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### Citation

Young, Emily (2024). An action research project into a parent translanguaging workshop in a monolingual primary school. Student dissertation for The Open University module E822 Masters multi-disciplinary dissertation: education, childhood and youth.

### URL

<https://oro.open.ac.uk/102284/>

### DOI

<https://doi.org/10.21954/ou.ro.00102284>

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**An action research project into a parent translanguaging workshop in a monolingual primary school.**

**Abstract**

Translanguaging, using multiple languages to make meaning, is integral to creating socially-just learning environments that provide multilingual learners with the opportunity to challenge dominant discourses. This small-scale action research project, using observational notes and open interviews from three participants, evaluates whether a translanguaging parent workshop in a monolingual school in England affects parents' use of and attitudes towards translanguaging. The data collected is thematically analysed using an inductive approach. This study finds whilst parent confidence increased, their positive attitudes and use of translanguaging remained unchanged. Further actions are suggested to engage parents not already using translanguaging.

**Key words:** translanguaging, parent workshop, multilingual learners, action research

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

As world-wide migration continues to increase (McAuliffe and Oucho, 2024, pp. 1-14), classrooms within England have an increasingly diverse social, linguistic and cultural profile. However, despite the increasing diversity of our pupils, teachers largely continue to follow English-only policies which centre teaching and learning around the English language (Gundarina and Simpson, 2021). These policies are fuelled by the misconception that multilinguals have separate language systems and that language success correlates with exposure to each language (Moody *et al.*, 2022).

This project took place in a monolingual primary school in England, with a monolingual teaching body, where 18% of the students are multilingual and twenty-two different languages are spoken. The school is situated on a newly built housing estate with a range of private and council-owned housing. Recently there have been a number of children joining the school from Ukraine, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Sri Lanka. Within the local community, there is a lack of understanding around language and cultural diversity, leading to a belief that English is the most important language and should be spoken everywhere. In addition to the social pressure, there is high parental anxiety amongst our multilingual families who worry about the development of their child's English if they continue to speak their home language.

Therefore, often our multilingual households adopt an English-only model. This results in children losing part of their cultural identity and heritage (Robertson *et al.*, 2014), struggling with low self-esteem and a lack of engagement that presents in school as disruptive behaviour. In addition, our multilingual children only hear limited English at home and thus do not develop a rich and varied vocabulary situated within a broad grammatical schema. As a result, the academic achievement of our multilingual learners continues to fall below their monolingual peers (Jiang *et al.*, 2022).

In our latest Key Stage 1 and 2 writing SATS results, 52% of our monolingual learners obtained the expected standard whereas only 34% of our multilingual learners obtained the same standard. Whilst academic data is not in itself a measure

of social justice, it shows the impact of the English-only model on the academic achievement of our multilingual learners.

In the early stages of my Masters' studies, I was exposed to the work of Freire (Tarlau, 2014) which opened my eyes to the importance of empowering people through literacy. It helped me to see this problem not only in terms of the academic data but more importantly the power imbalance it created. I realised that by only speaking English our students are unable to express or advocate for themselves and thus the dominant discourse prevails. Therefore, a pedagogical approach that supports families to maintain and develop their home languages, giving multilingual learners the vocabulary, grammar and confidence needed to not only do well academically but to also express their views and challenge inequality was needed.

During EE815, I discovered the concept of translanguaging: the process of using multiple languages to make meaning, shape experiences, gain understanding and create knowledge (Lewis *et al.*, 2012). Translanguaging is part of a socially-just curriculum that provides bilingual learners with the opportunity to learn without linguistic constraint (Moody *et al.*, 2022). This pedagogical approach not only enhances learning but creates opportunities for active participation in school life (Stavrou, 2020).

Whilst there is a range of research into the impact of translanguaging on spoken language in multilingual schools, research into monolingual primary schools in England is limited and there is a gap in the understanding of the power of translanguaging in settings where no teachers can speak the same language as the children (Costley and Leung, 2020). This is the situation for most multilingual learners within monolingual primary schools in England and so more research into how we can use translanguaging within these settings is needed (Gundarina and Simpson, 2021).

Therefore, inspired by the module material, I started to explore the impact of translanguaging on pupils learning within our school, starting with the children within my own class. I was interested particularly in using multilingual resources as legitimate cognitive tools to support the development of multilingual children's writing as recommended by Kiramba (2017). I encouraged the children to speak their home languages with each other; listened to stories from different languages; and

translated key information and learning for them to read with their parents at home. However, I quickly became aware that although the translations were helping the children to understand the context of the learning, the cultural fear of not speaking English and lack of understanding around the importance of translanguaging was stopping families engaging in the pedagogical approach.

I therefore shifted the project slightly and spent time focusing on celebrating the language diversity within our school and raising the profile of languages in the hope that this would support families to feel more confident to speak their home languages. We organised 'International Coffee Mornings' each term where we developed relationships with different families and supported them to organise an 'International New Year's Party'. We started to translate parent communications into twenty-two languages so that all our families could read the information and everyone could see that we valued languages. We invited parents in to read to our children in different languages and we created a display of all the different languages spoken by our families in the centre of our school.

Having spent time raising the profile and celebration of different languages, it then felt like a natural time to re-engage with translanguaging. As discussed in Costley and Leung (2020), I felt that the celebration of language itself might not on its own lead to the maintenance of multilingual practices such as translanguaging and so a further step was needed.

