

## TRANSLANGUAGING IN BRAZILIAN BILINGUAL EDUCATION: ANALYZING ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSLANGUAGING PRACTICES IN FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS

## TRANSLINGUAGEM NA EDUCAÇÃO BILÍNGUE: UMA ANÁLISE DAS ATITUDES E PERCEPÇÕES DE PRÁTICAS TRANSLÍNGUES DE ESTUDANTES DO 5º ANO ESCOLAR E SEUS PROFESSORES

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**Abstract:** Grounded in the translanguaging theory, which as a decolonial theory and pedagogy frames languages as a unified semiotic repertoire, this study explores participants' attitudes and perceptions toward their translanguaging practices. The investigation examines the answers to Questionnaires for Linguistic Characterization and Use completed by fourteen students and three of their teachers at a bilingual school in Southern Brazil. The teachers also answered a written interview. Results showed a solid stance for language separation in formal contexts, contrasting with a positive attitude toward multilingual behavior. Despite students and teachers prioritize the use of the target language, translanguaging practices are clearly manifested in class. Considering these results, translanguaging pedagogy seems to be valid for minority language development contexts, in which educators are committed to promoting the translanguaging *corriente* to promote biliteracy by valuing bilinguals' repertoire to create fluid and dynamic spaces allowing learners to critically convey their thinking.

**Keywords:** Repertoire; Translanguaging; Translanguaging practices.

**Resumo:** Baseado na teoria translíngua, que, como uma teoria e uma pedagogia decolonial, compreende as línguas como um repertório semiótico unificado, este estudo explora as atitudes e percepções dos participantes em relação às suas práticas e propósitos translíngues. A investigação examina as respostas de Questionários para Caracterização e Uso Linguístico, aplicados a quatorze alunos do quinto ano matriculados em uma escola bilíngue em um estado do sul do Brasil e a três de seus professores. Os professores também responderam a uma entrevista escrita. Os resultados mostraram uma postura sólida para a separação das línguas em contextos formais, contrastando com uma atitude positiva em relação ao multilinguismo. Apesar de os participantes priorizarem o uso da língua-alvo, as práticas translíngues manifestam-se em sala de aula. Considerando os resultados, a pedagogia translíngua parece ser válida para contextos de desenvolvimento de línguas minoritárias, em que os educadores se comprometem a promover a *corriente* da translíngua para

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fomentar a biliteracia, valorizando o repertório dos bilíngues para criar espaços fluidos e dinâmicos, permitindo-lhes expressar criticamente seu pensamento.

**Palavras-chave:** Repertório; Translinguagem; Práticas translíngues.

## Introduction

Researchers worldwide have studied the interaction of languages in the learning processes of emergent multilingual individuals of various ages, primarily in formal educational settings. However, much research has been grounded in a monoglossic view of languages (LEE; GARCIA, 2020; PARRA; PROCTOR, 2021). Nevertheless, since Bakhtin (1981) coined the term heteroglossic, which deals with language comprehension and production as an integral and inseparable part of its context of use, the amount of research based on this epistemological pillar has been widely explored in language pedagogy. Translanguaging (TL) is an instance of a theory that has been developed from that heteroglossic view of languages.

As a decolonial theory and pedagogy, TL views languages or language not as separate entities, but as a unified system of language practices interconnected with social and political culture (LI, 2018; OTHEGUY; GARCIA; REID, 2019; CENOZ; GORTER, 2021). By asserting the fluidity of the boundaries between languages (GARCÍA; KLEIFGEN, 2018; POZA, 2019), it conceives a fluid and dynamic space called translanguaging or third space (LI, 2018) as a space where social individuals, whether belonging to multilingual or monolingual social or cultural backgrounds, use all available resources to make sense of their speech, actions, writings, or even their *modus vivendi*. In the complex social architecture, these individuals consolidate their identities (LAU; JUBY-SMITH; DESBIENS, 2016).

Following Flores (2014), García and Otheguy (2020) ensure that TL is more than a simple pedagogical practice, as it carries the force of a political act, whose focus is to value what the students have and not what they lack. In this sense, it can be said that the heart of TL is found in the discussion around decolonial thinking, that is, TL is a theory and pedagogy of a decolonial nature (GARCÍA; ALVIS, 2019; ROCHA, 2019; GARCIA et al., 2021).

Thus, grounded in TL theory, and knowing that translanguaging is a feature mostly manifested in interactions (DUARTE; GÜNTHER-VAN DER MEIJ, 2020), the goal of this qualitative research is to investigate fifth graders and their teachers' attitudes and perceptions about translanguaging, as well as to analyze their awareness of their own translanguaging practices (TP). We hypothesized that all participants would have positive attitudes toward translanguaging and that students would use a high level of integrated language elements recruitment from their linguistic repertoire. Thus, we hypothesized that translanguaging theory and practices would show themselves to be valid for bilingual education where a new language is being developed in a formal context of bilingual education.

## 1 Studies on translanguaging: an overview of methods and results

The foundation of this study lies in a view of language that is consistent with Langacker's (2008), for whom language elements, such as syntax, phonology, or semantics, integrate a continuum of constructions at all levels and are influenced by the capacity of humankind for categorizing, conceptualizing, using imagination, and schematizing. In this perspective, these linguistic elements are seen as intertwined, as argued by the Translanguaging Theory (GARCÍA; WEI, 2014; GARCÍA; KLEIFGEN, 2018; LI, 2018).

