilinguals are not shuttling between separate codes (or languages), but rather performing parts of their repertoires, which

contain features from their languages (García & Li, 2014). Li, in particular, supports this idea by contending that empirical evidence confirms that there is no “language only area” in the brain. Language learning is not independent of other processes, for example, touch, sight or hearing. Language experiences and cognitive capacities are interrelated and mutually beneficial. Language is multi-sensory and multimodal, a semiotic system interconnected with other cognitive systems. Translanguaging then transcends the traditional divides between languages and language semiotic systems. The innate translanguaging instinct draws on as many cognitive and semiotic resources as are available to the bilingual to interpret meaning and design their actions accordingly. This means that people go beyond narrowly defined uses of language and transcend language barriers for effective communication; there is a movement between languages (Creese & Martin, 2003; Celic & Seltzer, 2011; Kramsch, 2009). Many, if not most, language teachers have been trained to make use of traditional bilingual teaching methods and approaches that promote the sole use of the target language. More attention has been given to the processes of acquisition than to the diverse people who are doing the learning. The multilingual, multimodal and multi-sensory dimensions that people have are different parts of the process of translanguaging.

The second argument that MacSwan (2017) presents is that by rejecting the existence of multi-languages and multilingualism, García and Otheguy (2014), and Otheguy, García and Reid (2015) are rejecting codeswitching, which is a sign of, and implies, separate linguistic systems. MacSwan points out that these scholars:

“both rely on codeswitching scholarship to support a positive view of bilingualism and simultaneously deny that multilingualism and codeswitching exist, and by choosing to do the latter over the former... lose the empirical case against a deficit perspective on bilingualism and are left only with an ideological one”. (p. 5)

MacSwan’s dispute is that García, Otheguy and Reid et al (2015) posit translanguaging both as a dual/multiple linguistic system and as a unitary view by basing it on contradictory claims about



codeswitching. While García does make it clear that there is a space for code-switching between languages, the practice that she is calling codes-switching is more than just a straightforward division, subtraction and addition of languages. The varied practices that are labelled code-switching fit into a translanguaging framework as systematic shifts in languages to fulfil specific individual objectives for language users. While language users can code-switch to translanguage, translanguaging is not only code-switching. For codeswitching to fit into a translanguaging framework, it is understood that it happens beyond languages; it is a transcending, not just a transfer. This concept is explored more in the discussion section.

Li (2018a) claims that for translanguaging, proficiency in an individual language is almost irrelevant because, translanguaging is ‘about the journey, not the destination’. Instead, translanguaging is characterized by the knowledge of how to make use of all the resources available and to question why some resources are not available (Li, 2018a). The point is not what learners are code-switching but why, how and in what moments they are doing so. This is different from one-dimensional views of code-switching where proficiency is the only goal. Translanguaging not only challenges the conventional view of language boundaries, knowledge construction and meaning making, it also contests boundaries between languages and other cognitive systems or modes. Code-switching implies that there are different languages that function as grammars. It implies a separation, differentiation and deactivation; to code-switch you must be able to pull apart your languages. However, when translanguaging, identification of different languages is only relevant when they are being used deliberately and being leveraged to construct meaning. Bilinguals and multilinguals are not manipulating separate linguistic systems. To communicate, they are not thinking “which language am I using?”. They do not consciously go to a Spanish box in their head switching off their English box along the way, they just speak to be understood. They just communicate, by thinking between and beyond languages (Otheguy et al., 2015 p. 282).

To understand code-switching, it should be defined as a multi-layered process. Turnbull and Dailey-O’Cain (2009), in their book on first language use in second and foreign language learning, offer a

reconceptualization of code-switching as something that both proficient and aspiring bilinguals do naturally and see it as a practice that is inherently linked with bilingual code-switching. They referred to intra-sentential switching in which the user moves between the languages for interactional or playful purposes. This provides an opportunity for language learning. Code-switching can be instances of thinking about the accuracy of a language, or its appropriateness, or the communicative effects it might have. This means that linguistic behavior when code-switching may be closely intertwined with students' metalinguistic self-reflection.

A study by Prada (2019) explored the role of translanguaging on linguistic ideology and attitude for heritage speakers in the Spanish university classroom. Heritage speakers are people who have grown up exposed to a language that is different from the societal language and have developed some degree of bilingualism in both (e.g. Valdés, 2004). Prada found that the vernacular Spanish often used by these heritage speakers was given little value and considered a sign of a lack of education. However, he found that when these linguistic practices (translanguaging) were considered 'appropriate', it allowed students to develop critical language and awareness that had the potential to lead to a fundamental transformative move towards equity in academic settings. This speaks to the impact which linguistic attitudes and ideologies can have if students have a positive view of their flexible linguistic practices as they translanguage. It gives them agency and the ability to fully use their linguistic repertoires in the construction of their identity.

Prada and Turnbull (2018) explored the role of translanguaging in the multilingual turn and how it could foster a renewal in language education. They described translanguaging as a 'metaprocess' fundamental to the reconceptualization of outdated perspectives on bilingual and multilingual teaching. They also claimed it could normalize the practices and experiences of bilingual and multilingual learners and leverage their sociolinguistic backgrounds and skills in the classroom and beyond. They posited that if translanguaging pedagogy was to be adopted it needed to be able to acknowledge student practices, identities, and experiences in the classroom, to understand that translanguaging is a communicatively

purposeful and nuanced meta-skill that allowed for meaning-making, to acknowledge hybrid language forms as emergent not incomplete practices.

### **2.11 A space between languages**

Researchers and agents involved in language teaching and learning are coming to accept that learning languages is not a purely cognitive process, and that a positive emotional experience of language, the chance to become and be a speaker of the new language, is of vital importance for the appropriation of a new language (Kramsch, 2009). Kramsch's book "The Multilingual Subject" is particularly poignant on this topic. While it does not directly refer to translanguaging, it does refer to that enigmatic 'third place' in between languages that is filled with notions including emotions, like anxiety and joy, fantasy, memories, double-meanings and identity. This is a place of cross-linguistic connotation where adolescents and young adults in a language class can find themselves experiencing language in new ways that can connect to them emotionally, as they seek to define their changing linguistic identity. Kramsch's book considers 'subjects' as consciously constructed beings created and shaped by language. As a systematic and strategic process, translanguaging allows the bilingual and multilingual to make meaning and to foster the affective side of language use.

Students use their whole linguistic and semiotic repertoire to shape their experiences and to create meaning. As a result, translanguaging can become a pedagogical practice accepted by teachers as legitimate in bilingual classrooms in which both languages are used for all purposes and in all domains (Mazak & Carroll, 2017). Teachers can foster this process. Research has shown that students' linguistic repertoires offer a wealth of resources from which multilingual speakers can draw (Cummins 2014). Studies have also shown that multilingual discursive practices make students more academically successful and 'comfortable' by promoting a "deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter" (Lewis et al., 2012).

Li (2011) refers to a learner's immersion between the linguistic systems, structures and modalities of their language, and then going beyond them. Translanguaging creates the space owned by the

multilingual user where they can integrate the different aspects of their life experience. If a language is considered not only as a code but also as a diverse, nuanced, meaning-making system, it follows that learners' practices may not focus on mastering the intricacies of grammar and vocabulary, but on how they experience learning and using another language as an integrated system of linguistic and cultural practices. Translanguaging classrooms and teachers can build on this linguistic complexity in language practices and leverage it.

### **2.12 Translanguaging in higher education**

Over the last four decades since the concept of translanguaging was introduced, it has been widely written about and studied, but mainly in elementary and secondary school classrooms (e.g. Sayer, 2013; Leonet et al., 2017). There have been numerous studies on translanguaging at these lower school levels in North America. To my knowledge, there is very little literature on translanguaging in higher education, however. The few university studies that have been carried out recently have either been in settings outside of North America or have had English as the dominant target language (Mazak & Carroll, 2017). Two reasons could explain this dearth of empirical studies on the topic of languages other than English in North America in the university setting. On the one hand, possibly the very ideology about translanguaging could be a factor, because translanguaging is seen as instinctively easy, and 'something that beginners do' and therefore much too puerile for university students. On the other hand, prestige and language dominance have always been valued and safeguarded in higher education, and institutions have traditionally sustained a 'pure' monolingual ideology, that one language should be focussed on at a time (García & Otheguy, 2020).

Mazak and Carroll (2017) report that many university stakeholders are reluctant to acknowledge the use of other languages because it entails less exposure to the target language and is therefore seen as a type of deficient bilingualism. It has been found that mixing languages was considered lazy, and code-switching was seen as an easy way out when a student did not want to make the effort to search for the right words (Gardner-Chloros, 2010). Although many administration and education authorities in

universities officially advise and promote the sole use of the target language, the use of other languages in parallel is widespread and quite common (Barnard & McLellan, 2014).

Mazak and Carroll (2017) compiled a series of empirical studies on translanguaging specifically in higher education in their book. Their perspective shows how translanguaging pedagogies exist and are negotiated outside of North America at this level. From the dates of studies, it is clear that only recently has research been conducted on variations of translanguaging in the tertiary classroom. Their critical view examines both the advantages and limitations of adopting translanguaging approach and ideology. It also concludes that when multilingual students, professors, class materials and policies come together and translanguage, meaning-making is facilitated and monolingual ideologies can be put into perspective.

### ***2.12.1 Student and teacher university studies***

While research focussing on teachers' practices and translanguaging are emerging more, studies on university students' perceptions of translanguaging are scarce. The study most similar to the current one in this thesis explored how undergraduate students' predisposed attitudes towards language influenced their perceptions of translanguaging in a university in Puerto Rico (Rivera & Mazak, 2017). The instructor utilized a flexible bilingual pedagogy and gave students a great deal of freedom in the languages they used in both oral and written work. Most students found that translanguaging was appropriate to facilitate classroom discussion and a *normal* and socially acceptable practice for bilinguals. However, about half the participants expressed that it was a *somewhat unprofessional* or *unprofessional* practice and almost the same percentage believed that translanguaging was *somewhat disrespectful* or *disrespectful*. These findings show that while students perceive translanguaging as a natural tool, they may hesitate to accept it within the professional realm.

Another study in South Africa, used semi-structured questionnaires to examine how undergraduate majors reacted to the use of translanguaging pedagogy in their engineering course (Carstens, 2016). Data showed that while the majority believed translanguaging facilitated understanding of concepts of engineering in general by simplifying complex topics which aided in the acquisition of the

target language, a few students felt that translanguaging could make new topics more confusing, due to the number of Afrikaans dialects. Others felt that Afrikaans should be avoided because English dominated the field of engineering. Adamson and Coulson (2015) used questionnaires and end-of-the-year reports to determine how undergraduates in a Japanese university perceived the use of translanguaging within their English language class. Results showed that most students believed translanguaging to be effective for classroom management and the clarification of tasks. They used it to compare and contrast resources written in Japanese and English and to facilitate the completion of writing assignments for student with lower English proficiency. They felt it was positive overall, though no information was given on variables that may have influenced their perceptions.

These three studies mentioned claim that students saw translanguaging as helpful and referred to different ways that students used their languages. However, the target language in each of these studies was English and there were different factors that influenced perceptions. An examination of language backgrounds and language learning experiences of participants might have given insight into understanding how the ideologies developed. In one of the few studies of translanguaging in texts in higher education Canagarajah (2011) investigated multilinguals' use of their language resources and the deep connections that this use had with their identity. He explored how one graduate student used translanguaging to make meaning by employing Arabic, English, French and symbols in her academic writing. His emphasis was on the process of the graduate student exploring the ways in which she could use all of her communicative repertoire as an integrated system. It showed how translanguaging could be strategic. Canagarajah (2016) promoted a translanguaging approach within university courses. He claimed that in translanguaging writing, languages come into contact with each other and form new meanings and grammars. He saw that students who engaged in translanguaging writing activities could develop their own strategies for how to use their entire linguistic repertoire in an effective manner. He argued that translanguaging writing leads to critical reflection of how language is used and enables students to develop techniques to negotiate their own meanings.

Only one study on the perceptions of translanguaging by university teachers could be found, from a university in Puerto Rico (Mazak & Herbas-Donoso, 2014). Science professors were observed and interviewed, and it was found that they perceived translanguaging as having three main purposes: to familiarize students with the nuances of (scientific) terminology in the target language mainly through translations; to combine Spanish lectures and English text; and to facilitate bilingual class discussions. While they found it useful, teachers indicated that they were still guided by monolingual English ideologies. It was concluded that shifts in perceptions and practice of translanguaging were influenced and changed according to context. This is also the case in student studies. Marshal and Moore (2013) began their study of transnational students at a university in Vancouver by questioning the role of academic English as the only way to students' success in higher education. They found that participants were fluid in language and literacy practices during the study and they showed themselves to be highly flexible as they moved with reflection and knowledge from and through different languages. They proposed that language attitudes had an impact. They saw reactions as connected to language attitudes, and claimed they could be evident as a "range of different behaviors, including the decision of which language(s) to learn, which language(s) to use as one's main means of communication" (Kircher, 2016, p. 241). Their conclusion was that many factors could contribute to student language attitudes, which could affect how language learners viewed languages and may affect how students learn.

Researchers have asserted that language diversity in tertiary education has the potential to facilitate learning (Mazak & Herbas-Donoso, 2014). A study in a Rwandan university that emphasized how languages could complement each other showed that language selection is very complex and has both political and learning implications (Andersson et al., 2013). When a group of students was asked to solve a task in a context characterized by language diversity, they utilized all their languages with continuous translanguaging to create meaning and constructively solve the task given. This is not just about task-solving however, it is also about the co-construction of identity that involves the use of language as a tool (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). This is one of the few studies on translanguaging and

identity at this level of tertiary education and the authors claimed there was a significant impact on identity. A positive correlation between translanguaging and identity was suggested by García-Mateus and Palmer (2017) when they explored how translanguaging pedagogy can support the development of positive identities. This is an important factor, however, it is out of the scope of this study.

### ***2.12.2 Teacher beliefs***

Teachers beliefs and their teaching practices do not always match, and the relationship is understood to be a complex one to research (Basturkmen, 2012; Viswanathan, 2019). A review of the research by Zheng (2009) revealed that beliefs often have a strong effect on practices. Teachers' beliefs identify their 'real' behavior towards their learners, and they can have a greater effect than the teacher's knowledge on planning their lessons, on their decisions, and on their classroom practice (Li, 2012). Kubanyiova (2014) pointed out that teachers' practices are closely related to their belief in how teaching should be carried out and to the teaching methods they have internalized throughout their careers. It is worth noting though that research on teacher beliefs has been conducted mainly in preservice contexts and among language specialists (Borg, 2011). Since the vast majority of teachers at the university level are specialists in different areas but not in language teaching and learning, an analysis of their beliefs on how translanguaging can be used and its usefulness needs to be researched, as the need to use another language as a means during teaching can determine the teachers' classroom practices. Continued analysis of in-service teachers' beliefs on translanguaging is required if we are to understand the belief that may, or may not, have a strong impact on the use of translanguaging teaching practices and eventually on their students' learning process.

Lortie (1975) argued that before teachers arrive to work in classrooms, they have had many years being students and observing and evaluating their own teachers, which he described as an 'apprenticeship of observation'. He posited that these observations were responsible for preconceptions that teachers hold of what constitutes 'good' teaching. He suggested that teachers face this reality and should be challenged by the idea that their experience was personal and may not be relevant to other students, that they are



limited by what they saw because it was from relatively few teachers and so this narrow view could only provide them with a partial view of teaching. This applies to teaching in general but more so to language teaching where their teachers may have had firm monolingual ideals that directed them. It can be likened to a successful athlete who believes they know all about training from watching their own coach.

In higher education there are fewer opportunities for teachers to recognize the influence of their apprenticeship of observation on their instructional approach and to question it. The goal at this level would be to move beyond any confines it might have put on their conceptualization, understanding, and effective pedagogy practices. Recently there have been collaborations between students and teachers that have emerged to explore apprenticeships of observation to make constructive changes to teaching practice together (Cook-Sather & Abbot, 2016). To be fair, it cannot be assumed that if teachers rely on their prior experiences it will necessarily lead to more traditional views and practices of teaching. It has been purported however, that sharing perceptions while co-constructing paths to take towards the development of knowledge can support deeper, transformative student learning (Conteh, 2018). Research points to a need to recognize the important role that translanguaging can hold in constructing relationships between teachers and students that can foster mutual empowerment.

### **2.13 Conclusion and research questions**

Despite the abundant benefits of translanguaging presented by scholars, many educators are still reluctant to incorporate it into their university coursework, and many students are unwilling to accept it (Mazak & Carroll, 2017). In the current study, translanguaging practices and beliefs of both teachers and students at the university level will be investigated. In order to do this, the following research questions are posed:

- What are translanguaging practices of university students and teachers in their Spanish classes?
- How do university students and teachers of Spanish perceive the pedagogy and practices of translanguaging?

The studies hypotheses can be found in section 3.6. In the next section the methodology will be explained, which includes: a description of methods used, information about the participants in the study and an explanation of data collection and analysis.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

Translanguaging is a topic that is characterised by its fluidity and complexity. For this reason, qualitative research is often used in studies of this nature as it allows for an in-depth and comprehensive exploration (e.g. García et al., 2017; Prada, 2019). Referring specifically to studies on translanguaging at the university level, when Rivera and Mazak (2017) wished to determine whether students' language attitudes influenced their perceptions of an instructor's translingual pedagogy at a Puerto Rican university, they used qualitative methods to analyze survey results in their case-study approach. In another example, Carstens (2016) studied reactions to the practice of translanguaging pedagogy with undergraduates by making use of the qualitative content analysis program Atlas.ti to explore themes, codes, and supporting quotes from semi-structured questionnaires. A third example is from a university-classroom ethnography by Wang and Curdt-Christiansen (2019), who studied translanguaging in a Chinese-English bilingual education programme. They drew on ethnographic data collected through observations, interviews and fieldwork notes to carry out qualitative analysis, allowing them to group translanguaging practices into categories. Most of the findings from translanguaging studies which are referred to in this study have been a result of qualitative research.

This study uses an in-depth qualitative approach for data collection and analysis. I did not use quantitative methods because instead of quantifying the data, I wanted to explore what participants understood were their individual practices and to try to determine their distinct underlying reasoning and motivations (García, 2017a). I was curious, however, to determine what other researchers might have studied on translanguaging using quantitative methods. I carried out a library search using the keywords *translanguaging quantitative analysis*. Results produced very few studies, and of those, most had quantitative methods used in conjuncture with qualitative methods in a mixed-methods approach. For example, a study by Makalela (2015) compared the reading and vocabulary achievement scores after three months between a regular class and an experimental class after three months of a translanguaging intervention programme. A paired t-test showed a statistically significant differential performance in

favour of the experimental class. This model, of translanguaging studies that utilize quantitative studies, had a pre-test(s) in the targeted language; after an intervention using translanguaging techniques, a post-test(s) was carried out.

A recent study by Moody et al, (2019) had similar research questions to this current study as it also explored students' perceptions of translanguaging by bilingual and multilingual graduate students at a large, linguistically diverse university in the U.S. However, they utilized a quantitative approach, precisely because so few studies had been carried out using quantitative methods, and they wanted to understand prevailing perceptions across a wide variety of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. They made a valid point that they had used a quantitative approach also because they did not want the researchers to unintentionally exert any influence over the participants that might have biased their beliefs, which is a possibility when using qualitative methods. They did acknowledge that the quantitative approach had limited ability to collect data on perceptions though, but they suggested that their findings could guide their future qualitative inquiries into translanguaging in higher education.