In their conclusion, Grieve and Haining (2011) acknowledge that an individual monolingual school, like mine, could not by itself realistically develop balanced bilingualism through translanguaging due to the lack of language knowledge. However, they argue that monolingual schools can promote home maintenance of all children's languages through practices such as translanguaging. Building on this, there is evidence of positive impacts when home and school literacy practices match (Moody *et al.*, 2022; Wessels and Trainin, 2014). As a result, a number of researchers have called for educational pedagogies that support translanguaging to free parents from the constraints of one-language only models (Moody *et al.*, 2022). In their study, Song (2022) found that parents' engagement maximised the effects of translanguaging which was especially useful when the teachers were not able to speak the children's home languages. When parents engaged in daily activities

linked to multilingual texts, the children were able to develop and utilise all their linguistic and cultural repertoires. This research led me to the idea of organising a parent workshop on translanguaging to facilitate discussion between parents about the use and impact of translanguaging. My research questions developed from this thinking:

*How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the attitudes of parents towards translanguaging?*

*How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the amount of translanguaging parents engage in with their children?*

For the purpose of this dissertation, I am going to write up this small element of the larger translanguaging project. The aim of this small-scale investigation is to explore the impact of a parent translanguaging workshop on parents' use of and attitudes towards translanguaging.

This small-scale investigation used an action research method with a parent translanguaging workshop implemented as the intervention. Open interviews were used to collect qualitative data from three participants which was analysed using a thematic approach. The project was undertaken within my own school setting with me as an insider researcher. As Thomas (2023) explains, action research is a technique where practitioners think for themselves and make their own choices. In addition, this project relied on me building a relationship and gaining the trust of our multilingual parents. Therefore, the findings are not generalisable beyond this setting. However, it still provides us with a rich understanding of the parent views within our setting and the methodology and methods could be replicated in other settings. The research methods are discussed further in Chapter 3.

The study revealed that whilst the parents spoke positively about the overall translanguaging project their attitudes and translanguaging practices did not change after the workshop. This is likely due to the fact that all three participants came to the workshop already positive and engaged in translanguaging practices. Therefore, more work is needed to engage parents, in particular those not already involved in the practice of translanguaging, in these workshops. More detailed analysis of the data and implications for future research can be found in Chapter 4 and 5.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This literature review starts by exploring the literature that shaped my research paradigm. It then draws on research that explains the monolingual view of multilingual language acquisition before comparing and contrasting this with translanguaging. At this point the review shifts, as my small-scale investigation did, away from translanguaging pedagogy itself and looks at the involvement of parents in literacy learning. It looks at the evidence currently within the literature around parental views and engagement and how this could be utilised to support translanguaging pedagogies. Finally, it finishes by reflecting on how the literature searches were carried out.

### 2.1 Research Paradigm

Reading Bishop *et al.* (2009), during EE814, was the first time I was hit by the power imbalance that our multilingual children face. They argue that teachers should create learning environments where all learners are able to interact with teachers in a way that legitimises who they are and how they make sense of the world. To create learning spaces that seek not to repair children from minority groups but to fix the schools in which we place these children (Bishop *et al.*, 2009). Reading this, made me reflect on how much time is spent within the English education system trying to help multilingual learners fit into our monolingual teaching and learning environments. I became fascinated by what might happen if as suggested by Bishop *et al.* (2009), rather than making multilingual children fit our system, we started to change what we did to make our schools truly multilingual in nature.

From this point in the module, I was drawn towards the work of Freire and critical pedagogy. His argument that schooling in its current format reinforces systems of oppression (Tarlau, 2014) spoke to the problems I was uncovering for our multilingual learners.

Freire saw schools as impediments to the education of the poor and therefore worked with minority groups to find ways for them to intervene in these dehumanizing processes. Central to Freire's work was the belief that critical consciousness alone was not enough (Freire, 2000). It was not sufficient to reform the learners without challenging the education system itself. He therefore used



literacy programs which aimed to combine theory, action and reflection to achieve this. He made sure that his work went beyond a set of teaching techniques, supporting learners to see that together they have the opportunity for collective action (Tarlau, 2014).

In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (2000) highlights the importance of societal change being brought about by the oppressed as they are best positioned to understand the significance of the oppressive society. He argues that change does not happen through explaining the problem to the oppressed but rather through dialogue with the oppressed about their actions. He explains that attempting to liberate those who are oppressed without including them in the process continues to exploit them. Therefore, inspired by this work, I wanted to make sure that this small-scale investigation provided our multilingual families with a space to discuss their feelings around translanguaging rather than me telling them my perspective as a monolingual educator. A time for knowledge exchange where everyone's voices were heard and respected equally. Freire (2000) also highlights how important it is for the oppressed to see the vulnerability of the oppressor. He argues that this allows the oppressed to develop conviction within themselves and become a force for change. Therefore, I also made sure that within the parent translanguaging workshop I shared how we recognised what we were currently doing was failing their children and that we needed their help to change our pedagogies and ways of teaching.

Whilst Freire's work pushed me to challenge the social norms of the English-only pedagogy within our school, it was the work of critical theorists that shaped my understanding of the politically determined communication methods within the education system.

Critical theory was first born out of the Frankfurt School in 1937 as a way to challenge the perceived oppression and inequality in western society (Ryan, 2018). Critical theorists argue that the education system encourages dependency and creates a hierarchical understanding of authority, leading to continual dominance of those who are successful within the system they have created (Breuing, 2011).

These readings helped develop my critical theory lens which I use within this small-scale investigation to examine and challenge society's exploitation and view of

education. It allows me to critique the way the current monolingual schooling system reinforces systems of oppression where minority multilingual learners are unable to utilise their full linguistic repertoire.

My ontological position, which also developed out of this reading, is that knowledge and the way in which we determine and transfer knowledge is politically created. Thus, society is continually influenced and manipulated by power structures that include politics, culture, race, gender, class and mass media (Ryan, 2018).