Researchers of TL have agreed that communication transcends the different linguistic codes (or named languages<sup>4</sup>) of a bilingual person, and communication transcends the lexicon, syntax, or semantic levels. TL involves the most diverse semiotic resources, which are presented in various situations on a daily ecological basis, and the named languages used are just one of these semiotic resources (GARCÍA, 2009, 2021; GARCÍA; KLEIFGEN, 2018; LI, 2018). Different from the assumption of two monoglossic languages, translanguaging is understood as “a simultaneous unity and duality” (GARCÍA, 2021, p. 5), which means that there is a simultaneous unity in the repertoire of the bilingual that parallels the sociopolitical perspective of named languages.

TL does not deny either the plurality of named languages or the concept of code-switching. Nevertheless, it asserts the fluidity of the boundaries between languages (GARCÍA; KLEIFGEN, 2018; LI, 2018) and, as a consequence, goes far beyond these notions, which cannot be included in translanguaging theory because they are grounded in a different epistemological perspective. Code-switching implies a “change” from one code (language) to the other and is based on the idea that bilinguals have two separate and limited language systems, a concept that does not match the translanguaging holistic perspective of languages organization and use (GARCÍA et al., 2021). In other words, the difference between translanguaging and code-switching is that the former views language as a dynamic, holistic system without boundaries or hierarchies, whereas the latter views the languages of a bilingual person as a system composed of individual named languages.

García, Johnson, Seltzer (2017) use the term *corriente* to refer to the constant flow of language practices by bilingual students in a translanguaging classroom. The *corriente* is made up of three strands - stance, design, and shifts - that work together so that conceptual knowledge and the language practices present in the classroom drift together. Welp and García (2022) explain that stance alludes to teachers’ strong orientation toward social justice as they acknowledge students’ extensive repertoire from which they draw resources to express themselves and make meaning; design refers to the careful instruction planning; shifts involve the moment-to-moment adaptation of the teacher’s practice to contemplate and adjust to students TP. Since this study is concerned with the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and students toward TL, the first strand – stance - is the one that most interest us.

Stance is a framework that informs the way teachers view students as bilinguals who perform dynamic language and cultural practices and, based on that, carefully design instruction and assessment. As García, Johnson, Seltzer (2017) put it, stance is “the philosophical orientation that teachers draw on to construct a translanguaging classroom” (p. 50). Therefore, when teachers reveal a TL stance, they leverage students’ bilingualism for learning by performing pedagogical practices for effective instruction and assessment.

Previous research has analyzed students’ and teachers’ perspectives about their TP. For instance, Wang (2016) analyzed teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward TP in a Chinese as a foreign language classroom. She used a questionnaire survey to understand students’ attitudes and an in-depth interview to understand teachers’ attitudes. These data were triangulated with classroom observations to analyze language practices in natural settings. The results showed that half of the sample of students (n=110) could use their full semiotic repertoires for meaning negotiation in the classroom. Specifically, the teachers’ data demonstrated that there are ambivalent attitudes toward language choice in class. That is, whereas some teachers had difficulty accommodating the use of different languages in the classroom, others completely agreed with a TL pedagogy. Wang’s data set demonstrated that translanguaging has served for giving voice to students at various levels of meaning negotiation, and, as a result, she urged teachers to renew

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<sup>4</sup> Named languages are a social construction that reflects the external view of a bilingual individual’s repertoire. In contrast, from the bilingual speaker’s perspective, there is only one language in their particular repertoire, with no political or hierarchical divisions (Welp; García, 2022).

knowledge on language learning to facilitate structured TL strategies and to develop a transformative teacher–student role.

Deroo and Ponzio (2019) used discourse analysis to investigate potential for translanguaging to disrupt monolingual ideologies through the development of seven in-service teachers' (ISTs) translanguaging stance. They observed what ideological constraints limited ISTs' adoption of a translanguaging stance and how, if at all, they moved beyond these constraints. Findings highlight micro-, meso-, and macrolevel influences that constrained ISTs' adoption of translanguaging and the productive ways they imagined addressing these limitations. Results point to implications for how teacher education might favor a translanguaging stance. The study revealed that translanguaging breaks down barriers between languages and acknowledges multilingualism as one cohesive system. The authors state that TL shows potential to transform educational spaces where students' multilingualism is central.

In addition to this, Khairunnisa and Lukmana (2020) conducted a survey to 50 English language teachers to investigate their attitudes toward translanguaging in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Indonesia. The qualitative study aimed to gauge information through a multiple-choice questionnaire and Likert scale questions regarding the importance of translanguaging use and the frequency with which these teachers felt their practice in the classroom. The findings revealed that Indonesian EFL teachers showed positive attitude toward the use of TL in their classrooms. Most of them found that the use of Indonesian language and local language are beneficial in EFL classrooms as it facilitates students' learning.

The aim of this study was to analyze 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their teacher's attitudes and perceptions regarding the use of translanguaging practices in a bilingual school. Moreover, it aimed at verifying how aware participants were on their TP in class. The method, results and discussion are presented in the upcoming sections.

## **2 The study**

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the University where it was proposed. This article reports part of the more extensive research, which included the analyses of TP of seven pairs of students while developing and oral story production based on a video with no verbal stimuli.

### **2.1 The setting and participants**

This research was undertaken in a private bilingual school, considered a prestige bilingual school, located in the south of Brazil, where there is a strong heritage of German culture. As a private school without offering scholarships to lower-income students, it is assumed that all students come from families with medium or high socioeconomic status. The school offers classes in the morning and in the afternoon shifts. On one shift, students have regular classes in their home language (Brazilian Portuguese), and bilingual classes on the other shift, totaling 10 hours of additional language exposure (English). In the bilingual program, the curriculum incorporates science, mathematics, and language arts, in which students learn about culture, history, society, and the environment, among other topics in English.