The principal objective of this current research was to explore the creative and critical moments that students and teachers perceived in their Spanish class when they used other languages, and therefore a qualitative approach was taken. Quantitative methods could not have provided data with the same nuances, or in the same manner. The data were collected then analysed qualitatively to find common ideas and later themes. There was no specific search for regular patterns or frequency of specific behaviours; instead, it was a pursuit of individual experiences that students and teachers were using to create meaning. The qualitative data collection methods use semi-structured interviews, and both individual and group interviews, which will be described in more detail in Sections 3.4. The next section details the research setting, followed by more information about participants and ending with an overview of data collection and analysis.

### **3.2 Research setting and recruitment**

The setting was the University of Calgary, in the Language, Literatures and Cultures program. After the study gained ethics approval, recruitment of participants began. To recruit a sample from the

population of Spanish teachers and students at this university, posters were placed in the corridors near where most Spanish classes were offered (see Appendix A). Participants were invited to share the ways they used their other language(s) in the Spanish class either to learn or to teach. They were informed that their practices would be discussed in groups of 2-3 of their peers, and with me, the researcher. They were told they would have to fill out a survey beforehand, participate in the interview and that during the interview they would discuss dual language activities. It was made clear that the two main objectives were to explore their practices and their perceptions of their bilingual or multilingual experiences.

In total, ten students and eight teachers were recruited. Interview groups were set up randomly in that, as participants signed up, they were placed in the first group that suited their availability. Participation was voluntary, and no compensation was offered. It was expected that participants would volunteer because they were curious about their uses of languages and hoped to gain insight into these practices. All participants freely signed consent forms. In the following section the sample of the population will be described in detail.

### **3.3 Participants**

#### ***3.3.1 Student participants***

The ten students who were recruited were from different level Spanish classes and had varied language backgrounds, both in term of language courses they had taken and languages that they knew. The criteria for student selection were that they were currently enrolled in a Spanish course at the university and that they were open to research on their classroom language use. Four students described themselves as beginners, or at lower intermediate level, three others identified as higher intermediate and the remaining three identified themselves as advanced learners. There was also a difference between the number of years these students had been studying Spanish. Students' self declared performance level ranged from "below average" to "far above average". A summary of relevant data provided by students in their surveys is shown in Table 1. All names are pseudonyms.

**Table 1.***Summary of Student Participants' Data*

Student	Yr. at univ.	Language courses taken	Languages known	Years spent studying Spanish	Level of Spanish
Natalia	3	Spanish, French, German	English, Igbo, Spanish, French	4 years	Intermediate
Jonathan	3	Russian, French	English, Spanish, French	8 years	Intermediate
Emily	1	Italian, French	Spanish, English, Italian, French	12 years	Heritage Language Speaker
Amelia	1	Spanish	French, English, Spanish	6 months	Intermediate
Anna	2	French, Arabic, German	Farsi/Azeri, French, English, Spanish, Turkish, Arabic, German	>1 year	Beginner
Sophia	3	Spanish (7 levels)	English, Spanish	5 years	Intermediate
Olivia	4	Italian	English, Spanish	6 years	Intermediate
Ava	5	Spanish, French	English, Spanish	4 years	Intermediate
Daniella	4	Spanish (7 levels), Italian	English, Spanish	15 years	Intermediate
Lily	Open studies	Spanish, French	Arabic, English, Spanish, French	Countless	Advanced

\*Amelia, Natalia and Lily were interviewed by themselves, while the following students were interviewed in groups: 1) Olivia, Sophia, Daniella and Ava and 2) Anna, Jonathan and Emily.

Of the ten student participants, nine identified as women and one as a man. The average age was 26.5 years old; ranging from 18 to 51 years old. All students had been exposed in some way to more than two languages, and they had all, except two, taken courses in at least two other languages. This made them all bilingual or multilingual learners. While initially the interviews were to be conducted in small groups of 2 or 3, it was not always possible to coordinate groupings due to students' schedules and obligations. The one-on-one interviews carried out made an amenable setting for more personal discussions, while the discussions during group interviews allowed students to construct ideas as they shared (Li, 2011). Having students volunteer to participate in the study was an advantage, since it meant they were willing to speak about their current and previous language-learning experiences. It was also a

limitation as it was most likely that they were students who were already interested in languages which predisposed their positive interest in language learning.

### ***3.3.2 Teacher participants***

Of the eight teacher participants, all spoke at least two languages, making them bilingual and multilingual. The criteria for teacher selection were that they were currently teaching Spanish at the university and that they were open to research on their classroom language use. All teacher participants were teaching beginner to advanced-beginner levels of Spanish at the time of the study. Of the eight teachers interviewed, most had completed pedagogy courses at their universities or participated in second-language teaching workshops and one had a master's degree in foreign language teaching. All except two were current graduate students, and of those two, one had recently graduated. While having formal training may not be a prerequisite for effective language teaching, it may influence how much time these instructors have had to formally develop and reflect on their practices and strategies. To ensure anonymization of teachers in a department that is relatively small, teachers were randomly labelled from 1-8, and the gender-neutral pronouns *they/them* are used when discussing their findings (American Psychological Association, 2020).

### **3.4 Data collection**

Data were collected through interviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Information was also collected from students using a researcher-designed questionnaire. The aim of the data was to answer two questions: If and how are bilingual and multilingual university students translanguaging in their Spanish classes? How are bilingual and multilingual university students perceiving the practice of translanguaging? The rationale for the selection of questions was to focus on data that illustrated the variety and complexity of ways in which participants enact their language practices and to narrow down their perceptions.

An in-depth interview method was adopted to collect qualitative data from participants, since interviews can “yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge” (Patton 2002, p. 4). In the interviews, the term ‘use of other languages’ was used, as opposed

to ‘translanguaging’, because it might have been a term, due to its nature, that participants were not familiar with or had different definitions for. By ensuring that participants understood the focus of the data I was looking for, I could encompass all their practices using other languages. This meant that ambiguities about how the term ‘translanguaging’ was defined or understood did not have to be taken into consideration, as it would have been a laborious and uncertain task in itself.

All the student participants used English when interviewed and all but one of the teacher participants chose to use Spanish for the interview. The only one who did not use Spanish did not have Spanish or English as a first language and used English, I believe from our negotiation at the beginning of the session, in deference to me as the researcher because it is my first language. The interview protocol was semi-structured, and participants were encouraged to elaborate on issues raised (Dörnyei, 2007). Each participant was interviewed for 30 to 50 minutes. During these semi-structured interviews there was a co-construction of data between the researched and researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) as questions led to answers that led to more questions, and no interviews followed the same path. It was very present in my mind, as the researcher, that the interpretations of the practices that the participants shared happened in their lives but also in mine (Coulter & Smith, 2009; Olson et al., 2013 Marshal & Moore, 2013). I could only understand their experiences in the light of my own. The attempt was made to impact the interviewees’ responses as little as possible, but my view on whether this was done, or not, is clearly subjective.

Each complete data collection session was audio recorded and took up to 1 hour and 30 minutes, depending on time constraints and how much participants wished to talk. Recording was done in a quiet room at University of Calgary. Both students and teachers shared their language practices (i.e., what they do, and what and how they perceive what they do) in the interviews. Only students filled out the questionnaire. The questionnaires and interview transcripts provided a descriptive account of the study; they do not provide explanations, so analysis was carried out. Interviews were transcribed in the original language and translation was only carried out after analysis.



### ***3.4.1 Data collection with students***

Data collection for students comprised three tasks. The first task involved filling out a pen/paper language background questionnaire (see Appendix B) which was researcher-designed and focussed on language backgrounds and attitudes. Two instruments from earlier related studies were used to create the questionnaire (Marsden & Taylor, 2014; Rivera & Mazak, 2017). Most questions on the questionnaire were open-ended, for example, students were asked to discuss how they made use of their different languages and how they perceived the use of these languages. There were also closed-ended questions for background and attitudes. Participants responded to statements on a Likert scale (*1 strongly disagree - 5 strongly agree*). An example of a statement was: “moving between different languages in class is confusing”. In total this task took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The second task was participating in a semi-structured interview, which was an open discussion in either in a group or individually (see Appendix C and D). For students this occurred right after they filled out the questionnaire. In groups of maximum five, (including me as the researcher) participants discussed their language practices and were audio recorded. The semi-structured interview included a focus on points raised in the questionnaire that students had completed pertaining to the use of different languages for learning a language. Students were also encouraged to ask each other questions, and spontaneous discussions that occurred were allowed to progress. This part of the study took a total of 30-45 minutes. I had wanted to use groups on purpose, thinking about 1) the richness of spontaneous discussion that might arise, for example in moment analysis (Li, 2011), and 2) the influence participants could have on each other’s reflections over the course of the interview. Even though groups had been proposed there were difficulties in coordination as some students had last minute changes due to their workload. With two of the students we only met after the third reschedule. That said, I found there was depth to be found in both forms of interviewing, group and individual. During the individual interviews, students provided insights that went into greater detail and the insights were more introspective. During the group interviews there were debates and discussions that sprang up that allowed students to rationalize their practices and perceptions out loud which provided details in a different way that was no less

enriching. During the interview, there was a discussion of tasks/activities/exercises that made use of different languages simultaneously (Celic & Seltzer, 2011; Montelongo, Hernández, Herter, & Cuello, 2011). In the final part of the session, participants discussed how they would approach a task or an exercise that used more than one language, and how it might make them use their languages differently. This took a total of 10-15 minutes within the total time.

#### ***3.4.2 Data collection with teachers***

For teachers, data was collected during their sole task which was a semi-structured interview. Three of the teachers (4, 5, 6) were interviewed individually and the others were interviewed in two groups, one of two teachers (7, 8) and the other of three teachers (1, 2, 3). During these separate interviews, teachers were asked 1) about their backgrounds and language attitudes towards their students' bilingual or multilingual strategies and practices, 2) what their own possible translanguaging practices were, and 3) how they perceived their own translanguaging practices and those of their students. These semi-structured interviews (See Appendix C and D) took a total of 20-30 minutes.

#### **3.5 Data analysis procedures**

After gathering the data, I transcribed the interviews using the audio recordings. The data was coded manually from the transcriptions and summarized. Two clear themes emerged that were related to the research questions: 1) the practices which used other languages that could be categorized and 2) perceptions about them, both perceptions of self and of those seen when observing others. There were two other themes that emerged after the initial analysis and that were presented in the findings: 3) student translanguaging positions, 4) perceptions of general language learning or personal language learning experiences by both groups. Key quotations, phrases and interactions were organized to be included in the results section of the study, along with recurrent words, phrases, and sentiments. In some cases, this was in the form of tables and in others it was in text analysis of parts of the discussions. When broken down, there were seven key findings that are presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

Thematic content analysis was used for data, a common method of inductive data analysis used in qualitative work (Ritchie et al, 2004). The process involved analysing transcripts, identifying themes

within those data and gathering together examples of those themes from the text. I had planned to use NVivo to facilitate the data analysis and participated in numerous learning modules in preparation but, as this was my first extended project that used qualitative data, in the end, I preferred to analyze for themes manually to be sure that nothing was overlooked, and in the case there had been any possible inconsistencies during data collection. The data analysis adopted a coding method in which frequently appearing themes were generated and then quotes sorted accordingly under them. This allowed for quick and ordered access to data when writing up the findings.

Finally, the findings were written up and then followed up with the respective discussion. There are two main approaches to writing up the findings of qualitative research (Burnard, 2004). The first is more traditional and involves writing up key findings under the main themes and then using verbatim quotes to show examples to support themes. The key findings are then followed up with a section which discusses them in relation to relevant research. The second approach is to incorporate the discussion into the findings. In this study the first approach was used.

### **3.6 Research questions and hypotheses**

The two research questions that guide this study and their hypotheses are:

Research Question 1: What are translanguaging practices of university students and teachers in their Spanish classes?

Hypothesis 1: There are a variety of translanguaging practices that occur in the university Spanish classroom, that will include personalized ways to translate and code-switch.

Research Question 2: How do university students and teachers perceive pedagogy and practices of translanguaging?

Hypothesis 2: There will be mixed feelings about translanguaging, either strongly for, in the case of students or strongly against, as in the case of more traditional teachers. Most participants will see it as being used to benefit learning, even if they do not approve of practice.

## Chapter 4 Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the current study are described. It was my goal to look for, 1) any indication that students and teachers were using their languages to reach deeper understandings, which could indicate translanguaging practices, and 2) the perceptions held by students and teachers about using other languages than the target language in the Spanish university classroom. My first hypothesis was that translanguaging was taking place; the challenge was to determine if, by following the literature and previous studies, these practices could be identified as translanguaging or not. My second hypothesis was that perceptions of translanguaging practices would widely vary.

This section has been organized according to key findings from each group. The findings were based on themes selected during the analysis stage of this research, and data has come from participants' quotes, either spoken words or phrases, or segments of interactions during discussions. Guided by the literature, I went through the transcriptions and found keywords (like “meaning-making”), phrases, and segments of conversation during interaction. These quotation excerpts, in context, are representative of practices and perceptions about using different languages together to enhance learning in the target language. Words in quotations that are underlined in this chapter allow the reader to see the key words or phrases which I interpreted as reflecting the most important ideas of participants. All the student data were in English, though not all students had English as their first language. As a result, there are some discrepancies in syntax, for example, that have been maintained. In the case of the teacher data, all the participants spoke in Spanish except one. The transcription was done, in Spanish and then the relevant quotations were chosen. Only after this were the pertinent quotations translated into English. The quoted excerpts that follow are independent of each other, unless it is specifically indicated that they are part of a group interaction or conversation.

There were four main findings for students and three main findings for teachers. Findings showed that both groups were using other languages in the Spanish classrooms, though uses widely varied. Other language use was dynamic and flexible and went beyond notions of direct translations as participants

spoke of multifaceted ways that they used to construct meanings. Overall, students perceived the use of other languages as being nuanced and beneficial to their learning, this was not a view held by all teachers however, as some expressed reservations about the practice and the impact they believed it had on their students' learning.

## **4.2 Student findings**

There were four main student findings. The first revealed practices and strategies that students spoke about that demonstrated what I have named a translanguaging position, in which they not only used flexible, dynamic practices to construct deeper meanings, they also demonstrated an openness to these types of practices. Quotes included words like “making sense”, “deeper understanding” and “complementation” which gave examples of how students claimed to construct knowledge through their languages. In the second finding, students spoke of how they perceived teachers' practices and strategies with other languages, and insight was provided on their perspective on contemporary language education and how teachers and students may not always have the same interpretation or goals. The third finding showed students' perceptions of how and why they translanguage, and the final finding on students' translanguaging positions gave further insight into where they stood in relation to aspects of translanguaging: Were they aware of their practices? How accepting were they of their practices? To help the reader have context on the student's backgrounds without having to refer back to the student participant table the first time a name is mentioned in a section their level in Spanish, their first language (L1) is identified and the number of languages they know is written in parenthesis beside their name, for example, Lily (advanced, L1 Arabic, knows 4 languages).

### ***4.2.1 Key finding 1: Student practices with other languages***

During their interviews, students were asked to identify any practices that used other languages in their Spanish classes, either that they or other students used, or that they observed their teachers using. The aim was to find any practices that were dynamic and flexible and that demonstrated the use of more than one language to make meaning. Key words searched for included: connect(ions), switch(ing), Spanglish, context, translat(e/ion), strategy(y/ies), *supplement(ation)*, *complement(ation)*, gaps, deep

understand(ing), language. In the excerpt below, Lily (advanced, L1 Arabic, knows 4 languages) shared her practices. She talked about making sense with her languages when she is given a direct task like memorizing something. This excerpt from Lily was chosen because it seemed to be a representation of what translanguaging practices are. She explains how 1) she resorts to her other languages, 2) she uses them to make sense of what she has to learn, and 3) her process is individual.

Lily “When I make sense... there are somethings that (I) have to memorize, it's just there's no better explanation so I use my other languages to say... OK, well in Arabic or in English this is how we say it, it may not make sense to the Spanish speaker but basically it makes it more acceptable (to me) that it's just a matter of fact, and this is how you do it, and just do it...”

Lily is aware that the process she mentions is very specific to her, she says when “I” make sense. She stated that she uses her languages to make sense, so learning is more acceptable to her. She also recognizes that it may not make sense to others.

#### **4.2.1.1 Students’ surreptitious translanguaging**

In the largest group discussion of four students, when students were asked how and when they saw other languages being used, they began to talk about “whispers”. One student mentioned it and then the other students took up the idea at different moments during the interview and it became a recurring theme throughout their discussion. These “whispers” were seen to happen in class during and between activities. While students said they do not want to show disrespect for their teacher’s possible monolingual view or instructions, that only Spanish should be used, they still feel the need to whisper to confirm their learning. These are two segments from interactions between Olivia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages), Daniella (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages), Sophia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) and Ava (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) about “whispering”.

Olivia “...if the teacher is promoting only the use of Spanish then sometimes you hear either silence or Spanish... with little bits of English people sneak in... whispers of English”

Researcher “what goes on in those whispers?”

Daniella “I think it’s when I don’t know what to say when I don’t know how to say something or there’s like a phrase or word that I’m not too sure... that’s probably when I’ll switch to English”

Olivia “yeah, I think a lot of people do”

Sophia “with instructions or something that we have to do... this is the whisper... whoever is next to me will just say it in English again, just to make sure I know what’s going on... I’ll tell it to myself and then whoever’s next me I’ll say, yeah, you’re right, and then I’ll feel better”

Ava “to confirm your understanding?”

...

Olivia “...back to the whisper thing... I’ve had (other) students... whisper...to confer with me and I was like ‘oh like I get to say what this is... I’m the expert now... (laughter)... but the whisper was to confirm... what’s he saying...”

Sophia “...and I think they whisper because they don’t want the Prof to hear that they don’t know what’s going on...”

Olivia: “or be disruptive”

Daniella: “some Profs don’t want you to use English at all”

Sophia: “I don’t think we should be scolded though for using English because if you don’t know the word, you don’t know the word and you can quickly look it up afterwards but I think as long as you show that you’re trying your hardest and you actually feel like you yourself are trying to learn the language and speak the language that’s all you can really do”

I thought this finding was particularly interesting because all three students seemed to feel it was necessary to whisper sometimes to confer to confirm their understanding. Was this in moments of translanguaging? Were teachers aware of what was happening in that moment, or did they just consider it a disruption and scold students for using English?

#### 4.2.1.1 Types of student practices

Students were asked to share any practices that used a different language from Spanish in their Spanish class. The question I asked explicitly was, “Do you use different languages for any activities in the Spanish class? How? Why? When?”. Practices that students commented on were divided roughly into four types, translanguaging as translation, translanguaging for explanation, translanguaging to reaffirm focus on the Spanish language, and code-switching to translanguague.

##### 4.2.1.1.1 *Translanguaging as translation*

As in Lily’s excerpt above, a number of students spoke about how they translated to and from their other languages to understand Spanish. In this extract, Amelia (intermediate, L1 French, knows 3 languages) refers to translation in context and how it can provide a deeper understanding because you can “get” the “nuances”, which makes the process more time efficient.