## **2.2 Monolingualism**

Ever since the rise of the nation states in Europe, European nationalists have been attempting to create standardised languages that remove any impurities. By connecting these languages to homogenous ethnic identity, they positioned monolingualism as the standard expectation. Monolingualism therefore became the dominant discourse with practices enacted by monolinguals seen as legitimate. As a result, the understanding of bilingualism developed in relation to monolingualism. Double monolingualism was used to describe different language systems that work in isolation within a bilingual's brain. This model led to the continual rejection of the development or recognition of any fluid language practices or pedagogy that went against the idea of double monolingualism (Flores and Schissel, 2014).

Saer (1923) took this further, arguing that multilingual children suffered from mental confusion which was confounded if the language they played with their peers was different to the one taught at school. They found that monolingual children were considerably more intelligent than bilingual children and that this persisted through university.

Cummins (2005) terms the double monolingualism model the Separate Underlying Proficiency Model (SUP). SUP proposes that language systems are stored separately and there is no transfer or underlying proficiency that links the separate languages. This model therefore suggests that there is a direct relationship between the exposure of one language and achievement in that language only. For decades, societies have believed that this model is true and that multilingual speakers have two separate linguistic systems (García and Kleyn, 2016). Therefore, they have continued to treat languages as completely separate entities. As a result, educational programs aimed at addressing multilingual learners' language and educational

needs have followed monolinguist orientations and monolinguist pedagogies that reduce the effectiveness of multilingual education (Wawire and Barnes-Story, 2023).

Despite the education system's historical reliance on the SUP model, Cummins (2005) argues that the empirical evidence clearly refutes it, showing that conceptual knowledge and skills are transferred across languages. He proposes instead the Interdependence Hypothesis which argues that proficiency in one language will transfer into proficiency in other languages provided there is adequate exposure and motivation to learn both languages. He argues that multilingual teaching should actively teach for transfer across languages, freeing ourselves from the dominant monolingual instructional orientation evident within current educational systems. He argues we must encourage cross-linguistic transfer and the development of language awareness whilst actively fighting against the idea that instruction should be carried out exclusively in the dominant language; translation into the less dominant languages is a regression; and languages should be kept completely separate.

Despite Cummins (2005) findings, the current form of the National Curriculum in England continues to lead to a culture of monolingual pedagogy. Driven by assessment frameworks which make no provision for languages other than English, it forces teachers to focus solely on English writing, reading and speaking. As a result, other languages remain on the periphery and the majority of teaching and learning continues to be monolingual in nature (Costley and Leung, 2020).

As literacy provides children with the ability to communicate, in doing so it gives them the power to create change (Tarlau, 2014). Therefore, these monolingual learning spaces in their very nature silence the voices of those who do not speak the dominant language (Kiramba, 2017). As a result, research shows these monolingual spaces lead to limited linguistic competence; inadequate cognitive engagement; poor expression of thought; and reduced ability to negotiate meaning (Wawire and Barnes-Story, 2023).

### **2.3 Translanguaging**

Translanguaging was coined by Cen Williams in 1994 when he provided Welsh students with the opportunity to change the language of input and output. He went against the more common SUP approach to multiple languages which saw them as

separate identities, taught in different spaces and in different times. He proposed, similar to Cummins (2005), that the cross-language semantic remapping that occurs when encoded information in one language is retrieved to enable production of information in another language leads to more successful learning (Lewis *et al.*, 2012).

García and Kleyn, (2016) took this further explaining how translanguaging theory *'refers to the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire, which does not in any way correspond to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages'* (p. 18).

They feel that in order to truly support multilingual learners their full language repertoire must be given a rightful place in the process of learning. They argue that even if the product of learning is in one language (García and Kleyn, 2016) as is often the case in English schools where the monolingual assessment framework dominates (Costley and Leung, 2020) the process must encourage the use of the student's full repertoire (García and Kleyn, 2016).

Research shows that translanguaging goes beyond merely translating, aiming for the balanced development of all the child's languages rather than using one to support another (Velasco and García, 2014). It sees the diverse languages that form a child's repertoire as an integrated system rather than separate identities (Kiramba, 2017), viewing language as sociocultural both in content and process rather than merely a tool for communication (Lewis *et al.*, 2012). It sees languages as diverse resources nestled within each other, created by different funds of knowledge (Robertson *et al.*, 2014).

Costley and Leung (2020) agree that pedagogical translanguaging is a crucial step towards meeting the learning trajectories of multilingual learners. They maintain that in order to meet the needs of all pupils the designated language of schooling should not be the only language used within the classroom. Wawire and Barnes-Story (2023) note that when translanguaging pedagogies are used learners demonstrate expanded vocabularies, sophisticated metalinguistic and meta-semantic awareness, increased engagement and fluency across all languages. Significantly, their research

looks beyond the academic achievement of learners, showing that translanguaging pedagogies empower learners to gain confidence enhancing their overall well-being.

Williamson and Clemons (2023) take this further, showing that multilingual orientations in English classrooms, can support in dismantling legacies of racial hierarchies and thus enabling social justice for multilingual speakers. They found that when multilingualism is promoted students have agency to disrupt the harmful norms of monolingualism. Thus, the need for learning spaces that not only facilitate but encourage multilingualism is key in creating social justice for our multilingual learners. Stavrou *et al.* (2021) found that drawing upon transformative pedagogical approaches such as translanguaging meant that learner agency was actively promoted and the language of power interrogated.

Whilst there is a growing body of research around translanguaging in multilingual classrooms around the world, Costley and Leung (2020) reflect that there are far fewer accounts of translanguaging pedagogies in monolingual classrooms where the linguistic diversity is high but not shared by other pupils or teachers which is often the case in schools in England. Barros *et al.* (2021) note that whilst mainstream monolingual teachers often see home languages as obstacles to children's learning, they are yet to be the focus of translanguaging studies. It was this gap in research within monolingual schools that interested me as our school shares this problem – a monolingual teaching body dominated by English-only speakers.