The research sample was comprised of 14 fifth-grade students (nine females and five males) aged between 10 and 11, and three teachers. Those participants were given pseudonyms. One of the inclusion criteria was having attended more than two years of bilingual school, which means at least two complete years of contact and use of English at the bilingual school. According to the teachers' information and one of the researcher's own experiences with this group age at the school,

students were at an early point of the biliteracy continua (HORNBERGER, 2022), meaning that their repertoire in English was still expanding.

Three teachers, all native Brazilian Portuguese speakers, also participated in the study and were named after the pseudonyms Fernando, Maria, and Carla. Fernando was a 33-year-old male teacher and spent the majority of class time (six hours per week) with students. Maria was a 46-year-old science teacher and spent two hours per week with the students. Carla was a 26-year-old math teacher who spent two hours per week with the fifth graders.

## 2.2 Instruments, procedures for data generation and data analysis

Two questionnaires were developed for linguistic characterization and use and later were analyzed qualitatively. One was designed for the students (Questionnaire for Linguistic Characterization and Use for students - QLCU-s) and one for the teachers (Questionnaire of Linguistic Characterization and Use for teachers - QLCU-t). Both were adapted from Scholl and Finger's (2013) language background questionnaire, from the Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire by Kaushanskaya and colleagues (2020), from the study of Orcasitas-Vicandi (2019) and based on the authors' knowledge and experience.

The QLCU-s explored students' general sociodemographic and linguistic information and motivation for their bilingual studies, the languages experienced in the classroom, languages' experience and use outside the classroom, proficiency, and attitudes toward multilingualism and multilingual behavior. The QLCU-t explored general information, teaching experience history, motivation for their bilingual teaching experience, the languages' experience and use in the classroom, attitudes concerning TP and TL pedagogy, attitudes toward multilingualism and multilingual behavior. The questionnaires were answered a few weeks after an oral task administration (which is not the focus of this article). Furthermore, to deepen or clarify information on their attitudes toward TL or pedagogical practices based on their answers to the QLCU-t, some extra questions were sent by e-mail to the teachers who replied by e-mail and WhatsApp voice messages. For the sake of clarity, the use of the term "participants" refers to students and their teachers. Google forms were used to collect consent from parents, teachers, and pupils, a measure adopted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 3 Results

The research questions that guided this study, as mentioned, were: 1. What are students' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward TL and how aware are they of their own TP in class? We hypothesized that participants would have a positive attitude toward TL, and that students would use a high level of language recruitment from their linguistic repertoires. Results showed a solid stance for language separation in formal contexts, contrasting with a positive attitude toward multilingual behavior. Despite both students and teachers prioritize the use of the target language, TP were clearly manifested in class as can be seen in the following section. We start by presenting the students' linguistic profile and the teachers' linguistic and professional characterization.

### 3.1 Data from the QLCU-s – students' linguistic profile

According to the QLCU-s, all students were born in Brazil and spoke Brazilian Portuguese as their first language, the same for their parents. Eleven (78,57%) of the 14 students had English as their second language and German as their third language, one had Spanish as a third language, while just one participant did not have a third language (see Table 1). They were considered

consecutive bilinguals; specifically, four students started to learn English when they were between two and three years old, five were between four and five years old, and four were between six and eight years old. As regards the age of enrollment in the bilingual program, one was four years old when enrolled, one was five, four participants were six, two were seven, four were eight years old, and just one had been enrolled by the age of nine.

**Table 1. Student's linguistic profile and motivation to follow a bilingual program**

<i>Name (pseudonym)</i>	<i>Age (Years: months)</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Languages (L2, L3)</i>	<i>Student's motivation</i>
Fany	11:04	F	English, German	<i>"I think it's important to learn English, and I like it very much."</i>
Marina	11:05	F	English, German	<i>"It's very important to learn new languages, and English is a universal language."</i>
Frank	11	M	English, German	<i>"For when I grow up, I want to travel and know how to communicate in English. Or go to college in the United States."</i>
Cris	10:10	F	English, German	<i>"To continue to learn English, which is a universal language."</i>
Mara	11:02	F	English	<i>"Because I need to improve my English and I like the teachers, the education, and my friends."</i>
Lisa	10	F	English, German	<i>"Because English is used in the whole world and the bilingual program teaches English very well, it stands out. And I think I have evolved a lot. My mother, some people, and I have seen this."</i>
Jorge	10:08	M	English, German	<i>"Because I am interested in English, and I want to learn more than one language."</i>
Vicky	11	F	English, German	<i>"Because I want to, and I like learning other Idioms."</i>
Rachel	10:04	F	English, Spanish	<i>"Because the methodology of the teachers is great!"</i>
Vivian	10:07	F	English, German	<i>"I love English. I love studying this language in the bilingual (program) and I want to travel to places where English is spoken. And I want to learn more about the language and culture."</i>
Vini	10:11	M	English, German	<i>"Because I like to study a new language."</i>
Abel	10:01	M	English, Spanish	<i>"Because I need to learn English."</i>
Anita	10:11	F	English, German	<i>"Because I wish to learn English, and it is a life goal for me, and, of course, English gives me many opportunities."</i>
Daniel	11:07	M	English, German	<i>"Because I want to have a better future and I want to be able to maintain the standard of living that I have today."</i>

**Note:** ( ) means that a word was added by the researcher for better comprehension.

Source: The authors

Considering the students' overall language experience, their linguistic repertoire had been developed mostly at school and private language courses. Six (42.85%) students stated that they had also learned English at home and on their own.

As regards language exposure, based on the QLCU-s, eight (61,5%) out of the fourteen students had been abroad, mainly to the US and Argentina. Regarding students' daily use of their linguistic repertoire, the questionnaire showed that six students also used their second language to talk to their fathers, two to talk to their mothers, and nine to talk to their friends, and they read, wrote, listened to music, watched TV and movies in both second and third languages. Moreover, they also used their linguistic repertoire to tell personal stories, calculate, take notes, speak when they are angry, and express affection.