Amelia “when you can make the translation within a context then you just... you get the nuances... I think this is very helpful ...when you can see the translation between something that you don't yet understand and something that you've already mastered, it's... you just gain a deeper understanding, like right on the spot it's just quicker... you just get there quicker”

Translation for translanguaging gives students a chance to confirm their language learning again when it is repeated in the other language(s), and can emphasize the message through the two, or more, languages. These related excerpts are examples from students of how and when they used this practice, as can be seen in another excerpt from Lily (advanced, L1 Arabic, knows 4 languages). She speaks about her process of coming into contact with Spanish, which she may not understand, and through translating what she considers the bare minimum, she is able to rearrange it, so it makes sense to her. Her awareness of a rearranging is what points to a translanguaging process.

Lily “...I read something or hear something [in Spanish]... but I may not get it right away. I first have to try to translate it to the bare minimum in English and then based on the Spanish rules and structure I rearrange it in my head to make sense of it in Spanish and then I say it in Spanish...”



Emily is the most advanced Spanish user of the student participants, not only as she is the only graduate student taking advanced courses in the target language, but also because she is a Spanish Heritage Speaker, and knows four other languages. She spoke about how she was comfortable with reading about the same topic in her different languages. As a speaker of Spanish, Italian and English she said relating texts in other languages was “good”.

Emily “I don't mind getting mixed readings...[if my Prof says] ‘Oh, here's an English paper’... that's good, I'm comfortable with it”

She made observations about how the different languages work and insisted on her use of a mix of *her* techniques when she has to do written work. She refers to a nuanced process that is a mix of English and Spanish.

Emily “...because English is so concise and short so... that's how I need to do it in Spanish, so I do use a mix of my techniques... and I do use both languages”

After this speech by Emily, a discussion ensued between the other students in their group. Both Jonathan (intermediate, L1 English, knows 3 languages) and Anna (beginner, L1 Farsi/Azeri, knows 6 languages) agreed with what Emily had said and they went on to speak more about translation. They said they saw other students translating whole texts because they thought it would be easier to understand. They said this whole text translation method could be “confusing” and “detrimental”. They recommend a more in-depth analysis of the language, saying that only individual words should be translated when necessary. Jonathan said that translation must be used with “clarification” so the nuances of the language could be understood; for an explanation of the “why” behind the way the language works, necessary for when students have to learn “techniques”, like Emily referred to, for themselves.

Emily “what I've noticed from my classmates is if they don't understand the text in Spanish they will go find it in English like right away, and I feel like that's really not the best way because lots of times that text is not translated properly... I know I [observed] a problem like that in one of my classes and it was just misleading them [the other students] on how we were analyzing the text, so

I think maybe translating the sentence... the content of the page we were reading, maybe made it easier to get [understand] the book in English if you feel like your Spanish is not on par with the English. Yeah, I always saw them... they saw it as positive, but at the end of the day they realised it would just be mixing them up”

Anna “why not just find the word we don't understand instead of searching the whole text for example?”

Emily “The text of Don Quixote it's harder in English. I've read both in English and Spanish, and with the English they use, it's much harder than just understanding the Spanish so that's where they [the other students] realize ‘Oh no this is not a good idea, it's better to just find the word’”

Anna “Sometimes translation makes it more confusing.”

Jonathan “...like Emily said, some of my classmates, if we're reading something from the textbook and they don't understand it, they will probably just translate it or look for something without asking for clarification or why it's this way, they just kind of translate it and go from there which can be kind of detrimental later [when] they have to use those techniques themselves”

In the extract below, Natalia (intermediate, L1 English/Igbo, knows 4 languages) refers to a “direct translating” as being a quick shortcut to learning, however, for her to “fully understand” when something does not make sense, she prefers to first learn in Spanish and then “work [her] way back to English”. She also speaks about rearranging direct translation to make sense.

Natalia “...direct translating... may help when something does not make sense but me doing that all the time doesn't really help. If I'm studying for something, I can use the translation method because it makes things quicker but when it comes to me fully understanding it, I prefer to not do it that way. I prefer to learn it in Spanish first and then try to work my way back to English,... if I don't have enough time then I just use direct translation and rearrange it, so it makes sense in my head”

Amelia (intermediate, L1 French, knows 3 languages) translates in context, both Natalia (intermediate, L1 English/Igbo, knows 4 languages) and Lily (advanced, L1 Arabic, knows 4 languages) talk about rearranging translations in their heads; and both Jonathan (intermediate, L1 English, knows 3 languages) and Emily (advanced, Spanish Heritage Speaker, knows 4 languages) refer to translation techniques being mixed. This indicates that students have varying views on translation and see it as being a simple process, which is less helpful, but also a more complex “mixing” and “rearranging” process. The latter would indicate a translanguaging process.

#### *4.2.1.1.2 Translanguaging to reaffirm focus on the Spanish language*

When students translanguage to reaffirm focus on Spanish they seem to be finding ways to ‘check’ the message again. Even if they understood the Spanish the first time, they move between their languages to confirm what they have learned. In the two excerpts below, Jonathan (intermediate, L1 English, knows 3 languages) explains that his understanding is being confirmed through his different languages when he goes over grammatical concepts in his other language French. He points out that he does not use a direct translation (as mentioned previously) to reaffirm but relies on notes in his languages of English and French, to help him understand.

Jonathan “(it helps) to be able to think back into Spanish... say ‘what is it in Spanish?’ , 'cos a lot of the times in French it is similar; a lot of the grammatical concepts between the two languages are similar. I use English all the time in class right now just to help me with different grammatical concepts... if I need to make a note about something. Most of my notes are in English relating the Spanish topic to something in English that can help me remember it, or something like that, not directly into Spanish”

Jonathan goes on to say that he knows other students in his class, who have more than one language like he does, do the same. They use the language with a similar concept to what they are learning in Spanish to help them learn. In this case, he uses learning the Spanish word *para* as an example, which they had been doing that week in class.

Jonathan “my classmates do kind of the same as me. I know there's a couple of people ... in class who have other languages, other than English, and so the concept of certain words are different for maybe English speakers because it is different from how English uses it, but other people, who I sit with, their language has a similar concept so they are able to compare and contrast that and they said that that helped them learn when and where to use *para* in Spanish, so I know there's that.”

The interaction below, between Olivia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages), Natalia (intermediate, L1 English/Igbo, knows 4 languages) and Daniella (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages), occurs because Olivia claims that she has learned how to “break down” the “traditional language learning approach”. The others agree with her. Olivia mentions the crossover between languages and how she can break down words that are similar words in her languages (cognates) to be able to make connections, while Natalia agrees that she does the same because then she is sure of what she is learning. Daniella then refers to the process as an indirect comparing and contrasting.

Olivia “I learned a lot about breaking down this... kind of ...traditional language learning approach... like breaking down words to root words and being able to make connections with... cognates and being able to recognize those in other languages that I haven't learned... there's a lot of crossover”

Natalia “yeah, it’s like I’m almost unsure sometimes... and I want to make sure that I’m doing whatever I’m doing right or I’m doing it how it should be done”

Daniella “you can compare and contrast indirectly”

Students spoke about these more complex ways to process the “crossover” between their languages as they learn, and as a way to be sure of what they are learning. They did not distinguish between where they used this type of translanguaging, it just seemed to be a process they recurred to whenever they believed it necessary. It was a way they found to reaffirm what they were learning in Spanish to themselves. A few students also spoke about how they were able to help others. Students themselves acknowledged that their process is not conventional. By referring to a process of “*indirect* comparing and contrasting”, as opposed

to saying only “comparing and contrasting” they revealed a complexity in their process that can be construed as a translanguaging process.

#### ***4.2.1.1.3 Translanguaging for explanation***

This next finding, that students translanguaged to explain to themselves, is very closely linked to what they do to reaffirm their focus on Spanish mentioned in the previous section. The findings are separate because I wanted to separate the ‘what’ they did, from the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ they did it while they said they were explaining to understand. The following two excerpts mention how Olivia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages), Amelia (intermediate, L1 French, knows 3 languages) and Jonathan (intermediate, L1 English, knows 3 languages) use their own language(s) to explain what they are learning. Olivia describes her process by explaining how she reverts back to English and uses cards because she is visual. This speaks to a multimodal method that complements the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Olivia does not speak about simply making a connection, or connecting, but about “bridging a connection” which refers to a more complex process.

Olivia “I tried to write out the definitions explaining concepts in Spanish wherever possible but sometimes I still revert back to having the English, just if (I) forget then I can go back and quickly look then quick and say, ‘Oh yeah I know what that is’ because I’m also very visual, I use cards... or (I) get help trying to explain it... maybe there's a native speaker in (my) group and they could try to help bridge that connection”

Jonathan says that if Spanish grammar is “explained” and further, the theory “behind it” is explained it would be easy to relate and apply what had been learned to other situations during learning.

Jonathan “...if the grammar was explained then we could go from one verb to another, if the theory behind it was explained, and then it is easy to apply to the rest of your learning”

Amelia speaks about taking notes that work for each person “in your own language” so that they can understand better. She makes sure to say that not only does understanding happen, but it is specific, or exclusive, to that particular learner.

Amelia "...taking notes in your own language, both Spanish and in your own language that you understand best, that way you just... understand better what's happening, especially for you, actually"

When I asked Amelia if she used other languages in the Spanish class, her reply was that she used two of her other languages, French and English. She offered to share a picture with one of her strategies from her notebook.

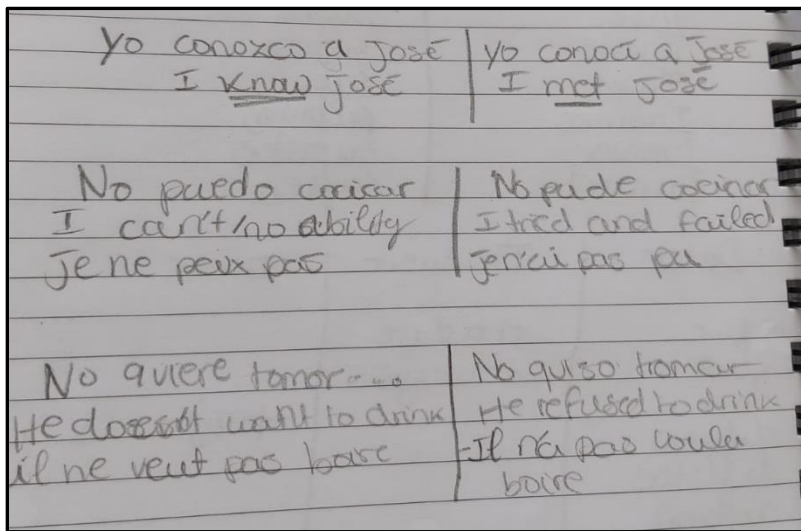


Figure 1. Amelia's notebook excerpt that shows how she uses two of her other languages, French and English to "understand better"

Amelia's excerpt showed how she used her different languages when taking notes. She said that writing in one language does not help you in all the ways it could if you are learning about tenses, in this case, because tenses change depending on context. To remember the nuances and make the "connections", she writes in both her languages so she can "understand better".

Amelia "... I do actually...I have my notes here... so I write something in Spanish and then under it in French and under that in English... I would do all 3 languages [flipping through her note book]... I feel like one of the important strategies would be like what I do here. (You get) a Spanish phrase and right under you write the meaning in English, or in your own maternal

language. You take notes in your own language, both Spanish and in your own language that you understand best. That way you just... understand better what's happening. This is a good page I've shown you because for these ones, our teacher told us that it depended on the tense... so if it was said in a different tense it would mean something different and so how do I remember that difference? By writing it in French as well, because it has the same... like the tense changes and the meaning of the phrase, so I think if you can identify a similar phenomenon in your language, write it down and use it as a way to remember what's happening in Spanish... it just kind of came to me honestly I was kinda like 'OK... this is a connection to what happens in French so if I put it down I'll just remember it'..."

Amelia's admission that "it just kind of came to me honestly" reveals that this strategy, which fills her notebook, is one she has developed by herself and she feels is her own. I did not ask her if her teachers were aware of this strategy. All three of these students talked about how and why they found ways in other languages to explain to themselves. These explanations can be labelled translanguageing because they are nuanced, individual and at times multi-modal, as in the case of Olivia's study cards.

#### ***4.2.1.1.4 Switching codes to translanguage***

Another type of translanguageing practice happens when students switch their language codes. Literature tells us that switching languages is a valuable tool in the translanguageing classroom where languageing practices are always being conceptualized and reconceptualized in a perpetual process of meaning-making. Daniella's (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) excerpt refers to a flexible switching that occurs based on context, and provides her with an opportunity for language learning. She does not speak of Spanglish, or a mixing of Spanish and English, she specifically refers to "a mix of Spanglish".

Daniella "...I think it's a mix of Spanglish. I feel like I see more Spanglish... you might start a sentence and you like then you come across a word or phrase that you're not sure how to say so

then you switch back to English... I don't think it's a bad thing for me, if not how am I going to learn?"

Amelia (intermediate, L1 French, knows 3 languages) says in the excerpt below, that how she uses languages depends on context, because it is always changing. She seems to point to her switching being a natural process because her brain recognizes the proximity of its languages, and it being variable depending on context.

Amelia "...I feel like my own brain also recognizes the proximity of both languages so it's just like let's just switch to that...(but) some phrases just don't line up, and sometimes it's just easier to go from Spanish to English it really honestly depends on what we're discussing, and it changes all the time"

Both Daniella and Amelia speak to an individual way to switch codes, that is not fixed. They go beyond the simple process of moving from one language code to another, to constantly making a decision of when and how to do so. As Amelia says, this happens because "some phrases just don't line up" and they need to be handled differently. Daniella sees switching as central to her learning and "not a bad thing" as she asks, "if not, how am I going to learn?" Code switching is about moving from one language to another, but the when, how, and why are what make it a translanguaging process.

#### ***4.2.2 Key finding 2: Teachers' practices observed by students***

The focus of this study was to examine student and teachers' practices, not only from their own point of view but how they saw each other moving between languages. There might have been merit in matching the teacher and student observations, specifically to see if ways that teachers claimed to use other languages to enrich learning were being interpreted and taken up by students as they intended. All students had instances to share of moments when their teachers moved between languages, using one language that in this case was usually English, to help with the learning of Spanish. In general, the examples that students gave are the same that teachers also talked about. Natalia (intermediate, L1 English/Igbo, knows 4 languages) says her teacher would speak in Spanish but explain about Spanish in



English, which resulted in one having to “think backwards”, a more complex process that can be labelled translanguaging.

Natalia “When it came to (her) explaining why things are the way they were she (the teacher) would switch between Spanish and English... she would speak in Spanish but explain the concepts about the language in English.... she would say in Spanish you have to think backwards... (using) a mix of both Spanish and English... she would just give the instructions, or she would explain the concepts about the language in English (but) she would use as little English as possible”

Ava (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) says that she has seen teachers explain Spanish meanings in Spanish but also repeat phrases about concepts in English. She says this is a helpful process.

Ava “(the teacher) would be lecturing and... would be explaining a specific concept and there's like a phrase that a student doesn't know and then the student... asks what this is and... sometimes I do see them explain in Spanish, like what it means in Spanish, but not all the times. I've seen them repeat the phrase in English as well... in certain scenarios I think... it's really helpful”

Amelia (intermediate, L1 French, knows 3 languages) says that her teacher says something in Spanish and then says the same thing in English, a practice she does not label translating, but a way to make connections between words to understand nuances of the language that help gain knowledge quicker than if everything is only in Spanish.

Amelia “when your teacher is suddenly telling you something in Spanish right after telling you the same thing in English you can make the direct connections between the words and you just gain... quicker, and again when it's within the same context that you get the nuances and all that way quicker than if... if the teacher was just speaking in Spanish the whole class, only Spanish, only writing in Spanish, only giving us instructions in Spanish.”

This is also confirmed by Daniella (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) who does not see the use of English as detracting from Spanish learning but as helping students to be surer, as it is “just” to “clarify”. She says, “I think when a student is unsure, I think that (the teachers) repeat it in English just to clarify”.

Jonathan (intermediate, L1 English, knows 3 languages) goes into more detail with his answer. He says that teachers explain in English, to correct and to clarify, and by doing so they help students who may be confused or have doubts. He says that explaining in English should “definitely” be used as it is a language that students understand and so the teachers can be sure that everyone has understood.

Jonathan “there will be times when my professor will speak in Spanish and for the most part I will understand it all the time but if there is anybody who's ever confused about what happened he will say it again in English, which I find very helpful for the people who are learning...if there is any confusion or any doubts it should definitely be explained in a language that people understand...to make sure that the point has come across and everybody gets it... [The professor] he'll use it in just that kind of way for corrections and clarifications”

These five students mentioned above share positive views of teachers using other languages in class. They do not use the term translation but use words like “explanation”, “clarification” and “correction”, despite it not being in the target language. They refer to it being “helpful” and at no time do they talk about teachers’ processes with other languages as impacting Spanish learning in a negative way. This differs from some of the teachers’ views as in the following teacher findings it can be seen that a few claimed that they believed students only wanted to be exposed to the target language, and that it was what they needed. Other teachers said they felt that using other languages, and specifically referring to different grammar patterns, could confuse students. While students claimed that their use of other languages was a failing on their part, most students expressed that they felt use of other languages was a useful strategy that teachers used to help them.

Only Natalia (intermediate, L1 English/Igbo, knows 4 languages) shared a different view. She had had at least four Spanish teachers. She first spoke positively about three of her previous teachers who had moved between languages. She says they focussed on Spanish and used it first, only using English after Spanish. She felt this way was more time-consuming but more effective.

Natalia "...I felt like I learned a lot more because [they] used Spanish first. [They] established that Spanish is the language that we're learning, immersing ourselves in it, and it takes a lot of time a lot more time, but I think it's more effective that way, in my personal opinion"

Natalia then spoke specifically, and negatively, about one of her teacher's methods. This teacher did not do as others had done but spoke English most of the class and she said she did not feel like she was learning.

Natalia "I have [Teacher's name] and I don't really like [their] method. I had [them] last semester and [they] don't do what my other teachers have done in the past, and I don't feel like I'm learning in [their] class."

I asked if she'd spoken to this instructor to share her dissatisfaction and discuss other methods that she might prefer. Her reply was that this teacher was old-fashioned and so might not be open to her views.

Natalia "...it's really hard... because [they] are very old-fashioned and [they] teach... like they think that with direct translation you can just get it, and [they] speak at least 90% of the class... speaking English and not in Spanish and the only times [they] speak in Spanish is when [they] are trying to translate something from English to Spanish and to me personally it doesn't help because I'm not really, well I'm not really immersing myself in the language... I feel like I am regressing because [they] speak mainly English"

The comment above I think is insightful because Natalia is making a contrast with "direct translating" as the process she does not like or agree with. While she accepts English use, there is a way that it should be done for her that is not just translating. I considered this as alluding to a more complex translanguaging process, a process that goes beyond replacing one language with another but using one language as a tool to grasp another.