## **2.4 Parents**

Considering the long-standing monolingual ideologies that continue to influence education policy and conversation, it is not a surprise that research has found that although multilingual parents take part in translanguaging naturally as part of their day to day family conversations, when questioned about translanguaging, they report that keeping languages separate is more beneficial for their children (Moody *et al.*, 2022). Moody *et al.* (2022) found that parents are influenced by the dominant ideologies present in society which portray English as the language of power. This is similar to informal findings within my setting where multilingual parents speak about the importance of English as the majority language. Interestingly, in contrast to Moody *et al.* (2022), Wilson (2021) found that parents felt it was important to speak the minority language at home in order to preserve their children losing it. However,

despite this difference in the language that parents favoured, both Moody *et al.* (2022) and Wilson (2021) agree that there is a need to create educational pedagogies that support and encourage the use of translanguaging so that families do not feel limited in their natural language use.

The encouragement of translanguaging by parents seems especially important as research shows that families have a major impact on children's literacy achievements and their involvement in building cultural capital beyond the school day is vital. Researchers have found that home literacy practices impact not only the development of language but also positively affect emotions associated with reading (Wessels and Trainin, 2014). Furthermore, Barratt-Pugh and Haig (2020) shared how research shows that literacy programs that value home languages and recognise their significance lead to increased parent contributions and as a result improve children's literacy development. In addition, research consistently shows that academic achievement is improved when school and home literacy practices align (Moody *et al.*, 2022).

Taking this further, Song (2022) found that when parents were actively engaged in translanguaging to support children's online school lessons it enhanced their children's learning. Parents were able to support their children to tackle new vocabulary by drawing on all their linguistic repertoires. They found parent engagement was a crucial tool to maximise the effects of translanguaging on the students learning.

Despite Song's (2022) findings, which highlight the importance of parental engagement on the impact of translanguaging, my literature search found no other recent papers that looked at ways to engage parents in translanguaging practices. Therefore, this small-scale investigation seeks to understand whether providing parents with the space to discuss translanguaging through a parent translanguaging workshop will affect their attitudes towards it. My first research question developed out of this thinking: *How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the attitudes of parents towards translanguaging?*

Whilst reading Wilson (2021), it became clear that there was a difference between the attitudes towards language use of multilingual parents and their actual use at home. Whilst 65% of parents felt that translanguaging was beneficial for multilingual

families, 95% felt that speaking one language exclusively to their children would be better than translanguaging. This inspired my second research question (*How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the amount of translanguaging parents engage in with their children?*) as I wanted to understand whether there was any correlation between changing parent's attitudes and the amount of translanguaging actually taking place at home.

## **2.5 Literature Search**

Google Scholar and the Open University Library were used as the main search engines throughout this small-scale investigation. When searching, a filter for peer reviewed articles and those written in the last ten years was used. At first, I used the search terms 'translanguaging' and 'education' to find literature that was linked to the use of translanguaging within schools. This search returned a wide range of literature which I drew upon to develop my understanding of translanguaging. I then narrowed the search by including the words 'monolingual school' and 'England' so that I could look at translanguaging within monolingual settings in England. As discussed above, this returned a much smaller number of papers due to the limited research in this area. Although I did not use a specific filter for education or primary, when deciding which papers to read, I focused on those based in primary schools.

Once I had decided to focus this small-scale investigation on a parent workshop, I used the terms 'translanguaging' and 'parent' to look at research linked to parents and translanguaging. Once again, there were only a few papers in this area which have been discussed above.

Although I did not change the search parameters specifically, where possible I have used papers within the past five years as education has changed significantly since the school closures in 2020 and with the continually increasing movement of people as discussed in the introduction. However, at times it was necessary due to a lack of more recent literature to rely on papers that were between five and ten years old.

## Chapter 3 – Research Design

### Methodology and Methods

As with critical theory, action research seeks to disrupt the dominant discourse and bring about transformation (Armstrong, 2019). Within education, it provides teachers with a methodology that generates knowledge about educational practices, helping them to better understand their teaching. Going further than other methodological approaches, action research aims to intentionally solve a problem raised or owned by an individual or group to improve their understanding and maximise social justice. It aims to change not only individuals but the institutions, societies and cultures of which they are members (Cohen *et al.*, 2017, pp. 440-456).

Inspired by the social change brought about by Freire's early literacy programs in Brazil (Tarlau, 2014) and wanting to use a critical theory lens to challenge the status quo, action research was the most appropriate methodological approach for this project. It aimed to cause emancipatory action by disrupting the monolingual status quo (Costley *et al.*, 2010, pp. 82-90) and empowering our multilingual parents to challenge the English-only model which remains the dominant discourse within our community.

As a methodology, action research aims to challenge the perception that research persistently fails to actually impact or change practice by placing change at the centre of its methodology (Cohen *et al.*, 2017, pp. 440-456). Through the design, implementation and critical evaluation process, prevailing ideas and assumptions are examined and fresh insights and interpretations emerge (Armstrong, 2019). This project aimed to bring about this social change by empowering multilingual parents to break free of the limitations of the English-only model by providing them with the opportunity to share their beliefs, engage in conversation with other multilingual parents and learn alongside each other about the educational impacts of translanguaging.

Action research has critical reflection at its heart – a spiral of steps, each composed of a cycle of planning, action and evaluation. This allows for continual refinement of thinking within multiple cycles of research. However, whilst the cyclical nature of this methodology is clear, one of its advantages is that it can be guided by the researcher



(Thomas, 2023). McNiff (2017) suggests that it is closer to a form of dialogue than a specific technique in itself. Due to the small-scale nature of this investigation, this action research project will not endeavour to find ‘the answer’ but instead will be one-cycle within an ongoing cycle of action research beyond the scope of this small-scale investigation.