Considering the students' self-evaluation of their second language fluency, seven students considered themselves fluent, and seven considered themselves almost fluent. Yet, regarding the third language, six perceived themselves with low proficiency, three considered themselves fluent speakers, and the other four stated they were almost fluent.

### **3.2 Data from the QLCU-t – teachers' linguistic profile**

According to the answers to the QLCU-t, Fernando had high proficiency in English and an intermediate level of Spanish and French. He graduated in Psychology and had a master's and a Ph.D. degree in Philosophy. Fernando had 12 years of experience as an English teacher and was in his eighth year of teaching in a bilingual school.

Maria was a pre-advanced English speaker, but she also mentioned she could read in Spanish. She graduated in Biological Sciences and Theology. Her master's degree was in environmental engineering, and at the moment of this study, she was doing a graduate course in bilingual education. Maria had 10 years of experience as an English teacher and was in her third year of teaching in a bilingual school.

Carla was an advanced English speaker and had started to teach in the current bilingual school program six years before the data generation. She had a degree in Biological Sciences (Environment and Biodiversity) and a Master's in Cellular and Developmental Biology. By the time of data generation, she attended a graduate course in Bilingual Education.

### **3.3 Participants' attitudes toward translanguaging**

As regards the attitudes toward the multilingual behavior, the findings revealed that even though participants acknowledged that it is natural for bilingual speakers to use both languages in their repertoire and that all languages have aspects in common, most students showed their stance that bilinguals should strive to consider only one language on each occasion. Interestingly, the findings have shown that this stance should be followed in formal contexts such as the classroom. Most participants understood that it is fine to combine languages in informal contexts but not in formal contexts. Specifically, the three teachers did not agree that bilingual people should strive to use only one language on each occasion. However, this attitude did not apply to the classroom for two teachers. On one hand, Fernando and Carla replied that languages should be kept separate in the classroom, and on the other hand, Maria agreed that all the repertoires could be used in the classroom.

When interrogated in further questions about the reasons for it, Fernando replied that "The mix of languages is something quite rich. When I answered I was thinking about trilingual students (Portuguese, English and German) mixing the three languages. These relates more specifically to the effort to assimilate languages but still anchored in Portuguese. I had students in the initial grades in mind." Carla answered that "In an informal setting, this is quite common. However, although this mix also happens in the classroom, it's often on students' part. I believe that it is the teacher's role to try to keep the languages separately, to focus on the foreign language teaching. It is comfortable for most students to use their mother tongue in language classes and the teacher ends up having to remind them that it is necessary to maintain the use of L2."

Fernando answered he did not agree that bilinguals should strive to use only one language on each occasion, but he agreed that this behavior should not be followed in classroom. In further response, he showed more flexibility to the use of both languages in the same context. He explained how natural it is for him to use his whole repertoire when he is speaking with others who share the same named languages in their repertoire, and he also acknowledged that it is ok for students sometimes to use their home languages because what matters is communication. However, he

asserted that “If I have access to two linguistic fields, or two universes of linguistic systems, I will make use of them. In the case of a pedagogical context, I have a role to play or an ethical task which is to enable students to operate linguistically and expressively in the English language accurately and effectively.” And he added, “So, I cannot adopt this addiction of going back to the Portuguese language. The students are in another context where they need to be challenged to stay in the English language and learn to communicate in the English language”.

As regards to students’ attitudes toward TP in class, according to the QLCU-s, 100% of the students answered that they enjoyed it when the teachers spoke only English in class. However, eight out of fourteen (57%) students mentioned that they liked it when the teacher explained the content in Portuguese, for reasons such as: “In some cases, speaking in Portuguese with students helps us better understand the explanation,” “I sometimes don’t understand what he says in English, so when he speaks in Portuguese I can understand” and “Yes, sometimes, when I don’t understand something about the activity, and in this way, it becomes easier to learn.” There was also an empathy reason, as shown in Maria’s answer, “There are people who don’t understand, and this helps.”. This finding suggests there is clear acknowledgement of how the use of the whole repertoire leverages the learning process, as Garcia and Kleifgen (2018) argue.

And for the question “I think it’s important that we can speak in Portuguese when we cannot say everything in English”, eight out of 14 (57%) students replied that they agree. However, what calls our attention is that there were some paradoxes concerning four students (Marina, Frank, Rachel, and Abel) who have a strong stance against TP. As for the question “What do you think of reading a text in English and discussing it in the language you prefer?”, nine out of the 14 students (64,3%) did not consider it a good idea. As Marina and Vicky argued, “We must speak in English in our bilingual English class”; Abel and Anita answered that “it is confusing” and “because it can make us get confused.” However, four students answered that it was a good idea “to check if we understood the text” and “because this way, I can better understand the subject.” As regards the teachers’ responses to this question, Fernando answered that it was not a good idea because “Any return to the comfortable position of the mother tongue with which one is most familiar ends up interrupting the expressive challenge in which that learner is engaged, and possibly even inhibiting future ones from doing so knowing that the ‘easy’ resource is available and authorized”. On the contrary, the other teachers answered: (Maria) “because I believe mixing would be more productive” and (Carla) “If they can use a reading skill well, it’s already a big breakthrough. For discussions, they are always encouraged to try to discuss it in English, even if they use Portuguese in some sentences.” When argued about what she meant by “more productive” in a further written interview, Maria answered, “In the sense of always trying to expose themselves first in English and mixing with Portuguese. Although it is a little difficult for them.”