### ***4.2.3 Key finding 3: Student perceptions of using other languages***

It was the principle objective of this study to explore what students thought about the use of other languages than the target language in their Spanish classrooms. Their perceptions could reflect on, not only their own uses, but also what they thought of what teachers were doing with other languages. Did they think that using other languages was positive and/or effective? Did they see it as something negative that did not contribute to learning Spanish? Were they ambivalent? These questions guided the discussion in this section of the interview. The interview question was: “what do you think of the use of other languages in your Spanish classroom?”. While the answers varied a little, there was a consensus by students, using their other languages was “helpful” and “beneficial”. They also saw it as a “natural” process that allowed languages to “flow”. However, it had to happen in certain ways, there were unwritten rules, for example, if a teacher presented ideas in Spanish, then reinforced in English to get back to Spanish it was effective, while if a teacher spoke English first then Spanish, it was not. Students saw their uses of other languages as personalized, unique to each user.

#### **4.2.3.1 Student perception of use of other languages in the Spanish classroom**

All students openly shared practices and strategies of using other languages in the Spanish classroom and what they thought of these movements. They accepted that they used other languages in some way in their Spanish classroom, however, while some saw this as an empowering, enriching experience, others said it might be a deficit as Olivia mentioned. A view put forward by Lily (advanced, L1 Arabic, knows 4 languages), that using your own language(s) to learn Spanish was like making use of prior knowledge which was the main resource that students had. When asked to talk about how she felt about other languages being used in the Spanish classroom, Lily started with a frank comment.

Lily “...actually they [students] don't have any other strategy because...if you really think about it, you don't have anything else to go with except what you know”.

This showed Lily’s support for using languages that you know to learn new ones. She acknowledged that the process is individual because everyone is different and processes differently, there is not “one

way for everybody”. I believe this may be vital for the understanding of translanguaging. It is not a recipe, but more the permission to explore ways through and beyond their languages that can allow students to find their distinct processes, what works best for each of them.

Lily “I feel like... you cannot just say one way for everybody that's just not how it works we are not all born with the same brain so... anything that can help me really is welcome.”

In general, students believed that each person needed to find the strategy or practice that best worked for them, like Daniella (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) who stated emphatically that “you have to come up with your own strategies”. This sentiment was supported by Ava (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) who said that these strategies using other languages were “not trained... [they were] just natural”.

In her interview, Lily also acknowledged the personal and social connection to languages because they are not just ideas and theories. She said there was a cultural component that she linked to a personal connection, as she says a person cannot be separated from their language. She referred to the complexity of the connections people have to languages. As a speaker of four languages and the most experienced in years of learning languages, this perspective that Lily shares gives insight on how she sees language learning as an intricate, individual process.

Lily “It is a feeling... because when you're speaking you're not just speaking mind and theories, and you know it's not scientific, right, when you're speaking about self and social connections and stuff like that... its psychological, you cannot separate the person from it (the language), right, so there's a science to it ...and then there is... a whole cultural component... a personal connection, because they (languages) are here” [pointing to her head]

Daniella speaks about how using other languages is a natural process that “flows out” of her. It is not a process like a mental conjugation that she would have to stop to carry out, but a process she doesn't have to stop to think about. It is a helpful “combination”, a “mix”, and she thinks that everyone with

English as their first language does this mixing. She says that it is helpful to use other languages when language learning in an individual mix.

Daniella “instead of having to stop and conjugate this in my head what I need to say it just like flows out naturally without actually having to stop and think about it... I guess English... when you're learning I feel like just the combination of both could be helpful...how I learn in the classroom, kind of a mix. Some students like to talk only in Spanish, but I think we all talk in English and Spanish (mix).”

The notion of translanguaging as an effective complement to language learning emerged. Natalia (intermediate, L1 English/Igbo, knows 4 languages) used the word ‘supplementation’ to express how she believed her other languages contributed to her learning in the Spanish class. She talks about wanting to speak English to use it “to supplement” her Spanish as some “thing” secondary that helps her to connect to Spanish.

Natalia “I'm not saying don't speak English at all in class because I still want to speak a little bit of English but it's more like Spanglish, where at least 50 to 60% of the time we speak mainly in Spanish, and then some explanations... the main language like English is used to supplement. I think that your main language should be used as a supplementation not the primary thing because it helps you to connect.”

Sophia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) spoke about students using English to boost their learning which also refers to this idea that it isn't so much about using another language, as it is about enhancing their Spanish learning.

Sophia “...need a quick little English booster if that's helping (students) learn... if that's how they learn”...

Daniella says it is not a “big deal” and it can actually mean you will use more Spanish, a sentiment she knows does not seem logical as she says, “I don't know if that makes any sense”. This view that the

other language will make learning in the target language more effective is part of the foundation of the translanguaging concept.

Daniella “you're mostly talking in Spanish but if you say a few things in English its not a big deal, maybe then you'll use more Spanish, I don't know if that makes any sense?!”

Olivia goes on to say that she thinks that moving between languages is “natural” and “cool”. She says that it’s cool to be able to make connections between languages and realize how similar they actually are. I would like to have explored this idea more with her, on where she sees these similarities: Is it because of how languages enable communication? Or is it the actual similarities between grammar, syntax and/or vocabulary that she is referring to?

Olivia “I think its like your natural speech... I've listened to a lot of speakers that speak Spanish fluently, but they also know English and they go back and forth like code switching right and to me I think it's cool... I think it's cool that we are able to make those connections between languages and realize like how similar they actually all are”

Amelia (intermediate, L1 French, knows 3 languages) says that she is a better learner of Spanish because she can find the similarities between her languages. It makes her learning of Spanish easier.

Amelia “I am a better learner now because of the similarities between them (my languages)... so I find Spanish easier because I know French, because a lot of the words are similar in the spelling in the structure and the meanings as well and some of the rules are close...

Emily (advanced, Spanish Heritage Speaker, knows 4 languages), as the heritage learner who grew up with Spanish spoken in her house says she feels a “need” to use her different languages. That she feels in her languages, and one day she can feel more English or more Spanish. This goes back to the idea expressed previously that students see a fluidity in their language practices and are comfortable with their changeability.

Emily “I feel like (my languages) they're part of me and I feel the need to use them both... so, sometimes I'm feeling more English and some days I'm feeling more Spanish it's crazy to think that I have two personalities, but it really depends on the day. I feel like Italian, French and Spanish are so related that I can... I am able to improve and kind of cling on to each language.”

The excerpts in this first segment in this section on student perceptions of use of other languages in the Spanish classroom were selected because they made general reference to the processes that it involved and how it made them feel. Students see using other languages as a natural process that can flow and support learning of the target language. They did not emphasize on the other languages that were used or how, that didn't seem to be the point, the main issue was finding a personalized way, unique to each student to improve their learning of Spanish. They focussed on the how, more than the what and agreed that if the how used other languages it would be beneficial.

#### **4.2.3.1.1 Student perceptions of monolingual ideology as they translanguage**

This next segment analysed student perceptions of use of other languages in the Spanish classroom, but in contrast to beliefs they might hold that language learning should be monolingual. This was done because a number of students started the interview by upholding the underlying belief that a successful language class should only use the target language. In some cases, they said that they had been made to understand that solely Spanish should be used in the Spanish language classroom. Anna (beginner, L1 Farsi/Azeri, knows 6 languages) says that her teacher would force them to speak in Spanish, and while she says, “this is good”, she questions the rule by asking, “but, if talking in English helps, why not?!”.

Anna “a professor would go past and say, ‘OK in Spanish now’. Sometimes they force (us to speak Spanish and)... this is good, we should practice Spanish, but, if talking in English helps, why not?!”

This dilemma was also shared by Daniella (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) who claims she uses English “probably” more than she should “maybe” during Spanish. It seems as if she is saying it



is a practice that she is conscious that she should not be over-using, but I believe that the use of the words “probably” and “maybe”, allude to a lack of total assurance in the belief.

Daniella “I guess I do tend to sometimes speak in English probably more than I should, maybe during Spanish”

Daniella explains her thoughts on the use of other languages in the Spanish classroom. She says she knows that in some classes, students are forbidden to use other languages and it is seen as “something bad” but that sometimes communication in only the target language is “so difficult”. She clearly states that her belief is that students “can use another language if that helps”.

Daniella “I think the purpose in class is to use Spanish to do activities or exercises but, I mean.... if it helps students to use other languages and it helps them understand...? Because I know that in some language classes they forbid students to use other languages... it was seen as something bad because we were in language class and it was Spanish class so we had to use Spanish and sometimes communication was so difficult because we didn't know some words we couldn't talk about it when we didn't understand... I think that we can use another language if that helps”

Sophia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) initially spoke about English can be used as a booster “if that’s helping (students) learn” but then she talked about how she feels her languages are ‘jumbled’ sometimes when she’s in Spanish class and how they can interfere with each other, so much so that the use of one can ‘turn off’ the other. Sophia did not speak of the jumble as if it were a positive occurrence but more as if she felt it made her incompetent and even unable to speak her first language still. This seems to be a negative view towards mixing languages however I thought it was interesting that she said it happened when they “start to explain it to you in English” as several of the other students had insisted that there was an order to the use of other languages as the target language should be used first for explanations.

Sophia “sometimes its just one big jumble... I feel like I can't even speak English ‘very properly’... they start to explain it to you in English and then it turns off the (Spanish) language I find”

Olivia also says that she thinks while she is in Spanish class, she should only use Spanish and learn Spanish. However, though she does talk about filling in gaps with English, the problem she specifically seems to refer to is not the use of English as much as when a student is “constantly” using English. She also uses the word “maybe” when saying that filling in gaps with English can mean that “maybe there’s a deficit there”, as if she considers there is the possibility of a deficit, but at the same time is not fully certain. As a result of seeing this process of filling in Spanish blanks with English as maybe “a deficit”, Olivia feels like she is “hard on herself” if she uses English.

Olivia “if you're in a setting where you're trying to advance your second language or third or fourth whatever it is... if you're constantly filling in the gaps with English and not attempting to learn how you would replace those in the future with Spanish then maybe there's a deficit there. I feel like I'm hard on myself if I start using English with (someone) 'cause I'm there to use Spanish and to learn Spanish”

So, even though these students had spoken enthusiastically and positively about their varied uses of their other language(s), many of which could be considered translanguaging practices, and they had expounded on all the ways they move between and beyond their languages, they had the monolingual belief present that ‘you should only be using Spanish’, and they felt they were not always heeding it as they should. The findings from these students seem to point to an inference that by continuing to fight with being monolingual they were denying their natural drive to combine all their resources. To be a successful bilingual or multilingual who is able to speak only one language when she or he chooses (and all of these students, except the beginner, who were now able to use Spanish at an intermediate-advanced level identified as successful) does not mean that practices in the classroom have to occur only in one language. I interpreted that there was a pride and joy that students expressed from being able to be flexible with their languages. Lily said that at the beginning she did not feel comfortable mixing her

languages but now she can “flip back and forth” and “throw in words of French” and know that she will still be understood.

Lily “now I can go in [to the French Center] and I say, ‘OK I have a question’ and I can flip back and forth and throw in the words of French that I know in a sentence that is mixed and they will still answer me”

Olivia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) says she feels more open-minded now that she has had different learning experiences in Spanish at various levels and specifically, now she is “open to being able to make connections”.

Olivia “you feel like you're somewhat more open-minded and open to being able to make connections not just like in like concepts and learning but like with people 'cause... in the language classrooms you're learning about culture and stuff as well... I just feel like my mind is more open as a result of it”

There is a connection to languages that goes beyond words and grammar, that both Lily and Emily referred to as being more personal. The students quoted in this segment expressed mixed feelings, from questioning what they see as an imposed monolingual ideal, to fully embracing their refutation the same ideal by accepting their own variabilities and individual needs. Perhaps the resistance to accepting multi-lingual translanguaging practices has been because is seen as having a counter-productive impact in a class where the goal is to learn only one language. If we take note of students like Olivia and Amelia who question if the Spanish class should be only monolingual it opens up to the idea that one does not have to undermine the other, but they can actually complement each other.

#### **4.2.3.1.2 Student perceptions of language learning**

This finding within the findings on perception was unexpected but worth mentioning. Students talked about the distressing feelings they had in general when they approached language learning and experiences in the language classes. The only two who did not mention the same feelings were Jonathan

(intermediate, L1 English, knows 3 languages), the only male participant, and Emily (advanced, Spanish Heritage Speaker, knows 4 languages), the heritage Spanish speaker. The other students used words like: “nervous, scared, terrified, afraid, worried, uncomfortable, intimidated, annoyed, frustrated, overwhelmed”; Olivia speaks of feeling like she reaches “a block”. These were feelings they said they had had at some moment when they had been learning languages.

Ava (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) “sometimes I get a little nervous... really afraid to make mistakes”

Lily (advanced, L1 Arabic, knows 4 languages) “I don't want to sound ignorant I don't want to say it wrong... I was scared...I was terrified”

Daniella (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) “...I was worried about making a mistake”

Olivia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) “...feeling nervous or uncomfortable, and I feel like I reach a block”

Sophia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) “I get a little nervous, it's a little intimidating”

Natalia (intermediate, L1 English/Igbo, knows 4 languages) “...it was kind of annoying, very frustrating, ...super overwhelmed and absolutely terrified”

There was a difference in how students had responded to these feelings, however. It depended on their level of learning, or again, on their previous language learning experience(s). If it was the third or fourth language that the student was learning, or if they were in an upper intermediate level or advanced class, they acknowledged the negative feelings but expressed themselves more willing to confront these feelings to learn. For example, in advanced classes, Olivia refers to a “healthy amount of anxiety...that kind of pressures you to improve”, while Sophia says that it “forces you out there 'cos you want to get better”. Olivia went on to say that she has “become consciously aware that you need to make mistakes to

learn in a language, so I've had to like kind of force myself to be like it's OK... yeah, yeah move on... but it's hard”.

It was also clear that students who had English as their first language and were learning Spanish as a second language expressed having more difficulties and doubts than students who had already learned 2 or 3 languages. Olivia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) said, “I don't have the experiences and the connections to the cultures that this language comes connected with”. This contrasted with the students who were learning Spanish after having learned other languages and who did not have English as a first language. For example, Amelia (intermediate, L1 French, knows 3 languages), who already knew two other languages said, “there's a definite advantage to having a second or third language... it just helps... when you can... tie all three languages together. Not only does it help you, it helps your other languages stay crisp and fresh.” What makes this difference between them more notable is that Olivia had been studying Spanish for 4 years, while Amelia had only been studying it for 6 months.

#### ***4.2.4 Key finding 4: Student translanguaging positions***

As mentioned previously, the term translanguaging was not used with participants, however, conversations were analyzed to find processes that could be labelled translanguaging. These processes were found, and a few of the students expressed what I have labelled a translanguaging position. The two excerpts that follow were chosen because they reflect what I interpret as students expressing their translanguaging position. During the interviews, Olivia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) and Lily (advanced, L1 Arabic, knows 4 languages) shared their thoughts and feelings in detail. Both of these participants had been learning languages for years and they seemed to revel in what can be called their *hybrid* practices. They were translanguaging because they reported on an ability to shuttle between languages, and to treat their languages as part of one process to make sense and construct new meanings. Lily spoke of the process of making sense by using her own languages.

Lily "...there is a transition period and there is just something you go through in a language when you just go through listening, listening, listening... absorbing... making sense whether out loud or in your head. When I make sense ... I use my... other languages"

Lily's first language is Arabic, her second is English and her third is Spanish. After her years of language learning, she speaks of an emotional connection to the process and what she calls 'sense making'. She started talking about her experiences learning Spanish by saying it started out as being attractive to her because she felt it made her feel closer to her home, which was Arabic. Lily spoke about understanding by making pictures in her head with her languages, again referring to a use of a different mode of learning, through pictures. She said she makes "mental pictures", "visuals" and she puts her languages "in pictures" as she learns Spanish. This exchange during her interview was chosen because it reflects diverse ways that she finds to make the language make sense to her. She feels that language learning is "embedded" in her now, so she is very comfortable moving between her languages and finding different ways to make sense, like through her "mental pictures".

Researcher "So you 'make' a picture?"

Lily "I make a picture, right..."

Researcher "So what are the notes that you put beside your pictures?"

Lily "I make lines like almost like... it looks like a river, a river... like you know when, like when you go through... like when a river goes through a space or area."

Researcher "because you have to think in a language? or is it not in a language?"

Lily "No, its all in pictures. Its all pictures at this point... that come out in Spanish"...

Researcher "Do you think you put them in there in English?"

Lily "I explain it to myself in English or to the person beside me... which I find myself doing now... to the person beside me, because I almost feel like it's embedded, so in my head I just see

a picture and... the word... comes out and it's usually correct. So, I'm not anymore thinking in English, I'm seeing pictures”

On the other hand, even after four years of learning Spanish, Olivia spoke of her struggle to feel like she belonged in the Spanish class, and the need to understand the connections in the spaces between the languages where there are no connections, and making her own connections. She Olivia does not seem to yet feel fully connected yet to her multilingual identity, as it is my interpretation that she still seems to be positioning herself as an interloper. It is her moving between her languages that makes her feel comfortable though. Making the language learning process one's own is a key feature of translanguaging and her forthright statement that “its about learning new ways to define yourself”, acknowledges this.

Olivia “I feel like for me moving between language helps to figure things out... I can be like ‘OK its just like that in English, got it and then move on’, but this is very different so I need to spend a little bit more time here to sort of understand... the connections, but there's the space between those connections where there are no connections so it's finding those spaces, like the gaps in your knowledge that you actually have to apply to in order to acquire those (languages)... I think it builds confidence” ... “[When I heard about this trilingual learner], it's almost like she's not learning three different languages it's almost like she's just learning a language that has all these different components... its not separate, they're all there together .....its about learning new ways to define yourself... the meaning is all mixed together when you learn languages”

Olivia refers to the space between the connections where there are no connections that maybe can be defined as her own space. Olivia is clearly experiencing language in new ways and connecting to them as she acknowledges her changing linguistic identity. It seems to take time and reflection for students to accept a translanguaging position. They seem to need to feel like they belong in the new language and then take ownership and use their languages as best work for them.

#### ***4.2.5 Conclusion in answer to research questions***

While meaning is being made, participants refer to relying on diverse resources in different ways and at different times. They also refer to gaps in meaning, that Olivia (intermediate, L1 English, knows 2 languages) described as “the space between those connections where there are no connections, so it’s finding those spaces, like the gaps in your knowledge.” The aim of this study was to explore what is happening in those gaps, when many students are whispering and thinking, and what participants’ perceptions of these happenings are.

In answer to the first research question, the student findings demonstrate that students are carrying out translanguaging practices in their Spanish university classrooms, and data showed diverse practices. Students did not limit themselves to translations and explanations in English, but found varied ways, including flexible language negotiation to reaffirm understanding and using code switching to translanguage. Students also discussed teachers practices that they had observed, only one student criticizing what she defined as a teacher’s direct use, while the other students were accepting of what I interpret that we can assume as a more indirect layered use of other languages as a part of their learning practices.

Translanguaging perceptions were identified in answer to the second research question. For some students there was the stigma that using other languages was something that should not be done in their Spanish classroom, but it was almost as if they could not help themselves because they saw it as part of a natural process of language learning, in particular at the beginner levels. Overall their perceptions of translanguaging practices were positive as they saw them as beneficial and helpful. It is my opinion that translanguaging practices often occur when students are whispering, and classroom observations would either verify or refute this claim.