This action research project has followed the eight-step process outlined by Cohen *et al.* (2017, pp. 440-456). Throughout this process, I have also used Stutchbury and Fox’s (2009) framework as a useful guide to think about the ethical implications of this research and the measures I have put in place are detailed within the description below.

### Step 1 - Formulation of the problem

As outlined in the introduction in Chapter 1, the difference in the academic achievement of our multilingual learners compared to our monolingual learners was identified as a problem whilst analysing the school’s data. Although all subjects were affected, the gap in writing seemed the hardest to close and was the one that teachers felt most ill-equipped to deal with. Once this problem was identified, we started to implement translanguaging strategies across the school: encouraging children to speak their home languages; translating learning materials and texts for parents and children to discuss at home; adapting flexible writing practises; and adding bilingual texts to our reading corners. Teacher training led to support from the staff who engaged collaboratively in discussions about how they could best support our families.

At this stage, the planned focus of the action research project was on the impact of the translanguaging practices the teachers were implementing on the academic writing of our children. The initial research question was *How does translanguaging support the development of the writing of multilingual students in a monolingual primary school in the UK?*

### Step 2 - Preliminary discussion and negotiations among the interested parties

Gaining permission for this project, from the gatekeeper (my headteacher) within my setting, was relatively straightforward. Throughout my Master’s studies, I have kept them informed of the direction that my thinking has taken and involved them in

discussions about the research. As a school, we had been working hard to implement translanguaging practices as discussed above. This project therefore was a natural progression and the backing of my headteacher meant that it was a straightforward decision to carry out a small-scale action research project in this area. Together, we looked at the Ethical Appraisal Form (Appendix 1) to make sure that all the ethical considerations had been reflected upon.

### Step 3 - Review of the literature

Reviewing the literature as discussed in detail in Chapter 2, provided evidence that translanguaging was a powerful tool that could be used to bring about transformative change for our children (Moody *et al.*, 2022).

### Step 4 - Modification or redefinition of the initial problem

Whilst researching the literature and preparing to carry out the small-scale investigation, it became clear that despite the implementation of translanguaging practices within our school there was continued hesitation from parents. During parents' meetings, a number of parents from a range of different year groups shared their belief that their children should only speak English as they had been told repeatedly in the past, by teachers and members of the community, about the importance of the English-only model of language. They therefore felt anxious about going against this and developing their children's home language. This concerned me as it meant that the dominant discourse of English as the dominant language was continuing to prevail despite our efforts to implement translanguaging practices. As a result, our multilingual learners were still prevented from taking full advantage of their multiple language schemas and were therefore unable to truly embrace their identity.

Returning to the literature, I found evidence suggesting that parental workshops which were designed to support their children's learning and share their own funds of knowledge helped them to feel empowered to be involved in supporting their children's home language development (Song, 2022). Tilley-Lubbs (2011) found that when parents were involved as collaborators in their children's education they were empowered as partners, supporting their children to develop their literacy skills. The 'Bringing Literacy Home: Latino Families Supporting Children's Literacy Learning'

project showed that by intentionally creating a learning atmosphere where parents felt comfortable to share their literary experiences they actively participated in supporting their children's learning. In this environment, parents were empowered to use translanguaging practices with bilingual books to promote and maintain their children's home language (Wessels and Guy, 2014).

Therefore, I decided to modify the small-scale investigation to focus this cycle of action research on the impact of a specific translanguaging parent workshop on the views and engagement of parents in home translanguaging practices. As a result, I adapted my research question to '*How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the attitudes of parents towards translanguaging?*' to focus on parent views around translanguaging.

#### Step 5 - Selecting of research procedures

When deciding on my research method, I wanted to make sure that the participants felt safe and empowered to share their opinions with me in their own words, allowing them to be active participants in bringing about change (Roulston, 2010). The translanguaging workshop itself would allow me to observe the parents' attitudes to translanguaging and therefore begin to answer my first research question: *How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the attitudes of parents towards translanguaging?* However, I needed another research method to further understand parents' attitudes and to answer my second research question: *How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the amount of translanguaging parents engage in with their children?*

As Thomas (2023) highlights, interviews provide personal contact which is not present through online surveys or questionnaires. This proximity gave me the opportunity to watch and listen to nuances in behaviour; show empathy and understanding through my own gestures and body language; and create a calm environment where parents felt safe to share more.

Initially, I was going to use semi-structured interviews to collect the parent views as I wanted to make sure that I collected data linked to my research questions. However, after discussions with my tutor I realised that, due to my critical theory lens, I would be taking an inductive analysis approach to my data (Thomas, 2023) and so there

was no pressure on what my data said as the findings would appear from the data. It was therefore more important to create a space where parents felt able to share their own views and account of translanguaging without me leading them. I realised an unstructured interview model would be more empowering as even a few directed questions could limit the parents' responses. In order to create a conversational tone to the interview and help the participants to relax, I started by asking them to tell me about themselves and their families (Burton and Bartlett, 2005). I then used an open question to start the interview (Appendix 4), placing the emphasis on the participants' own accounts rather than my preconceived social ideas or bias (Burton and Bartlett, 2005; Grieve and Haining, 2011).

To make sure that I made efficient use of people's time, the interviews were capped at 45 minutes and I held one interview with each parent to gain information about their pre- and post-workshop views rather than two. They were 1:1 and arranged at a time convenient for the participants (British Educational Research Association 2018, p. 9).