Regarding students’ attitudes toward the use of their home language in class, three students reported that they sometimes avoid making comments or questions about the topic they are studying in class because they do not know how to put their words into English. Nine students answered “yes” for the question “Has your teacher ever not allowed you to speak in Portuguese during class about a topic you are studying?”. Yet, when interrogated about how they felt, seven of them reported that they felt normal, Vini felt more responsible, and Rachel said that it made her think more about the answer.

Further, when asked about the occurrence of the following situation: “My teacher is speaking or explaining something in English, then he/she also speaks in Portuguese to help us understand”, most students responded affirmatively. Eight students (57%) said they enjoyed it when teachers also spoke in Portuguese because it helped them understand more clearly.

Now, we analyze teachers’ attitudes toward students’ use of home languages. The results from the QLCU-t have shown that all teachers prefer when students use English in class. When inquired about the reason, Fernando answered, “To break the ‘umbilical cord’ with the mother

tongue and build a new cognitive and expressive scheme based on the resources offered by the second language.” Maria posited that “as far as possible, I prefer them to communicate in the other language due to the effort it takes to communicate,” but she believes a student can speak in their home language when he/she cannot communicate in English. And Carla’s answer was “For them to leave their comfort zones and insert the language into their daily lives.”

Whereas both teachers, Fernando and Maria, have answered that they do not allow students to speak in their first language when they want to make a comment about the topic they are discussing, teacher Carla answered she allows it. When asked about the reason for this attitude, Maria wrote that “I believe it is better that they speak as much of the second language as possible, even if they mix words in Portuguese and English.” Fernando answered, “If the students’ doubts are related to the content of the class, I believe it is important that we keep to the second language and a mental scheme. I allow Portuguese (mother tongue) only when we suspend the more formal didactic activity to pay attention to some relational or parallel issue in the class (a conflict between students, a practical/logistical/institutional clarification, etc.)” Yet Carla’s understanding is that “When students have not acquired the vocabulary yet, or have just forgotten it, it is possible to help, but always encouraging them to try their best to use English. Besides, I also teach science, which makes it a little more difficult for the kids.” Moreover, two hypothetical situations were proposed in order to analyze teachers’ attitudes toward translanguaging (Table 2).

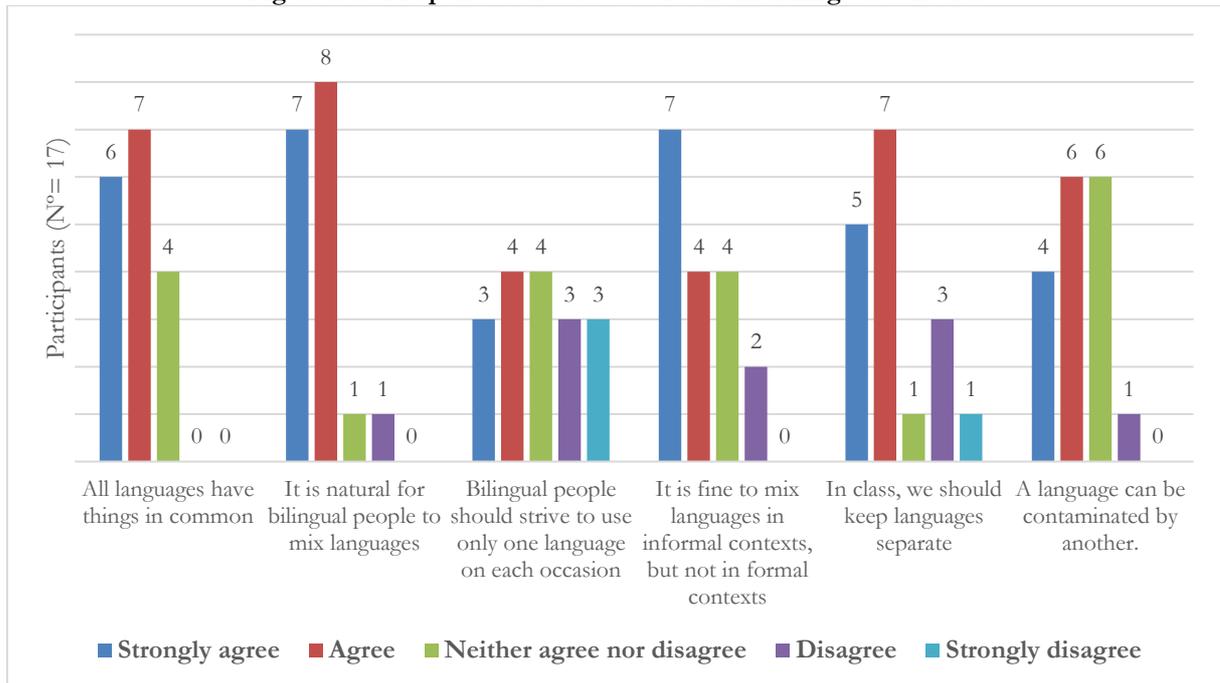
**Table 2. Teachers’ attitudes toward translanguaging**

Situation	Fernando	Maria	Carla
<i>A student wants to express his/ her opinion, but he/ she is unable to express himself/ herself in the target additional language. Do you allow the student to speak in their mother tongue?</i>	I answered “rarely” because I only allow it [to use Portuguese] when I realize that these students have problems strong enough to prevent them from expressing themselves in English, and that prohibiting an alternative would generate frustration and other undesirable consequences that might make the person not feel heard and noticed.	Yes. It is necessary to let the student express their opinion. Realizing that the student is still unable to express himself/herself in the target language, I allow them to speak in their mother tongue.	Yes. In order that he/she doesn’t lose interest in sharing their experiences/opinions. Sometimes, when he/she cannot express himself/herself, the child becomes withdrawn. However, I would help and teach, in the target language, the vocabulary he/she is using.
<i>You have an Asian student who speaks Mandarin as first language but speaks Portuguese with a high level of fluency because he has lived in Brazil since he was born. You’re rushing with content to catch up on your planning. However, Julian for example, trying to speak in English wants to make a comment on the subject comparing to Chinese culture?</i>	I would allow him to speak but would ask to be brief. Why would I stop Julian (whether Asian or not) from making his verbal contribution in the target language, even if briefly?	Because making this kind of comment and the relationship between languages is something very relevant, it could make students get even more engaged because it comes from the student’s own experience.	I would allow him to speak freely because he or she is using the target language and it is always interesting for students to learn about a new culture, but I would try to get back to the subject as soon as possible.