#### **4.3 Teacher findings**

The findings in this next section are based on interviews with eight Spanish teachers and focus on the two themes that stemmed from the research questions: 1) the identification of possible practices that use



different language(s) in the Spanish classroom, and 2) teacher participants' perceptions of the same. The first key finding in this section examines teacher practices that use other languages in the Spanish classroom to see if there are signs of their use or fostering of cross-linguistic meaning-making resources. It was not enough to find practices that only used another language; for these practices to be considered translanguaging in nature, their aim had to be to bring about deeper meanings and to connect students. This would imply that there is teacher-directed translanguaging pedagogy, which is a planned and structured activity led by the teacher, for example, a deliberate alternating of languages in the class. However, teachers may not consciously plan or structure activities for them to be labelled translanguaging practices. There was some debate that ensued between teachers about dynamic, flexible use of languages, and it has been reported in the section 4.2.2.

The second key finding in this section is an analysis of what teachers reported were their perceptions of their practices which could be considered translanguaging. Most of the teachers referred to their own previous experiences with learning languages and a description of some of these experiences is reported subsequently. These data were included because, while they were not directly related to the research questions, the teachers thought them important enough to share and so there may be an impact in some way on their current pedagogy practices. There is also a segment in this section that focusses on teacher perceptions of student language experiences. The section ends with teachers' reflections on their perceptions of other language use.

#### ***4.3.1 Key finding 5: Teacher practices with other languages***

These first findings describe how teachers are using languages that are different from the target language. The study examined both teachers planned strategies that could be labelled translanguaging, and translanguaging practices that emerged spontaneously in the classroom from both teachers and students. During the analysis, practices that might be labelled translanguaging were identified. Teachers' responses on their types of practices were varied. Even though the categorization is similar to that seen by students, there is not always the same use or rationale behind instances of translanguaging. There were

three practices identified: translanguaging by explaining and reaffirming, translanguaging by comparing, contrasting and translating, and translanguaging by connecting through another language. The following three segments report in more detail on these practices.

#### **4.3.1.1 Translanguaging by explaining and reaffirming**

The teacher interviews focussed on any practices that teachers discussed that had utilized other languages than Spanish in some way. There was a general consensus of all teachers that English should be used to foster understanding, though primarily in the beginner classes. Most teachers did not mention value in using other languages at higher levels. Teacher 5 mentions below, that they speak only in Spanish from the second level and upwards. This teacher also said that they used English mainly to explain grammar and to reaffirm knowledge about the Spanish language, though they also used it on occasion to translate or to explain. This indicates a translanguaging pedagogy, planned by teachers and points to an inclusion of pedagogical practices that leverage the fluid languaging of learners in ways that deepen their engagement and comprehension of complex content or concepts. Teacher 5 also talks of using English when they are teaching grammar so students can understand concepts “well”. By explaining in English, after explaining to them in Spanish they are ensuring that students have “really understood”. My interpretation is that this seems to allude to a more superficial understanding level that Teacher believes that can be deepened when English is used. This finding is the same as what was found in the section on the students.

Researcher “When you are in class do you only use Spanish, or do you use other languages too?”

Teacher 5 “It depends on the level. In the first (lower) level I use English ... especially when I am teaching about grammar because I need them (the students) to understand the concepts well, to understand what is being taught in grammar, well... from the second level here at the university I speak in Spanish. The grammar points I will explain in Spanish but then I explain them again in English to make sure that they have really understood the concept well. At the intermediate levels like 301 and 303 I only use Spanish and in the advanced levels... everything in Spanish too”

Researcher “When you say that you only use it to talk about the language ... do you also use it to translate or to explain sometimes?”

Teacher 5 “Yes, yes, of course ... especially at the first level, which is when I use English the most”

For Teacher 5, using English for this deeper understanding is seen as useful for beginner learners, but as a translanguaging prop that should be left behind as students move on to higher level classes. This was different from Teacher 6’s perspective, who saw English as the medium for language learning and asserted that they teach “Spanish in English” to their beginner classes. They described how they explained verb mechanics and sentence structure in English to make the Spanish “clearer”, then moved into examples in Spanish. They also gave details on how they presented the language to students and how they related concepts, clarifying that what they did.

Teacher 6 “I teach Spanish in English... so the first year is entirely in English. I don't believe that teaching grammar in Spanish to students when they don't know any Spanish is in the least bit pedagogically sound... they get more exposed to the language but they're so baffled and don't understand any of the grammar. That is not the point so for me. I want to explain the grammar in a language so that they grasp it and then we can use Spanish to actually practice and I know again there's a lot of people who believe that they just need to drown in the language. I use English to explain all the grammar... how verbs are conjugated, this is how verb mechanics work, sentences structure... that's all in English... and then everyone's clear on exactly what we're talking about. Then we move to Spanish examples and then they can see. We still talk about the grammar in English as opposed to dovetailing into “esto es un verbo... un adjetivo...”[this is a verb... an adjective in Spanish], this is a verb, this is a noun, and this is why they are conjugated and how they relate to each other, not just duplicated in the target language... rather than, [other teachers who say] ‘here's the whole explanation in the target language hope you got it, otherwise you're in big trouble’”

Teacher 6 often used the pronoun “we”, for example, “we can use Spanish”, and “we’re talking”. This analysis reveals an inclination and willingness to collaborate that is a feature of translanguaging pedagogy. Teacher 6 says that while they do use English they do not duplicate the target language, it is more about finding relations between the languages. This excerpt below from Teacher 8 about using English, not only to create a relaxed atmosphere, but even to make fun of Spanish language itself, is also an indication of a sharing through the language. By pointing out how ‘funny’ the language is, they are at the same time exposing their students to how the language works.

Teacher 8: “I use English to create a relaxed atmosphere, to make fun (by joking), even of the language structure that they are working with in Spanish to say, ‘doesn’t this sound funny’”.

During classroom discourse, English is used by some teachers to explain rules and instructions, as can be observed in these excerpts below. This can be seen in Teacher 7’s excerpt, specifically as they talk about helping students understand the use of commas in Spanish. If there is a direct translation of grammar, this is not considered translanguaging, however, if a teacher explains about the grammar and finds way to relate it to their students’ other language(s) that can be considered translanguaging.

Teacher 7: “(I use English) when (I) explain to them how the verb tenses work... to explain the verb tense or...to explain if you use commas or don't use commas or when, for example”

The following excerpts of Teachers 1, 3 and 4 demonstrate the ways they help students learn by explaining and answering in English. Teacher 4 is open to their students asking *about* Spanish instructions in English, which is a different concept from asking *for* instructions in English.

Teacher 3: “They get a lot of help with the rules and with the instructions in English”

Teacher 1: “I explain the rules to them in English”

Teacher 4: “if I use English it’s because the majority of the class hasn’t understood an instruction...students make sure they have understood the Spanish and (their work) is correct... they ask me in English”

It is my opinion that these activities can be considered translanguaging because they are not translations or simple switches from one language to another but a use of English to connect to Spanish. It is the difference that students referred to between a direct and indirect translation. If instructions are only restated from the target language into English, this is not a translanguaging practice, however, if the instructions are explained and further clarification is given in English in a way that connects to what students know, that could be considered a translanguaging process. Teachers use English to talk around and beyond the Spanish content, which could possibly explain why students used phrases like “think backwards” and “working my way back to Spanish from English”.

#### **4.3.1.2 Translanguaging by comparing, contrasting and translating**

Another example of other language use that demonstrated a translanguaging stance and design in teacher pedagogy was provided by Teacher 1. They gave insight into how they explained the use of the verb “*poner*” (to put) by putting it into context and comparing it to a similar use in English. As “put” is used in the same way in the present and past tense in English, they used the example to demonstrate that there are aspects of any language that do not make sense because there are exceptions to language rules. Though this is the case in any language, in English and Spanish, these aspects must still be understood to fully grasp the language. Teacher 1 refers to this notion of a language not making sense as a “wall” that students find when learning a new language; a “wall” that must be overcome by comparing and contrasting languages. They claim that when this type of comparison is carried out then realization can “knock down the barrier to understanding”. Teacher 1 invites their students to use both their languages to understand how Spanish works as by comparing and exploring similar characteristics, they can recognize ways that languages sometimes don’t make sense, which then helps them make sense of it.

Teacher 1 “...I said to them in English the same thing happens with the verb ‘put’ for example, what is the past of the verb ‘put’? It is the same (as the present), how do you know that I was talking about ‘pongo’ (I put- in present tense) or ‘puse’? (I put- in past tense)?... Because of the context ... the same thing happens in Spanish because one can encounter a wall like this that

doesn't make sense... and I tell you, really, no language makes sense if you think about it ... so in this way you knock down the barrier to understanding, I know it's strange, but that's what it's like.”

This process of comparing and contrasting languages was mentioned often by other teachers. Some teachers acknowledged the process of comparison as deepening understanding and promoting cross-linguistic metalinguistic awareness. In the following excerpts, Teacher 2 referred to being able to compare “only in English” because it is a “complicated” discussion to talk about the language, in the same target language, that one is learning.

Teacher 2 “later on (I) give time so they (students) can compare (languages), this because comparison is only done in English ‘What did you put there? Really? Oh, so you do that...’, yes, so OK, OK... because it is much more complicated to talk about a language (the target language in the target language)”

Teacher 7 talks about using comparisons and using “what you have” from your first language to understand. They talk about students “making” these comparisons, which I believe implies that they allow them the space to do so, and they value the process.

Teacher 7 “you use what you have in your first language... you use it to understand what you are learning in the second language by making comparisons”

Along the same lines, Teacher 6 also refers to a movement between languages, and how students may translate back and forth to compare the “mechanics” of the two languages and create a “structural link across the two languages”. An interpretation of their explanation is that the word “mechanics” is being used to refer to *how* the language works, which is different from how this teacher would describe “grammar”, as *what* works in the language. It is my opinion that Teacher 6 is alluding to a dynamic, active process. They refer to internalizing grammar as a deeper process than “just... memorizing” from the language.

Teacher 6 “they may translate backwards from Spanish to English to understand the Spanish structure or something along those lines I would imagine but I don't bother... typically (I would say) this is the way we do it in English and here's how it is in Spanish and if you understood it in English the mechanics are similar or the mechanics are different in Spanish so remember you flip the subject and the adjective... you've got Spanish”...” I think once you create that structural link across the two languages, and they can see... the logic seems to follow better for internalizing the grammar rather than just you know memorizing a whole bunch of rules, and not being able to apply them 'cause you don't understand anything anyway”

Teacher 7 says that students have to learn the rules of the target language then break them to understand the exceptions in languages. This teacher asks students to reflect with the question “why do you say it like this?” if the rule is different?

Teacher 7 “(I tell students) remember ‘you have to learn the rule to then break it’, I always tell them.... ‘in English, this would be called a noun, verb and complement, and in Spanish it is called this... So, think about it... you remember how in English you say this like this, but that is not the rule so then why do you say it like this? because this is exactly how it is said. So, in Spanish it also happens to us so then we are going to look at those exceptions”

Teachers used the word “translation” very little to describe their practices. They speak more about students translating to understand when they are given opportunities to compare and contrast their languages. Teachers seem to consider comparing and contrasting as being reflective processes that allow students to internalize and understand Spanish in more depth.

#### **4.3.1.3 Translanguaging by connecting through another language**

The most common reason that teachers said they used another language in their class, usually English, was to make connections to their students, connections that maybe could not have been made if solely the target language was used. These connections were not only between students and teachers, but between the students and Spanish. Below, teachers 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 all say that they use English to “create

relationships” and “connections”, and to get “closer” to students. These first excerpts are of Teachers 2, 7 and 8, the latter who says that they use the connection created by using English to give context.

Teacher 7 “speaking English in class I noticed that I can create relationships with my students”

Teacher 8 “(English) creates relationships with them ... when I use it, I feel that if a connection is created, especially because it gives context to what we are doing, it gives context and the social part...we have fun...”

Teacher 3 “I use English a lot because I think it is better to have a good rapport with the students instead of speaking in the target language all the time because they can feel that we are very distant from them and sometimes we do not understand”

Teacher 6 referred to feeling that distance was created between them and the students when only the target language was used; however, this distance or barrier is broken down when English is used because it makes it easier for students and they are seen to be more grateful.

Teacher 6 “I use English to get close (to students) ... I think it is the closeness that you establish with them in English ... in 201 (beginner level) it is different, one speaks much more English and I think that in general they are grateful that you do that, because you do not put up that barrier of ‘here I am and here you are’” ... “Connections are important ... when sticking to the target language, it may be more difficult for students to make those connections”

Teacher 2 mentioned that using English creates a two-way closeness, not only can teachers get closer to students, but students can get closer to students.

Teacher 2 “Yes, I make a lot of jokes in English because I want to get close to my students and I even use memes and things like that in English ... it is a way to get close to them and for them to get close to me and to their language learning going from their mother tongue, or some language that may not be their mother tongue but it is a language with which they feel most comfortable... yes, I use it a lot”



Teachers 4, 3 and 8 talked about using videos, while most others claimed they use jokes or memes, although Teacher 3 said emphatically that they did not use jokes, only memes.

Teacher 3 “I was talking about closeness when we talked about using English, but jokes no, I don’t use jokes, but I have many memes”

It was understood from the conversation however that the purpose of the use of both jokes and memes was similar, to help students feel more comfortable in Spanish. Throughout these teachers’ interviews it is possible to identify strategies and practices that reflect a translanguaging pedagogical stance, that teachers believed students prior knowledge of their language could be leveraged. A list of all the practices that teachers alluded to during the interviews can be seen here:

- Translating “backwards” from Spanish to English to understand the Spanish structure (Teacher 6)
- Dissecting or talking about the language as a process (for metalinguistic awareness) (Teachers 7, 6, 2, 1)
- Juxtaposition of languages to compare and contrast them in the language other than the target language (Teachers 6, 1, 2)
- Providing dual language texts (Teacher 1, 3, 4, 7)
- Connecting through using jokes, watching videos, analyzing memes (in both languages) (Teachers 2, 3, 4, 7, 8)
- Explaining about the language and giving instructions and rules (All teachers)
- Talking about languages across languages (All teachers)
- Supporting the asking of questions and providing answers in either language (All teachers)
- Using English to explain Spanish grammar (All teachers)

#### ***4.3.2 Teachers’ debate on the use of translanguaging practices***

There were teachers who did not agree with the views on using other languages stated above or did not agree all the time. Teacher 8 said they did not explain the concept in English first because it could

cause difficulty for students who would become reliant on it instead of learning the Spanish equivalent. They thought that then students would be confused when they had to work with Spanish “complex structures” later on. There is a low estimation given to beginners and their abilities to face the complexities that might arise.

Teacher 8: “but I (don’t use English) really to explain the language because I find that this has also caused me problems and difficulties because if I am ...explaining the direct object and I explain to them first in English, if I start explaining (it in Spanish)... it becomes a fallacy because they have such complex structures later with Spanish that the direct object does not follow that order, it is not just after the verb, for example. So, they always stay with that first definition, what I gave them... that I gave them in their language, that's why I don't like it. Sometimes I do, but I don't want to do it this semester because I noticed that it causes me more difficulty with 203 (beginners)”

Teacher 2 agreed with Teacher 8’s view that students would become confused if they were exposed to This was also apparent when Teacher 2 said they would not use the song “me gustas tu” which is a popular Spanish song that has been directly translated from English to ‘I like you’, but really means “you are pleasing to me” and is not a direct translation from English to Spanish. This ‘wrong’ use of the language Teacher 2 felt would confuse students who they see as only able to focus on one language at a time. Teacher 2 says that Spanish needs to be exclusively used and insisted upon, “hammered”, into students because they have to learn the “simple” in the target language first.

This lengthy interaction below between Teacher 2, 1 and 3 is about using songs that are at a higher level than the students’ level. Teacher 1 had previously talked about making jokes that were difficult for students as an acceptable way to expose them to the language, “sometimes I make jokes that I know they (students) don't understand, but ... but that’s their problem (laughing)”. Teacher 2 however, does not agree with exposing students to ‘difficult’ language, as they claimed that many times songs were usually “too creative” when in the target language and could lead students astray. Teacher 3 agreed with

Teacher 2 as the two share the belief that students do not want or need more complex language than the level they are at. Teacher 1 on the other hand promoted their use because they say that the creativity is a ‘good thing’ for learning about the language. Teacher 3 brings the discussion to a close by talking about how they see personal connections being made.

Teacher 2: “...because it is difficult, because there are studies that say that songs really do not help the student to acquire the language... because they are very creative creations ... (laugh ... VERY creative creations) it is like the song such as "me gustas tu" ... when we use the verb “gustar” (to like) I like you then, you don't want the student to learn I like you, it is the first time they see like... many times they use songs in such a creative way that they move away from the “normal” way of using the language. So, if it is a lower level, I try not to use songs because I really have to find quite simple songs, so I don't use them all the time...”

Teacher 1 “Reggaeton is wonderful because it does not have ... today we were talking about Colombia and I put on the song Tusa ... I don’t know if you have heard it ... Tusa is like the feeling when someone breaks up with you ... you are heartbroken and in the song they say she went out with her friend to ‘kill the Tusa’... but how is the feeling killed?... because you kill the Tusa. How? By going out to dance.”

Teacher 3 “it is very...”

Teacher 3 and 2 say together “cultural”

Teacher 2 “What I was saying, is the fact that they use the language in a creative way ... it seems to me that it is good thing, I just try to tell students, look at how this person is saying (this)....”

Teacher 2 (interrupting) “yes, but for a higher level”

Teacher 1 “no, no...”

Teacher 2 “at a low level I think it (the Spanish language) has to be hammered into them (“machacarlos” is the specific Spanish verb that was used) simply because then they don't know the simple”

Teacher 3 “yes, I think I agree a little because...”

Teacher 2 “because they don't know ...”

Teacher 3 “I always thought that giving a little culture like when I teach French, for example, French in Quebec is not the same as in France, so sometimes I said well this is done in France but in Quebec it is not done and it's that simple but still, no ... I felt that for the students it was too much ... they want one, one thing for now and then when they are at a more advanced level, they can ask about other things different”

Teacher 1 “I tell them to “choose”, it is confusing, yes? ... well, choose” [choose the way they want to say things]

Teacher 2 “but... try to carry out a survey in the middle of the semester to see what students tell you ... because maybe it's your group that values (this way) a lot because it also depends on the group

Teacher 3 “yes, it does depend on the group”

Teacher 2 “It depends on if, I don't know, perhaps most of them know French and have a linguistic command that helps them understand ... but if they only speak one language and are learning Spanish for the first time ... I don't know ...”

Teacher 1 “With the songs I take short phrases... so it is not saying ‘we are going to translate this song’. But I remember that I learned a lot of English from songs ... that's why ...”

Teacher 3 “Yes, yes, it is important, it is important, but I always tell them it is something that they have... to do but outside of the class...sometimes I show them, I don't know, a trailer for a movie or a series or I make them listen to a song but this is to introduce them to the music, to the culture so they can doing more at home... but in class I don't work much with the songs because it can be...

Teacher 1 “I agree, I do this (the process of using songs and language that is more than they can understand) to explain culture and to explain (the language) that the Tusa is a feeling that must be killed, but I do not explain the grammar from the song ...”

Teacher 3 “But I think the most important thing about this activity [using other languages] is that you have to take something from your home, that is, it does not have to be Spanish, it can be something in your own language... I did something like that...[talking about an aspect of the target language] and I asked the students in their language, in their first language how it worked... [when] they are talking about something personal [in their language] I believe that this helps them understand... another language and another culture... it helps them understand that learning a language is more than translating, it is another culture, it is another way of thinking and this is very important.”