Before starting the project, an information form providing the participants with a clear idea of the time required, my role, the purpose for the project and their rights regarding withdrawal and data storage (Appendix 2) was sent to all our multilingual families along with a consent form (Appendix 3). This information made it clear to participants that they had the right to withdraw up until two weeks after the interviews had taken place and if they did decide to withdraw, all their data would be destroyed (British Educational Research Association 2018, p. 12).

Research interviews often have a power dimension which the researcher has to be aware of (Burton and Bartlett, 2005). As equality and diversity lead at our school, I have spent the last three years developing positive relationships with our multilingual families: holding 'International Coffee Mornings'; supporting the running of a 'International New Year's Party'; and organising international reading afternoons. This provided an advantage as an insider researcher as I was known and trusted by the participants. However, as Kim (2012) recognises, this does not remove the unequal power relations between me as a teacher and member of senior leadership who speaks English and our parents who speak English as a second language.

Therefore, there was still a significant power imbalance which needed to be considered.

As an insider researcher, I hoped to hear the participants true views strengthening the validity of the results. However, the reliability of the project is limited as another researcher would not necessarily get the same results from conducting the same research (Thomas, 2023). However, I choose to sacrifice the reliability in an attempt to gain the authentic voice of the participants and thus maintain a critical theory lens.

I chose to audio record the interviews using Microsoft Teams so that I could maintain eye contact and be fully engaged in the interviews to help the participants feel more at ease (Burton and Bartlett, 2005). In addition, I thought carefully about where we conducted the interviews, making sure that we sat side by side so that it had a conversational tone rather than feeling intimidating. We used my classroom which all the participants were familiar with and I offered them refreshments to make them feel welcome (Burton and Bartlett, 2005).

Despite this the participants may have still felt pressured to respond in certain ways due to the perception that school staff judge their involvement in their children's education and how they support them at home. In order to minimise this risk, the interviews took place in private spaces where only I could hear the participant's answers. All participants were anonymised through the use of pseudonyms and no personal information that could identify them (such as the languages they speak, how many children they have or what jobs they do) was included in the data (British Educational Research Association 2018, p. 21). In addition, I made it clear at the start of the interview that throughout the project no-one was being judged and there was no right or wrong answer (The Open University, 2022a).

Another significant ethical consideration within this research was the understanding of the participants (British Educational Research Association 2018, p. 12), as the majority of them speak English as an additional language. Therefore, it was vital that all information forms and consent forms (Appendix 2 and 3) were translated into the participants' home languages and that there were translation tools available both at the translanguaging parent workshop and the interview to support communication. In order to make sure all participants were treated fairly, this was offered to all participants and the letters were translated into the languages from our school

systems to protect participants from harm due to micro-aggressions if assumptions were made about language skills (The Open University, 2022b).

Although I understand the importance of triangulation (Thomas, 2023), the short time frame of this study meant that there was not time to complete a pre- and post-interview. I considered using a questionnaire as in Wilson (2021) to collect pre-workshop data, however I did not want to create a power imbalance before the process started where the participants felt they were being 'tested' as to whether they used translanguaging and whether the workshop had worked. I felt that this could influence the whole study as they may have felt there was a right and wrong answer. This would have continued the power imbalance, allowing the dominant discourse to prevail as they felt pressurised to answer in a certain way. In contrast, by just having post-workshop interviews that were focused on discussing their views and family life, I hoped to reduce the power imbalance and disrupt the dominant discourse.

It was also important that I thought carefully about what data I collected, how it was stored and destroyed so that it was aligned with the requirements of the *Data Protection Act, 2018*. I made sure that all consent forms were stored in a locked cupboard on school site and shredded at the end of the module. If any participants chose to withdraw from the process, their consent forms would have been shredded immediately. The audio recordings were conducted through Microsoft Teams and saved into a password protected folder on my password protected laptop. They were only listened to by myself in private. Once the recordings had been transcribed (with all names anonymised), the audio recordings were permanently deleted. The transcriptions of each interview were password protected and saved onto a password protected laptop. Any information other than names, that made a participant identifiable were deleted or anonymised. I re-read transcriptions immediately after transcribing to check for any errors and to make sure that they did not contain any identifiable information. At the end of the module, the transcriptions will be permanently deleted (The Open University, 2011).

### Step 6 - Evaluation Process

Throughout the project, I have continually evaluated the ethical issues surrounding the project and the effectiveness of the methodology.

Although the interviews provided me with a rich body of data to analyse, I found that I had to ask more follow up questions than I had originally planned. The participants tended to answer with a short response, possibly limited by their English, which they all chose to conduct the interview in, before going silent. I then had to use a probing question to encourage them to add more to their response.

Therefore, the interviews were less open than I wanted and as a result I may have unintentionally altered the participants' responses by my follow-up questions. In the future, I would set out to use an unstructured interview but with follow-up questions prepared in case they were needed. Although this could increase my impact on the participants' responses, it would be better to have the questions planned before the interview than to make them up on the spot.

I also found that the conversation flowed more openly during the translanguaging parent workshop where all three participants were together. This allowed them to talk to each other, help each other with any language or understanding struggles and collectively build on one another's ideas. Therefore, in the future I would think about doing the interviews as focus groups to allow this collaboration and depth of response whilst remaining aware of the fact that they might impact each other's responses (Thomas, 2023).

### Step 7 - Implementation of the intervention

The intervention within this action research project was a parental workshop about translanguaging.

All multilingual parents from across the school were invited to attend the translanguaging workshop by email (which was translated into all twenty-two languages in our school community). This was then followed-up by a reminder email, distributing letters on the gate before school and phone calls to families. Having looked at literature in the field of translanguaging, I was aiming to include up to six participants within this research. This is more than in other translanguaging projects (Wilson, 2021; Robertson *et al.*, 2014; Moody *et al.*, 2022) and I felt this would give me scope to compare and contrast different parent responses.