Source: The authors

In summary, participants showed a positive attitude toward multilingual behavior. However, there is a strong stance against its use in formal contexts (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Participants' attitudes toward the multilingual behavior



Source: The authors

Different from Fernando and Carla, Maria seemed to have a more positive attitude toward translanguaging pedagogy. It seems that the strict view of language separation followed in class has intimidated students from using their full repertoire in class. However, students are used to it. Nevertheless, according to our analyses, most students and teachers demonstrated that they long for a freer translanguaging space where they can pursue the goal of using the whole semiotic repertoire for deeper knowledge, understanding, and discussions.

### 3.4 Participants' perceptions of translanguaging practices in classroom

In this section, we analyze the TP according to the participants' answers to the questionnaires. We present the results gathered from the QLCU-s and QLCU-t, which attempted to see the occurrences of TP in the classroom, as the COVID pandemic did not allow us to do class observation. We remind the readers that the use of the term "participants" entails students and teachers.

Firstly, based on the results below, we highlight that, although the participants would rather use the target language, the TP did occur in class, as the participants did use all their whole linguistic and semiotic resources to make meaning of their speech. According to the QLCU-s, 71,42% of students (n=10) reported that teachers sometimes speak Portuguese to help students understand the content. And all three teachers (100%) reported that they allow students to use their home language at some point. Seventy-eight percent (n=11) of the students confirmed that they are sometimes allowed to use their whole repertoire. The following teachers' reasons gathered from the QLCU-t confirmed that: Fernando – "If the students' doubts are related to the content of the class, I believe it is important that we keep to the second language mental scheme. I allow Portuguese (mother tongue) only when we suspend the more formal didactic activity to pay attention to some relational or parallel issue in the class (a conflict between students, a practical/logistical/institutional clarification, etc.)." Maria – "I believe it is better that they speak as much of the target language as possible, even if they mix words in Portuguese and English."

Carla – “When they have not acquired the vocabulary yet or have just forgotten it, it is possible to help, but I always encourage them to try their best to use English.”. Thus, these results underline that the use of home language occurred in class as a paradox of what teachers’ and students’ attempts to avoid.

In order to see the use of the whole unitary semiotic repertoire of participants, based on the questionnaires, for the proposition: “Sometimes, unintentionally, when I write my texts in English, I use words in Portuguese or another language I study or know how to speak. Or the opposite: when I write in Portuguese, I end up mixing it with English by accident.” Ten students disagreed with this assumption, three students reported that they sometimes integrated words in other language in their writings, and one student reported that it happened sometimes when she spoke. For instance, she gave the answer, “In German, I sometimes exchange ‘und’ for ‘and’”. Two teachers also confirmed this finding. Teachers Fernando and Carla reported that they see traces of German in students’ English writings. To illustrate that, the teachers highlighted that the most common ones were the use of “Ich” for “I”, for “I”, “Haus” for “house”, “maine” for “mine”, and “ist” for “is”. Furthermore, all teachers reported that it had happened to them as well.

In addition, students were asked “How does your teacher help you to understand the meaning of the new word in English?”. Seventy-one percent reported that teachers mime at some points; 50% of the students reported that teachers draw; 4% answered that teachers utter phrases using onomatopoeia or change the tone of voice and speak in Portuguese.

This situation above was proposed to teachers in a different way: “I use my body language, draw, make noises and use onomatopoeia to help students understand the target language”. Fernando and Carla replied affirmatively. Remarkably, Fernando’s response about the reason was that “Every nonverbal resource is valid and useful for the understanding of the message, except the use of the mother tongue, which is counterproductive”. He was further asked (in a written interview by email) about what he meant by “counterproductive”. In summary, according to his response, Fernando understands that an immersion method requires a mindset formulation to process the second language by creating a barrier to access the home languages as they do not help in that process. For him, this is demanding because the child can become dependent from always considering the home language before using the second. He also pointed to two problems: latency and addiction to mother tongue. That is, waste of time and deep dependency of the mother tongue to use the second. According to him, this is not helpful, because the languages have different mindsets. He added that this is the reason why we can use all other resources except the use of home language, which is ineffective.

To sum up, this section showed that TP have occurred in class, as students and teachers used their unitary repertoire with their whole beings to signify their pedagogical experiences in classroom.

#### 4 Discussion

Following Cenoz and Gorter (2021), we acknowledge the strong language separation ideologies that were constructed in language education schools. Nevertheless, translanguaging pedagogy stands against it. Those authors highlight that these ideologies postulate that being exposed to more than one language at a time brings confusion. The school also corroborates this ideology by allocating “different teachers for each language and a strict differentiation in the allocation of spaces and times for each language” (CENOZ; GORTER, 2021, p. 1).