During the interviews, teachers accepted that other languages were present in their Spanish classes. However, some clarified that they were present only for specific activities, and not all the time. This would have been an interesting finding to explore more in-depth. Referring to context and situation, Teachers 7, 8 and 2 spoke of aspects that limited their use of other languages, specifically compulsory curriculum requirements and enforced limits placed by authorities on other language use. This excerpt from Teacher 2 showcased what might have been a positive translanguaging moment between students, but they said they tried to curb the practice because they felt restricted by curricular requirements and time limitations; they focused on Spanish use and also enforced it. Teacher 2 realized that students were using English in a “parallel conversation” but did not allow the practice. This could be connected to the section on students’ surreptitious translanguaging in which the whispering, very similar to the notion of a parallel conversation, carried out in the classroom is explored.

Teacher 2 “I had very good results with using almost no comparisons (with English) or anything because it makes them not pay attention, they are going to be translating if you start with English, they’ll drift off, this was the problem that I had but no, anyway ... I always concentrated on using Spanish and then, they would be the ones who would tell me ‘oh look, just like in English’... ‘oh look at this’ as if they were the ones who would have a parallel conversation among themselves sometimes, comparing with English, but I tried to not let them... to not let them that much

because, between not having many hours to teach and having to cover the curriculum for the [required] exams...”

Later on, in the interview, Teacher 2 shared their own experience learning to be a teacher of a foreign language where they were told not to incorporate other languages. It is possible that there may be a correlation between how teachers were taught and their beliefs about language teaching, translanguaging in particular. The part of Teacher 2’s excerpt that would have been worth exploring more is “they supervised me in this, and this is what I continued to do”. Did this mean that Teacher 2 may have wanted to use other languages, or not? Or, did they not explore other strategies and practices because of the supervision or because they did not wish to explore other ways?

Teacher 2 “Because in the training I had [...] in foreign language teaching there was nothing about incorporating other languages [...] then I did not (use English) ... I started not doing it... and I saw results... of course the focus was super, super communicative in the target language, so we had the structure of how to do it... so since my training was in that and they supervised me in this, and this is what I continued to do”

We can assume that this external supervision that Teacher 2 was given to evaluate if the target language was being used enough in class is based on the notion that the more exposure one has to the target language the more one will learn. Teacher 6 and Teacher 3 talk of their fears that their students would not be able to cope with too much Spanish. They both referred to it as “to drown in the language”, a drowning from the flood of the target language.

Teacher 3 “I was told this sometimes... that I had to talk more (in the target language) but what happened is... I was so scared that I would drown my students”

Teacher 6 does not say that being immersed only in the target language is not an effective way to learn but that they believe it is not the “best way” to learn a second language, especially when you are an adult.

Teacher 6 “I know again there are a lot of people who believe that you just need to drown in the language, and I did when I was... when I was learning Spanish... it was a painful process and it worked, but I don't think that's the best way to learn a second language, especially after you hit a certain age”

This insight from Teacher 6 serves as an introduction to the key finding which focusses on teachers’ perceptions of students’ uses of other languages in the Spanish class. To understand these beliefs, their basis must be studied by analyzing teacher perceptions. The following section examines teacher perceptions in terms of how they situate learners in the Spanish classroom, and their own perceptions of using other languages while teaching.

#### ***4.3.3 Key Finding 6: Teacher perception of language learning experiences***

As we went through the interview, most teachers spontaneously shared their own prior experiences, both as language learners themselves and from their preparation as language teachers. They talked about a variety of experiences. They also shared how they felt students experienced language classes, which was not always in a positive way in their view.

##### **4.3.3.1 Teacher perceptions of students’ language experiences**

Teachers perceive students as not always enjoying the Spanish language class. Teacher 8 remarked that students “...have to make this big effort and force themselves to use Spanish”, while Teacher 7 shared the observation that “there are students who just want to leave the class, running”. However, there was also an awareness of the differences between students and their responses to what happens in the language classes that depends on their level and their personalities. When asked what would happen if students were told that only Spanish could be used in the beginner class, Teacher 1 and 2 replied.

Teacher 1 “... there are some students that you notice are more afraid than others. Some make many mistakes and they give up, then there are others who don't speak, even if you ask them to,

but I think it's about the teacher too, who must make students comfortable with (language) learning, so its about how they are relating"

Teacher 2 "It depends a lot on the personality of the student, because there are students who just 'shut down' and don't want to know anything, and others who say, 'ok, this is it, so let's try'... obviously at the 201 [beginner level] if there was only Spanish the students would be very quiet and very tense, but there would be others who would try to risk more, it depends on students' personalities".... "So, there is a bit like, uh, like a balance between these types ... (some) like they get even more motivated, and then you know, there are those who are in the middle like trying to... 'figuring it out'... it's like well... I don't know...you as a teacher have to.... play with the balance between English and Spanish, you joke, and you joke in Spanish ... you make them feel comfortable with both languages".

Teacher 1 and 2 share the view that teachers have a responsibility in how students feel in their language class. In the excerpt below, Teacher 6 mentions also that teachers are accountable for students' feelings. They refer to a responsibility to "relate" to students, as Teacher 1 had mentioned, and to "collaborate" with them so they can "feel comfortable". Not only is this collaboration between teachers and students, but between students and their peers, as can be observed in Teacher 3's excerpt.

Teacher 6 "I guess I start off with trying to make sure they get the idea that they can make mistakes and get away with it because...in language learning we have so many places we can screw up all the time and I want them (my students) to kind of recognize that screwing up is part of life ... I don't really care about the grades if everybody learns everything I'm OK with straight A's across the board and everybody learning... the way I teach it all makes a difference, like this you're one of them and rather it's collaborating with them in their learning as opposed to pontificating about how much I know (as the teacher) and showing them how bright I am and how stupid they are, and I think the attitude more than anything else makes the difference"



Teacher 3: They (students) help each other a lot with the rules and with the instructions. At a more advanced level such as 301, I do not use English much and I say something and they do not understand because I do not repeat, but... I have a student or some students who if they have understood it well to repeat it in English for their classmates then they do help.

Teacher 6, in particular, has very strong feelings about how important it is to support students who might have a negative outlook at the beginner level. This Teacher also referred to the responsibility and accountability of teachers in general and believes that the student and teacher relationship should be one of equal footing. They refer to their own personal approach to teaching beginner classes. This reflection below by Teacher 1 refers to there being two visions of the Spanish language. They say that while the day-to-day use is flexible and indistinct, “fuzzy” with no “clear limit” it becomes rigid and inflexible in the classroom. The image used was of the Spanish language becoming “a concrete block that cannot change” in the classroom. When asked about this disparity by students, Teacher 1 says they try to explain by telling students that the language is “not so strict, sometimes it can, sometimes it can’t” and this leads to their own dilemma “I don't know... I don't know if I confuse them”.

Teacher 1 “Among the Spanish teachers what I see is that... there are two like visions of the language. One is how we are from so many different places, between us we understand that the language is... ‘fuzzy’ and it is like it does not have a very clear limit so, I don't know ... a Professor ... might use an article before a name which to me is super strange, but I understand what the use is... but at the same time when we go in to teach Spanish the language becomes a concrete block that cannot change so... ‘this has to go...’, ‘it has to be always like this’... and when I am in front of the room and the students ask me, I (say to myself) ‘I know that they were told that (that there are solid rules in the language), but because the use is not so strict, sometimes it can, sometimes it can’t’... I don't know... I don't know if I confuse them like this, but whenever I see they are making confused faces, I tell them, in English, exactly the same thing

happens, you know, sometimes you can, sometimes you can't, sometimes the rule is broken...  
you who speak English, understand this”

In general, teachers reported that their prior experiences had been monolingual, and grammar focussed. Their classes were described by Teachers 8 and 5 as “strict” and seen “as a burden” by some of their own teachers. Teacher 8 said that their experiences using the inductive method made classes “difficult” and “boring”. Words and phrases like “difficult”, “hard”, “brutal”, “punitive”, “painful”, “not relaxed”, “not enjoyable” found in the excerpts below of various teachers speak to a language learning experience that was not seen as particularly easy.

Teacher 5 “I remember when I had French classes... from the first level they spoke to us [only] in French and obviously one did not understand [...], the classes that I had were much stricter than now... (there was) not so much doing things in groups or games, they were... many more grammatical concepts and that's it”

Teacher 6 “there were a few... [language teachers] that sort of made class enjoyable, most of my professors did not. So... most of them had something stuck up their... and they couldn't relate to students, couldn't quite get into their skin and make their life easier but (they think) better of themselves and they see teaching as a burden that you carry with you while you're doing the things that you really like doing so I think I've managed to sort of relate with students better”

Teacher 7 “The focus was not on your production (of the language), it focussed more on if you knew how to write, read and listen... I feel that focussing on the four competences in a way inhibited me... ‘Now we will practice ‘listening’... that’s what they told me... and when I was teaching... the model was to almost to force you to teach (only the target language)... you were told what you had to teach”

Teacher 2 “In my last job we had to only use Spanish... so it was very... forced... is the word I’m looking for... not very natural, and they (the students) did not have a good experience and did not understand... anyone who spoke English was given a card...it was like punishment”

Teacher 8 and Teacher 2 also shared their first experiences as teachers being difficult. Teacher 5, 6 and 7 mention observations and evaluations of their own teachers. All three teachers explained how they had left behind the strict, inhibiting, unrelatable methods that were part of their learning, and had become more relaxed, open, and relatable. These teachers learnt how ‘not’ to teach a language.

Teacher 8 “My first experience as a Spanish teacher... was difficult, it was hard. My students corrected me” ... “it was the inductive method, and repetitive... I worked there with students and the classes bored me a lot”

The Spanish teacher is seen in a position of wielding power in some of the interview segments above, and not always in a positive way for students. There are also the insights from two of the teachers who talked about the external pressure they were put under by their institutions. Teachers 2 said “they supervised me (to be sure I did it) I kept doing it” and Teacher 7 held that “the model was to almost to force you to teach... you were told what you had to teach”. This may reflect a perpetuation of the inflexible views that have been held about language learning that there is ‘a right way’ and only one ‘right answer’.

#### **4.3.3.2 Teacher perceptions of using other languages in the Spanish classroom**

Teachers had mixed perceptions. Some thought that English use should be controlled and limited more, while others believed that it was the most constructive way to build grammar in the target language. Teachers asked themselves questions during the interviews, as if they were reflecting in the moment. In the dialog reported below, Teacher 3’s observation shows that they think that using too much English in class shows “failure” on their part. It should be noted that Teacher 3 is one of the teachers who does not have Spanish as a first language. Their idea is supported by Teacher 2 who says that a teacher needs to “have control” of themselves. However, the phrase “you don't realize that you’re using too much English because the students are learning” is representative of a dilemma that one faces when hearing similar phrases. If students are learning, then is using English ‘a failure’? Are students learning because there is English being used in the class? Are teachers saying that more learning would happen if less English was

used? Teachers may also be in a similar predicament when using languages other than the target language, and sometimes not even consciously. If they use another language in the class, students learn, but it is still labelled as something negative that needs to be reduced.

Teacher 3 says that an adequate “example” is not being set if too much English is being spoken by them and English should be “reduced”. Teacher 1’s comment offers a different perspective on this, by saying that they think of it not as English being reduced but as Spanish being “increased”. It can be presumed that if one thinks of English as needing to be “reduced” it is because it is being overdone and so a teacher is doing too much of something they should not be doing. However, if one thinks of ‘increasing’ Spanish it opens the doors to a leveraging of new opportunities and it means every new word in Spanish is a successful step forward, not a regression because English is being repressed. Teacher 1 also does not have a negative view of using the two languages, if they are needed; they say they can work together to make both “extremely clear”. This is an interaction between Teachers 1, 2 and 3 below.

Teacher 3 “I’m always wondering if I use too much English and I think... I think it is very easy to get to a point where you don't realize that you are using too much English because the students are learning, they have more and more vocabulary so you are supposed to be using less English but when one is used to it, then it's as if it's a little more difficult. I would say that sometimes I have to... I have to...”

Teacher 2 ...”to control yourself”

Teacher 3: ...”yes, control myself, so as not to use too much English. It’s ok if they use a little English in class because... to understand the exercises... or even to relate to each other they have to use a little English but if I see that there is almost no Spanish... I think that it’s because I use too much English because I am also there to give an example so if I use too much English, they will continue using too much English...”

Teacher 2 “Some things (can be said) in English yes, but then obviously it’s as Teacher 3 says, you have to control yourself, but then you get used to speaking English and you tell yourself, ‘I could say this in Spanish and they would understand me perfectly’ ... so then I notice that I am talking more in English because I am excited. I’m talking more in English (laughs) but then sometimes I say no, wait, this is Spanish class, then it’s a question of controlling myself, of finding a middle ground” ... I also try to use lessen the amount of English that I use each time ...

Teacher 1 “the way in which Teacher 3 said it is ‘English needs to be reduced’ ... I see it another way, that every time ‘I am increasing Spanish’ ... and sometimes I use both (languages) as if I need them both to be extremely clear.”

Teachers had diverse practices, from only explaining some grammar, to using English as a whole to teach Spanish. They also acknowledged that their students were using other languages. However, they had mixed feelings when asked about their perceptions. Findings show that while students seem to search for and develop diverse ways to understand and make meaning in Spanish, teachers did not show an awareness for this diversity and creativity.

An important finding, I think, is what was not found. Teachers did not talk about having much time to discuss students’ strategies with them, or time for reflecting themselves on how other languages were being used by students in their classes. By using words like “reducing” and “controlling” some teachers seemed to want to limit and contain this other language use which, if we acknowledge the variety, flexibility and dynamism of practices as noted in the student findings, is like trying to close the stable doors after the metaphorical horses have already escaped and are finding ways, on their own, to enjoy running free.

The section can be brought to a close with this excerpt from Teacher 3 who seemed to go through a translanguaging shift over the course of the interview.

Teacher 3 “This (interaction during interview) helps me... it helps me and that’s why I always like to participate in this type of discussion because now I’m thinking about how I can get a little closer to the students (after listening to what Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 said about their practices)... This semester I am going to (give surveys for feedback to students) because I have my classes ... (and there may be), I don’t know, things that they would like to change in the class and things... and I would also like to know what they do in their homes”

Teacher 3 said this after listening to practices that Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 had mentioned. They said that as a result they would like to make changes in their own classes and get more feedback from students. More than that, they would like to involve students in the process of learning in class and try to involve things they do at their homes. This finding shows a newfound desire to build a closer relationship with students, and points to a value in using this type of group discussion to allow time for reflection.

#### ***4.3.4 Conclusion***

This section of the chapter presented teacher findings and their analysis. It discussed teacher practices with other languages and determined that teachers did have some practices that could be considered translanguaging. This section explored these teacher practices that include explaining, translating, reaffirming, comparing and translating between languages. Teachers used these different ways through other languages to connect to students. However, teachers had mixed views on using other languages. There seemed to be some connection between teachers’ previous learning and training experiences. Teachers perceptions on the student language experience and their own using of other languages in class again reveals varied teacher perspectives.

## **Chapter 5 Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the findings from this study in more detail, to relate them to the pertinent literature and to make observations on their contexts, implication and/or relevance. Following the outline of the previous chapter, first there will be discussion of the students' findings, and then a discussion of those of the teachers. In each section, there will first be a focus on the practices of students and teachers that have been labelled translanguaging, and subsequently on the respective perceptions of the same by each group. In this way the research questions can be addressed.

### **5.2 Student key findings discussion**

#### **5.2.1 Introduction**

This study aimed to see if any translanguaging practices could be found in this Spanish university classroom context. To be considered translanguaging, the activities had to be both dynamic and flexible, whilst also demonstrating the use of more than one language (García & Li, 2014). Overall, analysis revealed that these students were using other languages to translanguage in the Spanish classroom. They were making use of multiple, dynamic and flexible practices, which they specifically claimed helped them make sense of the target language (García, 2009).

There were four main student findings. Students practices were categorized under four themes: translanguaging as translation, translanguaging to reaffirm focus on the Spanish language, translanguaging for explanation, and code-switching to translanguage. The selection of these themes was based on the literature and on the results from other comparative studies (García & Li, 2014). According to Dailey-O'Cain and Liebscher (2006) the first language can be used as part of different practices to support student language learning. This was evident as students spoke about their practices with their different languages.

### **5.2.2 Student translanguaging practices**

There were four types of student practices. This section of the findings begins with excerpts chosen to give insight into practices as well as to give context. The first was chosen to serve as a depiction of translanguaging that was representative of students' practices. It was taken from Lily during her one-on-one interview. As the most experienced language learner, Lily spoke confidently about making sense by using her languages. Her excerpt served as an example of what students might do and be thinking when they moved between their languages, and I found it to be representative of flexible student practices as described by Li (2018). Lily also was very accepting of the movements between her languages and spoke about it being an exclusive process that made language learning more "acceptable to *her*".

The second introductory excerpt was taken from the largest group interview. It was taken from an interaction between Ava, Daniella, Sophia and Olivia. Talk about "whispering" had emerged spontaneously as the students were speaking, and it came up constantly during their interview. These "whispers" were seen to happen in class during and between activities, aligning with Kibler's (2010) work on the importance of whispered speech, for talking about talking, and talking about the task. Ava and Olivia said that students whispered while using English "to confirm understanding". Students' comments alluded to translanguaging practices during the whispering but commented that it occurred surreptitiously behind the backs of the teachers in classes, especially where they felt mixing languages was not approved of by teachers and/or banned (Lin & Martin, 2005). As Daniella said, "some Profs don't want you to use English at all". It would be interesting to explore what goes on during these whispers, that students claimed happened often during class for them to confirm understanding, and if it aligns with Swain and Lapkin's (2000) work in which they found that translanguaging in these moments helped to move a task along.

#### **5.2.2.1 Four types of student practices**

The first type of student practice found was that students translated as they translanguaged. Translation can be related to translanguaging as they are both social practices that "stress the permeability



of boundaries” (Creese et al. 2016, p. 4-5). It can also serve by presenting a chance for all students to understand what is being said, regardless of whether they have understood the version in the target language or not. It was notable that many of the students differentiated between their personalized ways of translating between languages, and from a process they labelled “direct translating”. In effect, both the students and the teachers insisted on identifying and separating the two processes of translating, one “direct” and the other “indirect”. It seemed that they saw attempts to move directly from one language to another as an unhelpful or confusing process. Emily even went as far as to say that it could be a “detrimental”.

Students referred to an “indirect” process of translanguaging having various nuances. For example, Amelia spoke of the importance of “translation within a context” to “gain a deeper understanding”, and Jonathan said that “translation must be used ‘with clarification’ to understand the nuances”. I saw this as his way to insist that language learning be given context so it could be better understood. Other similar comments revealed that students were negotiating meaning flexibly through all their languages while they developed deeper metalinguistic knowledge (García, et al. 2017). Lily claimed that “indirect translation” gave her the opportunity to hear the message again and to “rearrange it in (her) head”, while Natalia discussed “using direct translation and rearrang(ing) it”. There is support for this from Cummins’s (2007) notion that knowledge and abilities from one language can be potentially available for the development of another through metalinguistic development. Amelia did not speak about translating words or sentences but about “translation between something that you don't yet understand and something that you've already mastered”. Translations are acts “of communication in which an interaction in one code is re-produced in another code” (Creese et al. 2018, p. 842). When students determine what the “code” is, through their own analysis, they can be said to be translanguaging. Furthermore, translation allows students to differentiate and adapt through translanguaging (García & Li, 2014). These students were translating so the language made sense to them. Embedded in this practice is the belief that learning is not a product, but a process.