However, in total, three parents attended the translanguaging parent workshop. Although this was not as many participants as originally intended, I felt that due to

the nature of this small-scale investigation and the limitation of time, completing three interviews with these participants would still provide valuable information about the views of parents within our school community. I am aware of my obligation to make sure that I have enough evidence to back up my conclusions and resolutions (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009). Therefore, due to the limited participant size, the data collected from this investigation is not generalisable (Thomas, 2023). However, it still provides an insight into the parents' views within our community and the method of the intervention is replicable in other schools.

It was important when facilitating the parent translanguaging workshop that I stayed true to my critical theory lens, making sure that it was more than the presentation of a set of translanguaging techniques. I was also aware that as a member of the dominant majority as a white monolingual woman, I did not want to dictate the nature of the discussion (Breuing, 2011). Therefore, the session aimed to provide a safe space for parents to share and discuss their opinions on translanguaging, learn from each other and be empowered to use translanguaging at home to support their children's learning.

The meeting took place in my classroom, a quiet space known to the participants. Refreshments were offered to the participants when they arrived and we started with an informal conversation introducing ourselves to help them feel at ease (Thomas, 2023). At this point, I shared with the participants my vulnerabilities, explaining that I realised that at the moment we were failing the multilingual children within our school and that I understood more needed to be done (Freire, 2000). The workshop lasted just under an hour and included opportunities for the families to share the languages they spoke at home and their feelings around translanguaging. In order to stay true to my critical theory lens, the aim of this workshop was not for me to impart knowledge onto the parents but rather to help give them the space to feel empowered by their collective experience (Freire, 2000). Although I informally shared some examples of research that showed how translanguaging helped academic achievement, this was only in response to parent questions. I worked hard to make sure that I did not lead the discussion or influence the flow of the conversation. I spent most of the time listening to the views and thoughts of the parents, learning from them and developing my understanding of the barriers and challenges they faced.



During the translanguaging workshop, I made some informal observational notes about the parents' attitudes towards translanguaging. I wrote these down in a notebook, as we were talking, in note form. I decided to use an unstructured observation approach, making notes whilst part of the discussion, in order to stay true to my critical theory lens. Therefore, rather than looking for certain behaviours, I noted down what I saw happening (Thomas, 2023).

### Step 8 - Interpretation of the data

Once the data had been collected, it was thematically analysed. This analysis method was chosen as it provides a rich and detailed account of data and is accessible for those early in their qualitative research career. It allowed me to search across the observation notes and three interviews for repeated patterns of meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Whilst analysing the data, I used an inductive approach so that the themes were strongly linked to the data itself (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Through a bottom-up process, I allowed the theory to emerge from the data rather than approaching it with a set of preconceived themes and ideas (Cohen *et al.*, 2017, pp. 643-656). Although, I recognise that no analysis process can be entirely passive as the researcher will always play an active role in identifying the themes they choose to present to the readers (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.80). However, by not trying to fit the data into a pre-existing coding frame I allowed the parents' voices to emerge and their messages to be heard through the analysis (Thomas, 2023).

The data was analysed as one set rather than one by one so that general trends could be identified. Through the analysis, individual views were compared and contrasted.

I used the steps set out by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyse the data:

#### *Phase One – familiarizing yourself with your data*

The observational notes were re-read straight after the workshop to check that I could understand what I had written and add any further detail that I had not been able to write during the meeting. I then re-read them a number of times as I began to process the data to make sure that I was familiar with them.

After conducting the interviews, the data was transcribed as described in Breuing (2011), using clear transcription conventions as outlined by Cohen *et al.* (2017, pp. 643-656). This process gave me a thorough understanding of the data as it involved repetitive listening and close reading.

*Phase Two – generating initial codes*

Initial codes were then created for each segment of the raw data.

*Phase Three – searching for themes*

Once the codes had been established, a thematic map was used to combine different codes to form overarching themes.

*Phase Four – reviewing themes*

As analysis is not a linear process, the themes were reviewed and modified as appropriate. It became apparent that some initial candidate themes needed to be merged and other themes appeared from within initial themes.

*Phase Five – defining and naming themes*

At this stage, the three key themes were determined and a name given to each one that indicated the essence of what it was about. These themes were:

Attitudes Towards Translanguaging

Use of Translanguaging

Other Interventions

## Chapter 4 – Data Analysis

This chapter aims to process, analyse and interpret the qualitative data, collected from the translanguaging workshop and three subsequent interviews conducted in this project. First, observations made during the translanguaging workshop were analysed to begin to answer the first research question: *How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the attitudes of parents towards translanguaging?* Then, the interview data was analysed to further answer the first research question and begin to answer the second question: *How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the amount of translanguaging parents engage in with their children?*

Each theme will now be outlined, explored and analysed in the context of the project's two research questions.

### 4.1 Attitudes Towards Translanguaging

At the start of the translanguaging parent workshop, the parents communicated in very short two- or three-word sentences, speaking mainly about their family and the languages they spoke at home. At first, none of them commented on the use of translanguaging, focusing more on expressing the languages that they as parents spoke without elaborating about their children. Their body language was closed and they sat with their chairs facing me in a straight line.

As we continued to talk, one of the parents asked me about how I felt. I informally shared some evidence around the power of translanguaging, leaving time and space for the parents to talk with each other about what I had shared. As the discussion grew, the parents seemed to take encouragement from each other, opening up about their feelings towards translanguaging.

“It’s so important isn’t it...”