This belief could be seen in general when the QLCU revealed that most participants did not consider “reading a text in English and discussing it in the language I prefer” a good idea, and explicitly, when some of them explained the reasons by arguing that it would cause confusion in their minds. In accordance with students, one of the teachers did not like the idea because this

could lead students to comfort zones by taking students from the “expressive challenge in which that learner is engaged” and making available and authorizing an “easy resource”, which is the use of home language practices. This finding might be related to the idea of maximal exposure to the target language, which is beneath the belief of compartmentalization of languages (CENOZ; GORTER, 2021). The teacher’s answers showed that there might be a fear of losing the maximal English exposure aim or maybe because of the danger that students can learn “that they do not need to understand the second language” because they have their teachers’ or peers’ help (BAKER; WRIGHT, 2017).

We follow those above-mentioned authors’ understanding that there is a need for extended exposure to the target language. Nevertheless, there is a greater need to build on students’ knowledge and students claim for greater understanding and thinking even though they are paradoxically tied up to the ideology of strong language separation. As a matter of fact, according to Cenoz and Gorter (2021), there is no less exposure to the target language if the pedagogical TP are well-planned and implemented across the lessons.

When the question “Has your teacher ever not allowed you to speak in Portuguese during class about a topic you are studying?” was planned, we expected that more students would answer yes, and the result from the QLCU-s confirmed this. Nevertheless, when interrogated about their feelings, it was expected that students would demonstrate uncomfortable feelings. To contradict that, all the nine out of the fourteen students, who had answered positively, replied that they felt normal and, surprisingly, two students gave reasons such as “I felt normal because he is very cautious with our English speaking”, or “I felt more responsible”, which corroborate the view of two monolinguals in one, or the perpetuity of the double monolingual as the ideal bilingual (CENOZ; GORTER, 2021; GARCÍA; OTHEGUY, 2020).

Thus, considering that there was a notable paradox which involved, on one hand, the teachers’ and students’ attempts to avoid the use of their home language plus a solid stance toward keeping languages separate in formal contexts, that contrasted, on the other hand, with a positive attitude toward the multilingual behavior, plus how students search for deeper understanding attested their identities as legitimate semiotic actors who are not just capable of using their full linguistic and unitary repertoire, but also demand a free translanguaging space to maximize their meaning-making potential (GARCÍA; KLEIFGEN, 2018).

Looking more closely at the data collected with the administration of both QLCU, the majority of the participants, probably as a consequence of their attitudes toward the multilingual behavior, really strive to maintain languages separate. This seems to echo the words of Baker and Wright (2017) that “bilinguals themselves may be defensive or apologetic about their use of home language and attribute it to laziness or sloppy language.” However, other responses to the questionnaires, as presented in the results section, showed that using the whole semiotic repertoire is a practice in class. This possibly points to an opening space for implementing translanguaging pedagogy.

As regards to the view of multilingual behavior, data revealed that even though participants acknowledged that it is natural for bilingual speakers to have a multilingual behavior and that all languages have aspects in common, most participants showed a clear position that bilinguals should strive to consider only one language on each occasion.

The fact that they believed languages could be integrated in informal contexts but not in the classroom corroborates strong languages separation ideology, which points to the use of only the target language and to maximal exposure to it (CENOZ; GORTER, 2021) and also evidences the influence of the “direct method” from the early twentieth century in the present bilingual education (GARCÍA; OTHEGUY, 2020). However, we highlight Maria’s comment about the reason she did not agree that languages should be kept separate on each occasion. She understands that the home language, Brazilian Portuguese in this context, serves as an anchor that supports the

learning process. On one hand, we keep in mind that translanguaging is not just about promoting learning and its core brings the calling to have a new perspective on language as translanguaging. On the other hand we do acknowledge that Maria's understanding mentioned above, Fernando's sensitivity to translanguaging or to allowing students to translanguage when mediating a social or emotional conflict, and Carla's flexibility to allow students to use their entire repertoire in class addressed translanguaging pedagogy, whose purposes, according to García, Johnson e Seltzer (2017), are: to support students as they engage with and understand complex content and texts; to provide opportunities for students develop linguistic practices for academic contexts; to make room for bilingualism and students' ways of knowing; and to support students' socio-emotional development and bilingual identities.

Thus, RQ1 was satisfactorily answered because, based on the data and analysis, we could see what participants' attitudes and perceptions toward translanguaging are, as well as their awareness of their own TP in class.

As presented in the results section, even though the use of home language practices is avoided and not preferable, both QLCU did show that it is a practice in the classroom. The fact that eight students replied that they like it when teachers also explain something in their home language because it helps their learning process, showed that those students and two of the three teachers who positively answered to the idea of reading a text in English and discussing it using their entire repertoire showed there was a willingness to use translanguaging pedagogy as a resource to foment a greater understanding and deeper discussion, which echoes the words of Cummins when he says that "Rather the first language must not be abandoned before it (additional language) is fully developed, whether the second language is introduced simultaneously or successively, early or late, in that process" (CUMMINS, 2000, p. 32), and it also confirms that the goal of pedagogical translanguaging is to activate the resources of multilingual speakers in order to expand language and maximize learning (BAKER; WRIGHT, 2017). Importantly, this highlights how translanguaging pedagogy should focus on what bilinguals have rather than what they lack in order to nurture their bilingualism (WELP; GARCÍA, 2022).

Taking into consideration that TP refer to the use of different semiotic resources from their full repertoire to make sense of their speech, actions, and interactions (LI, 2018; OTHEGUY; GARCIA; REID, 2019), the findings from the questionnaires have shown that teachers and students used a range of semiotic resources and ecological affordances in the classroom. As demonstrated in the results, both from the questionnaires and the students' interactions during the task, all participants acknowledged or evidenced a variety of semiotic modes including bodies, onomatopoeia, changes in voice tone, that is, spaces that go beyond the linguistic element of language practices, which take part of their daily routine to endeavor communication based on a target language in a translanguaging space (GARCÍA; OTHEGUY, 2020; LI, 2018). That is the place where they position themselves socially, historically, politically, and give voice to their worlds by affirming their identities built on a unitary repertoire that is synonymous with a unitary linguistic system, lexicon, and grammar (GARCÍA; OTHEGUY, 2020; OTHEGUY; GARCIA; REID, 2019).