The second type of translanguaging practice identified reaffirmed students' focus on Spanish, or "confirmed" their learning. Jonathan spoke about "think(ing) back into Spanish" and Olivia mentioned that there was "a lot of crossover" between languages and words needed to be "broken down... to make corrections". Comparing and contrasting "indirectly" was common practice according to Daniella. Most notably, Jonathan spoke of his "thinking back" into the target language as being different from practices that go "directly into Spanish". Cummins (2007) advocated the use of what he called bilingual strategies for understanding the target language. The excerpts below reveal the use of bilingual strategies for comparison, including for the comparison of cognate terms across languages, and the use of different languages to take notes. Daniella speaks of indirectly comparing and contrasting her languages, her word "indirectly" pointing to a more complex translanguaging process. This is in line with the research by Adamson and Coulson (2015) on university undergraduate perception on the use of translanguaging in a Japanese/English setting that focussed on comparing and contrasting resources. Their findings showed that most students believed translanguaging to be effective for the clarification of tasks, which is also the consensus of the students in this study.

The third translanguaging practice was noted when students spoke of providing themselves with explanations. Jonathan said that "...if... grammar was explained then [students] could go from one verb to another, if the theory behind it was explained...then it is easy to apply it to the rest of your learning". He approved of English being used to explain grammar and believed it would give students capacities that could then be applied in other similar contexts, easily. Several other students also spoke of taking notes about grammar in their various languages. Interestingly enough, this was also an idea upheld by the teachers and was the most common practice they mentioned using in their Spanish classes when asked about other languages.

The topic of multimodality (Li, 2018a) emerged as students spoke of being visual with their languages, of using cards, of making pictures in their heads with their languages, as Olivia said, to "bridge that connection". Lily referred to the mental notes she made in pictures to understand her

languages. She said she makes “mental pictures”, “visuals” and she put her languages “in pictures” as she learns Spanish. This exchange during her interview was chosen because it also reflected diverse ways that she demonstrated her translanguaging instinct (Li, 2011a). She said she feels that language learning is “embedded” in her now, so she is very comfortable moving between her languages and finding different ways to make sense, like through her “mental pictures”. Amelia shared a page of her notebook to demonstrate how using all three of her languages helped her understand better (Li, 2011). A practice she said “just kind of came” to her, again identifying it as something unique she developed to help her own learning. These processes were seen to be highly personalised by each student; it is their own path that students follow to make meaning when they translanguaging (García & Li, 2014).

The final type of practice was code switching to translanguage and again students spoke about the personal ways they used to construct their knowledge. Daniella referred to using “a mix of Spanglish” for example, not just of using Spanglish. Her excerpt, “you come across a word or phrase that you're not sure how to say so then you switch back to English...” refers to intra-sentential switching posited by García and Flores (2013) that provides her with an opportunity for language learning. Daniella goes on to say that she “doesn't think it's a bad thing for” her, and she asks, “if not, how am I going to learn?”. Literature tells us that switching languages is a valuable tool in the translanguaging classroom where languaging practices are always being conceptualized and reconceptualized in a perpetual process of meaning-making. Amelia talked about the process of switching as something natural because she felt her brain recognized the “proximity of both languages”, her process became more of a translanguaging one when phrases “didn't line up” and she had to find ways to resolve this complication, while acknowledging that her process was changing all the time. Switching codes can have different functions depending on if it is being done by students or by teachers (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). Teachers themselves did not use the words “switching codes” but students did observe them switching and doing so to support students. Natalia talked about a favourite Spanish teacher of hers who “when it came to her explaining why things are the way they were...(she) would switch between Spanish and English for [the students'] sakes”.

Mazak and Herbas-Donoso (2015) posited however that translanguaging was not limited to what is traditionally branded as ‘code-switching’, but rather it sought to include any practices that drew on an individual’s linguistic and semiotic repertoires. Rather than being a shortfall, the first language could serve to help students get back to the target language. The way students switch is often an individual practice that students use to help themselves, and the student participants referred to a number of ways that they switched their codes, either in writing explanations, speaking or talking about what they were learning. This perhaps is also part of a process that Behrend et al. (1992) referred to as self-scaffolding, since the speakers are providing the scaffold for themselves. Amelia’s full comment said, “...I feel like my own brain also recognizes the proximity of both languages so it's just like ‘let's just switch to that’ ... ..(but) some phrases just don’t line up... it changes all the time”. Code switching is not only a moving between languages but a way to meet challenges when “phrases just don’t line up” as Amelia says. While it has been considered only as a way of going from one language to another, García and Li (2018) claimed that this was a simplified view, it is in the *when*, *how* and *why* that students code-switch that makes it part of a translanguaging process.

### ***5.2.3 Teachers’ practices observed by students***

The second key finding was that students observed teachers also moving between languages with what can be labelled translanguaging practices. Natalia and Daniella spoke about their teachers switching between languages and explaining concepts “about the language” which aligns with García and Li’ claim (2014). Ava and Jonathan said switching by teachers could be “really helpful”. According to Natalia, a teacher of hers would speak in Spanish but explain about Spanish in English, which resulted in one having to “think backwards”, a more complex process that can be labelled translanguaging. Amelia thought context was important to “get the nuances” and make the “direct connections” between the words in the two languages. It is important to note that for teachers and students there was an order to the switching for it be effective. It had to go from the target language first, Spanish, then back into English, and only then was one able to go back to Spanish to gain a deeper understanding. This thesis found that

this was a common belief held by both teachers and students. Not only, Natalia said that of all their teachers, the only one she hadn't ever liked was "traditional" as he spoke in English first, and then translated into Spanish, which "didn't work for her" and was "not effective".

#### ***5.2.4 Student perceptions of the use of other languages***

Data analysis revealed that students were accepting of their translanguaging practices that they used between and beyond their languages. For example, Ava saw them as "just natural" and as a way to connect with previous knowledge. Lily said that one doesn't have anything else but "what you know" so it was logical that a student would use their first language to get to the one they were learning. These two excerpts just mentioned, support Williams' (2012) concept of 'natural translanguaging'. Daniella spoke to the individuality of their practices "you have to come up with your own strategies" so the language "just flows out naturally". Daniella's excerpt aligns with Rivera and Mazak's (2017) findings from a Puerto Rican university where students agreed that translanguaging was appropriate to facilitate classroom discussion and a 'normal' and socially acceptable practice for bilinguals. Lily acknowledged that learning languages was a "personal connection", because "they (languages) are in our head". Students recognized how these flexible practices necessarily needed to reflect the distinctiveness of the processes of their users as they all learn differently (García & Li, 2014).

Students' disclosed how they had found language class distressing; how nervous they got (Ava), the fear they felt (Lily), their worries about making mistakes (Daniella). Natalia said she had felt intimidated and overwhelmed, and Olivia said she felt uncomfortable, and like she would "reach a block". One could assume that this would have an impact on what practices students feel comfortable using, but this would need further study. The response to these feelings was different for students however, depending on their level of learning and/or their previous language experiences. Students in higher level classes acknowledged their disconcerting feelings but expressed themselves more willing than beginners to confront these feelings to learn.

Under this same third key finding, there was the notion put forward of translanguaging as complementation (Andersson, et al. 2013). Amelia said that the “main language should be used as a supplementation, not the primary thing (in language learning) because it helps you to connect.”. Natalia “used both languages” and Amelia acknowledged that she was “able to rely on a different language”. Olivia said it was a practice for her to “borrow amongst (her) languages”, and that language learning was a “whole big package” while Ava admitted to English being “shuffled in” her language class. The idea of personalized practices was again reinforced by Lily who felt that “you cannot just say one way for everybody, that's just not how it works”. Daniella even saw the use of English as leading to “maybe then...(using) more Spanish”. Mazak and Herbas-Donoso (2015) claimed that translanguaging can be transformational as it continually conceptualizes and reconceptualizes languaging practices in a perpetual process of meaning-making. Daniella’s contribution that using English may mean that as a result you use more Spanish connects to the notion of this transformation. It also shows how it can determine how people go *beyond* their languages, and how this can be a crucial part of knowledge construction (Jewitt, 2008). Students who had already learned other language(s) previously spoke about it giving them a definite advantage. Translanguaging, and using one’s different languages resources together, can help students move away from a deficit perspective (Cummins, 2014).

Some students felt they had to hide translanguaging practices (Lin & Martin, 2005), for example, by “whispering”, as was mentioned in a previous section. This revealed the dilemma between a monoglossic ideology and the use of multiple languages that students alluded to in Daniella’s excerpt, “I guess I do tend to sometimes speak in English *probably* more than I should *maybe* during Spanish”. However, at another moment in the interview she had also said that she switched back to English, and that she didn't think it's was “bad thing” for her as if not, how was she “going to learn?”. Olivia expressed the thought that if one is using English to fill in the gaps in the target language “*maybe* there’s a deficit there”, because, as Daniella interrupted to say, “the purpose... is to use Spanish”. However, Olivia later said that having different languages allowed her to make connections and moving between her languages helped her “figure things out”. Daniella again also contradicted her words by saying one should be able to “use

another language if that helps”. All the students showed signs that they were translanguaging but not all had not accepted their practices. Three students in particular talked about their full acceptance of their translanguaging practices; Emily, whose parents speak Spanish and who said that her two languages “are part of (her)” and she “feels the need to use them both”, Lily who said that when she “makes sense”, she “uses her other languages” and Amelia who felt she was a “better learner now because of the similarities between [her languages]”.

A number of students started the interview by upholding the underlying belief that a successful language class should only use the target language, which could be a sign that the ‘monolingual principle’ (Howatt, 1984) perseveres. Sophia talked about how her languages become “jumbled” sometimes when she is in her Spanish class. She did not speak of the jumble as if it were a positive occurrence but more as if she felt it made her incompetent and even unable to speak her first language. Her view is upheld by Weinrich’s (1974) early notion that competent bilinguals should have the capacity to keep their languages separate from each other. Another view also being upheld is that of Cummins (2014), who had discussed how bilingual education maintained the idea that a bilingual student’s two languages should be kept rigidly separate. Sophia went on to say that sometimes she feels “like (she) can’t even speak English ‘very properly’... they [the teachers] start to explain it to you in English and then it turns off the (Spanish) language I find”. Her perception may be an indication that she perhaps maintains the notion that one language can interfere with another (Jarvis, 2008), a notion which claims that it is unacceptable for students to use another language in class.

In a case study, Canagarajah (2011) explored how one graduate student used translanguaging to make meaning by employing Arabic, English, French and symbols in her academic writing. His aim was to investigate multilinguals’ use of their language resources and the deep connections that this use had on their identity. While the notion of identity was not explored in this present study, student participants did speak of deep connections and making these connections between and beyond their languages. Olivia talked about the space “between the connections where there are no connections”. This space can maybe

be defined as her own space, a new ‘third space’ (Homi Bhabha, 2004) that she constructs. Olivia is clearly experiencing language in new ways and connecting to them as she acknowledges her changing linguistic identity. I posit that Olivia could be creating her own distinctive translanguaging space as defined by Li (2011a).

### **5.3 Teacher key findings discussion**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

There were two main teacher findings<sup>1</sup>. The first explored the ways in which the teacher participants, with their different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, were potentially implementing flexible translanguaging pedagogy (García & Li, 2014) in their Spanish classrooms. To make a claim that translanguaging pedagogy was being used, the teacher(s) would have to have included planned translanguaging activities in which they have interacted with students (Lewis et al., 2012b). This pedagogy would have to reflect deepened explanations of complex topics in the class or have led to profound discussions of language of social issues (García & Li, 2014). It would also demonstrate a differentiation of instruction and a flexible building on language practices (García et al., 2017; Li, 2017). The combination of the two, or more, languages is what would keep tasks moving forward (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Most importantly there would be a “leveraging” of students’ linguistic repertoires and or language practices as a valuable resource, by involving them in class(es) with the goal that this leveraging would lead to an improved situation of language learning (García, 2017b). This follows García et al.’s (2017) conclusion that, for teachers, translanguaging can be a pedagogical practice that can leverage the fluid languaging of learners in ways that deepen their engagement and comprehension of complex content or concepts.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a reminder that teachers are referred to by their numbers and the singular pronoun “they/them” is used to protect their anonymity throughout the discussion and this thesis.



This study, like that of Lewis et al, (2012) sought to show how teachers' practices constituted a translanguaging pedagogy specific to the higher education context. Translanguaging pedagogy can be considered "more as an attitude, or stance, that sees the value of using all of students' linguistic resources and takes steps to use and develop these resources" whether deliberately or not (Mazak & Carroll, 2016, p.72). The teacher's reported what they did and what they thought about it, but the lack of classroom observation here was a drawback as, according to Basturkmen (2012), there is a complex relationship between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices, and the two do not always match.

### ***5.3.2 Teacher translanguaging practices***

Explaining and reaffirming were the first translanguaging practices of teachers found. Teacher 5 said they used English mainly to explain grammar so students could "really" understand. Teacher 6 had strong translanguaging views as they declared that they taught "Spanish in English" to their beginner classes to make Spanish "clearer". They clarified, like the students did, that they were not duplicating Spanish but relating and discussing it (Celic & Seltzer, 2011). Teacher 8 even joked about the language structure with students, to create a relaxed atmosphere, and as a way to reaffirm learning. All teachers claimed to have explained and answered questions in English to help students understand. By explaining in English so students "really" understand Teacher 5 seems to be showing a translanguaging stance, that they are open to the use of other languages and think it will be useful for students, and moreover, that students will be able to contribute to the learning process with their valued language resources (García et al., 2017).

The second topic was translanguaging by comparing, contrasting and translating. Teacher 1 explained how they juxtaposed languages and encouraged students to use their languages to knock down the "barrier to understanding". This juxtaposition of languages (Mazak & Herbas-Donoso, 2015) demonstrates a clear instance of translanguaging, and Teacher 1 provided an example of a translanguaging pedagogy stance and design (García et al., 2017). Teacher 1 invites their students to use both their languages to understand how Spanish works by explicitly comparing and exploring similar characteristics (García & Li, 2014). They recognize ways that languages sometimes don't make sense,

and translanguaging can help them make sense. By claiming to “teach Spanish in English”, Teacher 6 was demonstrating a multilingual awareness that is a feature of translanguaging. Teacher 6 and Teacher 1 go beyond monolingual views to model and engage in translanguaging shifts by directly teaching students about linguistic variation (Henderson & Ingram, 2018; García, 2017a). Teacher 2 has students compare languages because they see it as complicated to talk about the target language, in the target language, while Teacher 7 confirmed that students were using their first language to understand what they were learning in the second language. Teacher 6 referred to how students make “structural links” across their languages and how they see them “translating backwards”. There is a sense of Li and García’s (2014) dynamic process, that is supported by the words of Teacher 6 as he describes how he sees students “flip”, “create”, “internalizing” and then the notion of “breaking” the rules to learn them.

The third topic reflected how another language, mainly English, was used to connect to students in the Spanish classroom. Teacher 2, 3, 6 and 7 all spoke of the importance of making these connections to build a relationship with their students (García & Li, 2014). They also gave details on how they related Spanish concepts, by using English for students. They clarified that what they did was not a duplication of Spanish however, but more a relating and a discussion through English as noted by Celic and Seltzer (2011). This again reflects a translanguaging design, as proposed by García et al., (2017), and a deliberate and simultaneous merging of students’ repertoires of practice (García & Li, 2014). I had wanted to explore how they built connections through other languages to Spanish, however, they replied the question by focussing on connections between people, and not between languages. They spoke about how important these connections were to “get close to students” (Teacher 6), to build a “good rapport” (Teacher 3) and to “create relationships” (Teacher 8). Connections could be created because teachers said that with English, context was given to the activity (Mazark & Carroll, 2016). Teacher 3 and 6 also referred to a hierarchical barrier that placed students on a different level from their instructors when only the target language was used (García, 2009). Translanguaging can shift focus onto what Li (2018) has called a ‘linguistics of participation,’ which occurs when teachers and students work together in the co-construction of knowledge through translanguaging classroom discourse. Teachers’ comments show they

are putting their students at the ‘heart’ of interactions, a key component of translanguaging pedagogy according to Creese and Blackledge (2010).

In this study, most teachers claimed that they saw students’ diverse linguistic practices as valuable resources that could be leveraged, demonstrating a translanguaging design which has the intention to integrate students’ language practices and ways of meaning-making (García et al., 2017). While teachers to some extent or another spoke about practices which demonstrated a translanguaging stance, they were not always in agreement about using other languages than the target language. In one of the teacher groups, a debate ensued. Teacher 8 said they did not use English because they had observed it had caused difficulties for students, while Teacher 2 said that students need to be “hammered” with simple Spanish first so they could learn it well, as if not, they could become confused because they would have to focus on more than one language at a time, which aligned with García (2019). A lengthy interaction ensued between three of the teachers about using songs that have more advanced language than the students’ level. It was a deliberation around Krashen’s (1981) comprehensibility input hypothesis, that students should only be introduced to language that is one level up from where they are at a time. Teacher 2 expressed reservations about using songs that were too creative in the target language as they could “lead students astray”. Teacher 2 did not agree with exposing students to “difficult” language. Teacher 1, on the other hand, disagreed with this view as they said that students needed to know how to choose what they did with their languages and that creativity was a “good” thing to learn about the language (Li, 2018a). The conclusion of this debate was that each teacher told the other they would carry out surveys in class to involve students in the process and to know what they thought on the topic. It was clear that teacher participants accepted that other languages were being used creatively in their classes, whether they agreed to the how or why, or not. Several clarified however that other language use depended on context, they were present only for specific activities, and not all the time. This clarification is in keeping with the findings of Mazak and Herbas-Donoso (2014) in their study of translanguaging at university level that the practice of translanguaging changed in context. This would have been an interesting finding to explore more in-depth.

Even though they were not asked directly, most teachers found the way to talk about their own experiences learning languages. For example, Teacher 2 shared that they were told not to incorporate other languages when they did their master's degree in foreign language teaching and they were externally supervised during their practicum. The supervision evaluated if the target language was being used enough in class, based on the notion that the more exposure one has to the target language the more one will learn (Ellis, 1986; Krashen, 1981). This is a clear reference again to Krashen's popular comprehensible input hypothesis, which argues for exposing learners to as much appropriate input in the target language as possible. Not all teachers agreed with this view however, for example, Teacher 6 expressed their disagreement with the hypothesis that argues for exposing learners to a 'flood' of comprehensible target-language input to ensure mastery and they say that they do not think it is the best way for adults to learn a language. The segment of Teacher 2's excerpt about external supervision of their work would have been worth exploring more. This teacher said that "they supervised me in this (only using the target language), and (so) this is what I continued to do". Did this mean that Teacher 2 may have wanted to use other languages, or not? Did Teacher 2 not explore other strategies and practices because of the supervision, or because they did not wish to explore other ways? It is possible that there may be a correlation between how teachers were taught, and their beliefs about language teaching, translanguaging in particular. This is in line with Kubanyiova's (2014) perspective that teachers' practices are closely related to their belief in how teaching should be carried out and to the teaching methods they have internalized throughout their careers.