Moreover, grounded in the view that translanguaging pedagogy acknowledges "the importance of leveraging all the linguistic and cultural practices of emergent bilinguals to educate them" (GARCÍA; KLEIFGEN, 2018, p. 21), in the QLCU-t, two hypothetical situations were proposed in order to identify teachers' attitudes toward TP of students. Table 2 showed the situations and the teachers' answers. Situation one sought to deeply analyze teachers' attitudes toward the use of home language practices, and Situation two sought to understand teachers' perception of what was more relevant: following the plan or fostering culture growing. Though there is a clear influence of the traditional view of languages as autonomous and separate systems on teachers' language view, as the QLCU-t showed, their answers to those hypothetical situations

demonstrated that above that influence, and most probably, the influence of the school principals, who are also influenced by families and societies, there is an opening door for promoting pedagogical translanguaging, which from its beginning values the development of a deeper and critical understanding by considering and putting those emergent bilinguals at the center of their learning and language practices (GARCÍA, 2009). Therefore, “a more flexible norm can then be adopted that includes all students along a bilingual continuum, instead of insisting on a rigid monolingual standard.” (GARCÍA; KLEIFGEN, 2018, p. 29).

At a final point, to echo the words of García and Lin (2017), this study has shown that some emergent bilinguals participated less in the class probably because they were not allowed to use their full repertoire. The QLCU-s revealed that four students replied that they avoid making comments in class because they do not know how to put their words into English. Even though it is a low number of students, this fact contradicts what translanguaging theory values: “Learning to do bilingualism rests not simply on adding another autonomous named second language but on incorporating new features into one’s developing repertoire.” (SÁNCHEZ; GARCÍA; SOLORZA, 2018, p. 38). Thus, it is not aligned with TL theory, which encourages the use of languages “in an integrated and coherent way to organize and mediate mental processes in learning.”

As a final point of this section, we highlight that the results of this study have potentially confirmed our hypothesis that translanguaging theory is valid for bilingual education where a second language is being developed and confirmed the understanding of Vogel and Garcia (2017), and Cenoz and Gorter (2021), who agree that translanguaging pedagogy is valid for contexts where students are majority language speakers and are developing minority language in in the context of bilingual education as in the present study.

## Conclusion

This study addressed a few calls for future research on TP and the role of translanguaging in pedagogical teaching for bilingual education (POZA, 2019; LI, 2018). It brings light to the understanding of translanguaging literacy pedagogy in bilingual education, in which the language of instruction is not much experienced outside of the classroom. It attempts to explore students’ and teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of their own TP.

As a theory of decolonial nature, translanguaging seeks the transformation of sociopolitical and socio-educational structures which reinforce inequalities in language hierarchies (GARCÍA; OTHEGUY, 2020). At the same time, there is empirical evidence that translanguaging theory brings different factors to reflect and challenge bilingual education all over the globe. García and Otheguy (2020) point out that different countries had started offering English to the curriculum in bilingual education programs. We highlight that Brazil is also among those countries. Besides, being bilingual is becoming the norm for students.

To echo the words of Cenoz and Gorter (2021), we know that, due to the adoption of monolingual ideologies and the isolation of languages in the curriculum, even in bilingual or trilingual programs, the opportunities for bilingual students to have a freer translanguaging space to develop their repertoire have been curtailed. This was seen in our findings. On one hand, the results of our study showed that, overall, teachers and students are influenced by the monoglossic view of languages. Most students believed that the use of the whole repertoire in the same context could bring confusion, and teachers kept the stance that students must remain in the target language for the sake of its development. On the other hand, students and teachers agreed that they do use their whole semiotic repertoire in the classroom, and both search for deeper knowledge and biliteracy development.

Lastly, when we think of the question posed by Seltzer, Ascenzi-Moreno, and Aponte (2020, p. 26), “what are the new ways of translanguaging unwrap for teachers to value the language

and literacy practices of young emergent bilinguals?” We know there must be a lot to be investigated. Nonetheless, this empirical study was an attempt to explore this fertile ground where there is a tension between the heteroglossic language practices of emergent bilingual subjects, and the standard patterns of language promoted in schools.

Certainly, we acknowledge there are limitations to our study. Among others, we are aware that individual interviews would have enriched this research. However, despite the limitations of this study, there is evidence that underlines how schools staff are challenged to have a translanguaging stance to, on one hand, foster collaboration across content, languages, and pupils, but also, by acknowledging the integration of home, school, and community based on translanguaging documentation, translanguaging rings, and translanguaging transformation; and on the other hand, to open up the allowance for the translanguaging *corriente* by keeping the pupils in the center and working to develop their bilingualism and biliteracy (GARCÍA; KLEIFGEN, 2018; SÁNCHEZ; GARCÍA; SOLORZA, 2018).

Hence, we know that the heart of translanguaging is related to the importance of developing the minority language (CENOZ; GORTER, 2021); however, concerning the context where this empirical study was developed, TL theory also calls for educators to value home language practices and use them strategically to augment students’ understanding, knowledge, and critical thinking, and, by doing so, prepare them to be authors of their own stories and play an active role in a world that claims for equal rights. Therefore, agreeing with Morais (2021) and taking up García’s words (2021), we argue that translanguaging pedagogy is “not a bad thing” for bilingual programs in Brazil, which focus on developing a creative and critical culture.

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