### ***5.3.3 Teacher perceptions of the use of other languages***

The second teacher key finding revealed teachers' perceptions of their own and students' language learning experiences. Overall, teachers reported that their own prior experiences as learners and pre-service teachers had been monolingual, grammar-focussed, strict and punitive. Teacher 7 went on to acknowledge that students did not always want to be in the Spanish class and said that they could see that some students just wanted to run out of the class to escape. However, they also recognised that responses

depended on the level of the learners and their personalities. This is in keeping with the student findings also. All the teachers spoke about the responsibility of teachers to help students connect in the Spanish class, in particular Teacher 6. Teacher 1 however spoke of having difficulties with giving answers about Spanish to students. This teacher claimed that they observed two visions of Spanish, the one that is used daily that is much more flexible or “fuzzy”, with “no clear limit” and then the Spanish that was enforced in the classroom which was like “a concrete block that cannot change”. When students came to ask about Spanish and its nuances, they spoke about how difficult it was sometimes to align these two visions for students.

As for their own use of different languages, there were teachers who embraced the process but there were also teachers, like Teacher 3, who said that they felt that using too much English in the classroom was a “failure” on their part. Teacher 3 said they did not think they always set a good “example” and they needed to further “reduce” their use of English. This feeling was supported by Teacher 2 who said that one needed to “control oneself” in the classroom and not use too much English. This was a dilemma for teachers though, because while they were not supposed to be using English, even when they did, students still learned. According to Lortie (1975), teachers’ own past experiences as students could influence their present teaching approach. This may reflect a perpetuation of the inflexible views that have been held about language learning that there is ‘a right way’ and only one ‘right answer’. If so, this would not allow teachers to explore translanguaging pedagogy which, as a dynamic and flexible process, implies diverse and personal ways to wield a language. It requires an uninhibited space for both teachers and students (Li, 2018a).

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

The views that have been held about language learning that there is ‘a right way’ and only one ‘right answer’ need to be reconsidered if translanguaging is to be explored in classrooms. A review of the literature revealed that some teachers uphold the monolingual view that students should not use their first language in the classroom because they will get off-task, or their behavior may become disruptive to

learning (García & Li, 2014). The aim of this study was not to discredit in anyway the monolingual view on language learning, but to explore another way to foster learning in the language classroom. For example, there could be translanguaging moments during a monolingual class. Li (2018) contemplated a natural drive that people have to combine all available cognitive, semiotic, sensory, and modal resources in language learning and language. Teachers could encourage this natural drive behind translanguaging strategies, or at least they could present them to students and allow them to chose which to use during the Spanish class.

Translanguaging has the possibility of giving students more options for language learning and so offers another way to carry out individual language processes in a world that is ever more diverse. García and Li (2014) suggested that leveraging translanguaging means encouraging the use of language resources in more innovative ways. Translanguaging reflects the complexity of learners' linguistic repertoires, and multiple codes and modes of expression (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; New London Group, 2000). Perhaps my reservation with the monolingual view is that it does not allow flexibility for students who may be having difficulties or may have other needs or seem to easily acknowledge diversity in learning methods. In higher education contexts which are multilingual and multicultural, translanguaging can include the use of many meaning-making resources to negotiate understanding (Mazak & Carroll, 2016). Teachers can deliberately plan in a variety of ways and with a variety of projected outcomes. Previous research is clear that, especially at beginner levels, translanguaging is evident in bilingual and multilingual classes, however it may be difficult for teachers who have been immersed in monoglossic language ideologies, to accept translanguaging (García & Lin, 2016).

The teachers in this study did not mention involving students in their learning process, for example, through surveys and/or discussions, but they were not questioned directly about it either. This is an empowering opportunity at this level however, where students are adults. It can empower students because they can feel that their needs and interests have been included in planning for learning sessions, and it can also empower teachers because they have feedback from students that validates what they do in

class. The literature on translanguaging points to the notion of sharing perceptions while co-constructing learning paths and claim it can lead towards the development of knowledge that can support deeper, transformative student learning (Conteh, 2018). Even though research has shown that while participants, both teachers & students, profess to believe that moving between languages in a way that can be labelled translanguaging is a natural tool, they still hesitate to accept it, or to teach it intentionally in the classroom (Anderson, 2017). Li (2018) posited that translanguaging has the potential to highlight the gaps that are found between the meanings in language learning as they appear, and to empower students to find ways to bridge these gaps. Maybe second language teachers and learners need to focus more on these gaps, and on what happens there.

## **Chapter 6 Conclusions**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This next chapter is divided into three sections. It starts with a discussion of the major implications of this study and considers possible areas of future research. This is followed by discussion of the study's limitations. Finally, the thesis will be concluded. The main objective of this study was to analyze translanguaging practices and perceptions of teachers and students at the tertiary level. A whole picture could then be painted of the two viewpoints in the classroom, as teachers and students have an impact on each other.

### **6.2 Limitations**

In principle, collecting data on the two groups of teachers and students was a constructive idea. However, focussing on only one group, only teachers for example, would have allowed for more in-depth study and follow-up to develop data. The study could have narrowed down the areas of research. On the other hand, perhaps if there had been more connection between the two groups, specifically, if the teachers had identified their students and vice versa it might have allowed perceptions of the other to be substantiated. It is difficult to assess the impact of translanguaging on student success more than to say that they feel more comfortable when they use their languages in different ways and by translanguaging they perceive they learn more effectively.

Another fundamental limitation is that this study was specific to the context of this Spanish programme, at this specific university, and to these participants with their particular backgrounds. It cannot be considered representative of all university students or teachers of Spanish. Recruiting students and teachers from other universities could have given a richer picture of this situation. It might also have led to successful recruitment of more participants to overcome the limitation of the low number of participants.

Perhaps the greatest drawback to this study was that while the theme was translanguaging, the concept of translanguaging was not explained explicitly to students. Time constraints determined various factors of this study, as there were extenuating circumstances, however it is possible that if the term



translanguaging had been introduced in a previous session, more opinions about it as a process could have been explored, though it might have been more difficult to identify the process because students might have been watching themselves. There was a fear that by naming the process it would inhibit students from mentioning activities they felt were not translanguaging or they might reject the notion from the outset. By only asking about ways other languages were used, meant that data had to be further sifted to determine which activities actually revealed or demonstrated translanguaging.

Class observation could have been carried out as well to provide a more objective perspective to complement what interviewees reported. Many of the studies on translanguaging have been longitudinal case studies that have used a variety of data collection methods. By going into the classrooms, it would have been possible to observe these practices in action and ask students their perceptions on specific practices with concrete examples. Self-reported data have their own limits because one can never be sure if participants do what they say they do; however, it often reveals participants' motivations which lay the foundation for future research.

### **6.3 Implications**

A review of the literature revealed that translanguaging has yet to be fully researched in the higher education language classroom context. There is a dearth of the analysis of strengths and challenges of adopting the translanguaging approach in detailed case studies of higher education, which is necessary to shape a possible future translanguaging research agenda. This study provides a clear argument for the authorization, or at least the value of introducing translanguaging to students and teachers in higher education so they can choose if they want to leverage practices of translanguaging or not.

Translanguaging does not have to do away with traditional monolingual methods, but it has been shown to have the potential to work alongside them and make language learning more effective. Translanguaging does not have to be adopted in the classroom but it can be explored and presented to students as another option for their learning; students can translanguage even if their teachers do not. Findings from this study demonstrate that translanguaging can make language learners feel more empowered so their experience of language learning is a more positive one. Translanguaging pedagogy

can mean more work for teachers, and this is a great deterrent if teachers are not supported by policy makers or administrators.

#### **6.4 Future directions**

This study shows that traditional language ideologies persevere both for students and for teachers. Changes in the outside postmodern world only seem to be gently reflected inside the higher education language classroom, in this case. Administrators and teachers have a responsibility to ensure they are meeting the needs of their current students, and research is pointing to the possibility that translanguaging can transform classroom discourses for today's diverse student bodies. In 2011, Canagarajah suggested the development of dialogical pedagogy to explore and learn from students' translanguaging practices. He proposed that pedagogy could include student and teacher feedback and by sharing and co-construction, develop students' proficiency. Yet, almost ten years there have not been significant steps taken in this direction.

Future studies might consider an experimental setting in which one class is explicitly exposed to translanguaging and a pre- and post-test is taken to compare it to another class with no prescribed translanguaging to have a measure to demonstrate if translanguaging can be reflected positively in results. This should be done as part of a mixed methods study however because the qualitative analysis of student involvement in translanguaging is still very necessary. This study did not address the complete range of possibilities for translanguaging. In future studies a range of activities could be shown to students and completed by them. In future studies, ethnographic field notes, accompanied by audio and video recordings, could give more insight on students' language use during interactions in the classroom.

Whatever methods are selected, how students feel should not be undervalued. Studies show that students want to be more involved in their learning, so it would be worth while for teachers to survey their classes regularly to determine students' progress and needs. This study has not explored how translanguaging relates to student's sense of identity (Li, 2018a). There is great utility in exploring this topic more, as universities have so many international students who are likely to speak a different language and to be forging a new identity. Ultimately, language should not be separated from identity.

Due to the difficulty in measuring its success, future research can work to further validate translanguaging pedagogy. However, translanguaging needs to be presented carefully as it can be disconcerting for students who may receive the message that translanguaging practices favor “doing whatever, whenever, you want with the language”. It needs to be carefully defined in context before it is presented as an option or authorized. Implementing it or even offering it requires tact and the right promotion, so it is not seen as just “the lazy way”. Most importantly perhaps for its adoption, it must not be seen as replacing traditional methods of education in the target language but as a way to complement them.

## **6.5 Final conclusions**

This study focussed on translanguaging practices of teachers and students in a Spanish university setting. A qualitative methodology approach was adopted to examine themes that emerged from discussion on using languages other than Spanish in the classroom. Data were presented from the following sources: interviews, both individual and in group, and also questionnaires for students. It can be argued that students were employing translanguaging practices in classes, and teachers were leveraging students’ dynamic, bilingual and multilingual resource, even though they did not label them as translanguaging. The findings showed that students used other languages than Spanish and their practices held an important role in their language development.

The data revealed a considerable degree of fluidity in participants’ language practice, as well as shifts in perceptions and practices that transformed according to context. The student participants showed themselves to be highly fluid in their movement between languages. Both teachers and students could enjoy the freedom that comes with switching among their codes and constructing language freely, driven by their idiolects. One cannot focus on either the teacher or the student without acknowledging their agency. Translanguaging allows all students and teachers to use the features of their linguistic repertoire they choose. It has the potential to transform how teachers and learners perceive the ways they have of making-meaning and it can enable them to share in a co-construction of knowledge (García & Lin, 2016).

In this way, as co-constructors they can more willingly express complex thoughts and use all that is available to them in their single languages box. Translanguaging allows us to feel brave enough to explore our languages, use them in a way that works for us, and so no longer be bound by them.

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Appendix A: Recruitment posters



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In the space between languages,  
translanguaging in the university  
Spanish classroom.

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**How do you use your languages?**

**Would you like to share your experiences as a language learner?**

If you are learning Spanish and it is not the language you use most frequently at home, I would like to explore your language practices and strategies with you in a group with 2 or 3 other people. We will also discuss dual language activities that research says benefits learning in the Spanish class. At the end of the study I would be happy to send you a summary of the results if you wish.

The session will take 50 minutes. It will be made up of 3 parts that will involve 1) filling out a questionnaire, 2) participating in a semi-structured interview (an open discussion in an interview group), and 3) discussing 2-3 activities that make use of different languages simultaneously.

**\*Your course instructor will not know whether you agreed to participate or not and the choice to participate, or not, will have no impact on your course grades.**

Please contact me via email (see below) if you wish to participate so I can send you meeting place in Craigie Hall. My email is: [abigail.williams@ucalgary.ca](mailto:abigail.williams@ucalgary.ca)

**Thanks in advance for considering this opportunity! ¡Muchas gracias!**

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You can sign up (alone or with a group of 2-3 friends also) in any of these times that works for you:

Friday Feb 14	10:00, 11:30, 1:30
Reading Week	anytime 8:00-3:00 that works for you
Monday Feb 24	10:10, 12:00, 2:00, 3:00
Tuesday Feb 25	anytime 8:00-3:00 that works for you
Wednesday Feb 26	10:00, 12:00, 2:00
Thursday Feb 27	9:00, 10:30, 12:00, 1:30, 3:00

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this study: REB19-0675





In the space between languages, translanguaging  
in the university Spanish classroom.

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**Are you a Spanish teacher at the University here?**

**How do you use your languages?**

**Would you like to share your experiences as a language  
teacher?**

If you are teaching Spanish, I would like to explore your language practices/strategies with you in a group of up to 2 or 3 other teachers. We will talk about the possible use your students make of other languages in your class and I will ask you to share about any other languages you may use in your Spanish class, (what, why and when).

The session will take up to 45 minutes and the activity will involve participating in a semi-structured interview (an open discussion in an interview group), and discussing use of different languages.

Please contact me via email (see below) if you wish to participate so I can send you potential times available and the location of the meeting in Craigie Hall. My email is:

[abigail.williams@ucalgary.ca](mailto:abigail.williams@ucalgary.ca)

**Thanks in advance for considering this opportunity! ¡Muchas gracias!**

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this study: REB19-0675





**Appendix B: Language background questionnaire for students**

Thank you for agreeing to participate! There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to any of these questions. Please read each item carefully before responding. The information we get from you is vital to the success of this project. **Thank you!**

1. Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender (please circle): male / female / other \_\_\_\_\_      3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What year are you in at university? \_\_\_\_\_ And what language courses do you take? Or have you taken?  
Now: \_\_\_\_\_ Previously: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is/are your nationality/ies and or citizenship/s? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you always lived in Canada? (If not, how old were you when you arrived and where did you come from?)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Which languages do you know? Please list in chronological order and write what level (B- basic, I- intermediate, A- advanced) you are. If you have more, add then in the space here beside.  
First language(s) L1 \_\_\_\_\_  
L2 \_\_\_\_\_  
L3 \_\_\_\_\_  
L4 \_\_\_\_\_
9. What language do you prefer to use/do you feel most comfortable using?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How long (in years) have you been studying Spanish? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What do you understand by "first language"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What language do you speak most frequently during the day/at home? \_\_\_\_\_
13. What is the first language you learned to speak? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What language do you find more 'beautiful', Spanish or English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. How would you describe your Spanish performance compared to the rest of your class? Please circle the one you believe to be true: Far below average/ Below average/ Average / Above average / Far above average
16. Would you describe yourself in your Spanish class as a: Beginner / Low intermediate / Intermediate / High Intermediate / Advanced (Please circle the one you believe to be true)
17. Do you think that English should be used more in the Spanish classroom? Circle yes / no. Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. If you answered yes, do you think it will be more helpful in teaching any of these areas? You may mark more than one item.

Reading	Writing	Listening	Vocabulary	Speaking	Grammar
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19. Please respond to these statements below with (1- Strongly disagree/ 2- Disagree / 3- Undecided/ 4- Agree / 5- Strongly agree). You can mark the corresponding square under the number you have chosen.

(English has been used to stand in for other languages, but feel free to consider your own first language).

Strongly disagree → Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE?
					I enjoy learning Spanish.
					Using other languages during the Spanish class is helpful.
					Reading a text in English first helps me learn it in Spanish after.
					I understand Spanish more if it is explained using English.
					The teacher should use both English and Spanish during Spanish class.
					When I move between different languages in the Spanish class it is confusing.
					Students should be allowed to use the language they prefer when in groups, even if the final presentation is only in Spanish.
					Taking notes in my first language is useful in the Spanish classroom.
					Learning Spanish is difficult for me.
					Using English in the Spanish class for supportive comments or jokes makes it more fun and motivating.
					Languages should be kept separate when they are being taught.
					The most effective way to learn a language is to focus on its structure, for example, grammar, vocabulary, verb tenses.
					I think a an effective dual -language strategy is for students to compare Spanish words and English words to help their understanding.
					A student is successful when he/she can think only in Spanish.
					My teacher intentionally uses other language(s) that is/are not Spanish during class as a strategy.
					I feel more comfortable in the Spanish class if I am allowed to use English.
					Using my first language in the Spanish class can deepen my understanding of Spanish.
					If my teacher uses another language in the Spanish class, it is because she is having difficulty as a teacher or I am having difficulty as a student.
					I prefer it when the class is taught only in Spanish.
					Using English in the Spanish class can deepen my understanding of Spanish.
					It is not necessary to learn about different Spanish cultures to learn Spanish.
					I understand the Spanish course content more when the teacher uses English.
					I think that learning Spanish will help me in the future.
					Making errors is a positive part of learning a language.
					I am sure I can learn Spanish well, and reach a high level.

21. Do YOU use other languages when you are learning Spanish? (If the answer is no, have you seen other uses of different languages in the Spanish class by classmates or teachers?). When? Why? Give 2-3 examples if you can.

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22. Do you think only the target language (in this case Spanish) should be spoken in the language class? Why or why not?

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➔ Is there anything else you would like to share about how you use different languages, how you see your friends using it/them, how your teachers use it/them?

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## **Appendix C: Semi-structured interview questions for students**

### **DISCUSSION 1 (discussion in an interview)**

How do you see yourself as a language learner, as a speaker of another language, or as a user of different languages? If your teacher or classmates had to describe you what would they say? Can you explain?

How do you learn a new language? What is your process? Do you think it is the same or different from other people?

Do you use different languages for any activities in the Spanish class? How? Why? When?

What does it mean for you to “move between your languages”? Can you explain?

When and why do you choose to use one language over another?

Do you think you translate in your head while you are talking/working in class? Is it a translation process or is it a different process?

How do you think you should feel about your various language (linguistic) uses? (pride or shame?)

Are there benefits to using other languages in the Spanish classroom? Does it ‘hurt’ your language learning?

Does a student have an advantage because they have a second or a third language?

Do you think that the process of using other languages should be taught and practiced as a strategy in the university, or not?

### **DISCUSSION 2 (while exploring dual language activities)**

In what ways are you using the different languages for these (different) activities?

Do you think you translate in your head while you are working? Can you explain the process you use for coming up with an answer?

When and why do they choose one language over another?

Did you learn anything more by having the text in two languages?

How are you “moving between your languages”? Can you explain?

Do you recognize how and when you are “moving” between your languages?

What is your perception of your using of different languages as you move between them, can you explain?

Do you think that this type of dual language activity should be utilized in your university Spanish class or not?

## **Appendix D: Semi-structured interview questions for teachers**

### **DISCUSSION**

Can you share your language background?

Can you describe yourself as a language teacher and as a speaker of another language? Explain.

How do you teach a new language? What is your process? Do you think it is the same or different from other people?

Do you use different languages for different activities in your class? How? Why? When?

Do you translate for students sometimes? In what other ways do you use different languages in your language class? When and why do you choose one language over another?

Have you observed your students' using other languages in your class? When? Why?

Do you recognize how and when your students "move" between languages?

What do you think about students using other languages in a language classroom? Is it positive or negative? Are there benefits? Does it hurt learning or are there advantages/disadvantages?

Do your students have an advantage because they have a second / third language? Why or why not?

What does it mean to you when someone "moves between their languages"?

Do you think that the process of moving between languages should be taught and practiced as a strategy in the university or not?

What do you think of Spanish language learning today in general/in the university?