It became clear, through this discussion, that all three parents felt positively about translanguaging and that it was a natural part of their day to day life. As Wessels and Trainin (2014) found, they seemed empowered by the collective nature of the translanguaging parent workshop and were able to use this opportunity to share practices with each other.

“We read books in ... and in ... at home which has really helped them to develop understanding of what they are reading in ...”

“Ah that is something we could do.”

As well as the words that the participants exchanged, their body language changed as the workshop progressed. As a shared appreciation of translanguaging emerged, they became more relaxed, smiling and turning their chairs to face each other. The conversation flowed with the parents jumping in to finish each other's sentences and nodding as they spoke. They seemed to grow in confidence and this confidence was carried through to the interviews where they spoke positively and confidently about the translanguaging practices they engaged in at home.

The reason for the initial hesitation to share about translanguaging was touched on during the interviews, where two parents expressed how sad they felt when families did not engage in translanguaging practices. Parent three took this further, expressing that she felt at times other parents were embarrassed by their home language.

“On the playground I saw two ... parents with two ... children and they speak English and I saw that as weird as I thought maybe they don't want to be rude for the English people but for example for me I take that as maybe they don't want them to speak ... because it is ... you know.”

In addition, parent three shared her worries about translanguaging when her child was first born, highlighting that she had not always felt positively about translanguaging. She shared how she had had to put aside her worries about not understanding English in order to maintain her child's home language.

“I worried about when we speak ... and ... then when he got to school he would not understand English. But I spoke with my partner and we said it is better that he will learn English at school as we don't know so well English so better he learn at school and then we learn him ... and ... at home.”

This also highlighted the parent's understanding of the importance of translanguaging and that speaking only broken English limits the child's vocabulary.

Parent two shared a similar view, stating that she had a much wider vocabulary and felt more comfortable speaking in her home language than in English. Therefore, she felt that translanguaging helped her develop her children's vocabulary as she was able to share the meaning of words in her home language when she couldn't in English.

During the interviews, all three parents spoke about the importance of maintaining their children's home language for their children's cultural understanding and feelings of identity. They spoke about translanguaging helping this process. They felt a strong sense that if the children did not maintain their home language they would lose their cultural identity and a piece of who they were.

"It is important they keep speaking ... as it is our country, our motherland and they need to remember who they are."

The parents also shared a feeling that maintaining their home language allowed their children to communicate with family who live abroad. In addition, they spoke about how it helped them to understand other cultures and fit in when they visited relatives. This felt important to all the participants.

"I have family in ... and ... so they can be understood...for mine they like going and understand my brothers and sisters."

Despite all three parents holding a predominantly positive view towards translanguaging, parent two and three discussed how at times it was difficult for them to maintain their children's home language as they now preferred to speak in English and asked to read and watch television in English. This showed a shift in the children's attitudes as they grow older and spend more time in English speaking settings.

Parent two also shared how her children's views differed depending on their age. Whilst her younger child was interested in developing her English at home, the impact of mental load on her older daughter who attends secondary school means she wants to speak her home language at home. She noted that she often says 'enough English' when she gets home from school as she is tired after a day of translating. This idea also alludes to the importance of translanguaging in reducing

the cognitive load on multilingual children, especially when they are new to English as with parent two's family who arrived in England less than a year ago.

Parent two also acknowledged how over time she could see her children losing their home language even with translanguaging at home. She shared how important it was for her to therefore work harder on the translanguaging at home to continue to preserve their home language as they spent more time at school.

This theme, which emerged from the data, answers my first research question (*How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the attitudes of parents towards translanguaging?*) The analysis shows that all three parents came to the translanguaging workshop with a positive view of translanguaging whether this had always been the case, or developed as in parent three's case after conversations with family. They seemed to share a mutual understanding of the need for their children to maintain their cultural heritage, fit in with relatives and take pride in their identity. Alongside this, there was a feeling shared by all parents that they themselves could communicate at a higher level with their children in their home language.

Although the workshop did not seem to alter their attitudes towards translanguaging, their willingness to discuss their feelings developed as they grew in confidence through the workshop. The workshop therefore seemed to provide an opportunity for the families to reinforce their confidence in the positive translanguaging pedagogy they were using at home.

#### **4.2 Use of Translanguaging**

As explored in Wilson (2021), the different families that took part in this project had different experiences and expectations around translanguaging at home. All three parents shared that their families engage in translanguaging. For parent one and two this was a mix between English and their home languages. Parent three shared how they spoke three languages at home and used translanguaging between all three.

At some point in the interview, all three participants shared that their families engage in translanguaging practices as a natural part of family life.

"We mix between English and ... in one sentence."

As well as in their everyday speech, all three parents, discussed how they read with their children in both English and their home languages. They all talked confidently about how they read books in English and discuss them in their home language. Parent one and three also spoke about how they read books in their home language and then their children talk to them about them in English.

“We read in ... and in English. For example, the children are in ... school so they also get books in ... school and in English...Yes it helps them when we read in ... and then in English. They are able to learn more words.”

Parent one explained how translanguaging allowed her to support her child’s literacy learning in a way that matches her linguistic repertoire rather than within static language boundaries.

“My kids they understand English much better than me so for me with a book I try to understand in my language and after that I explain to them in my language so that they understand is much better.”

This is echoed in Moody *et al.* (2022).

As well as using translanguaging around reading, parent two shared how her family use it when watching television or movies. She discussed how her daughter enjoys watching cartoons and so they watch them in their home language and then discuss them in English or vice versa. She explained how this allowed her daughter to engage in her home language in a positive and happy way whilst developing her vocabulary and understanding.

This theme, which emerged from the data, answers my second research question (*How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the amount of translanguaging parents engage in with their children?*) Although all three parents shared a rich range of ways they use translanguaging practices at home, none of them indicated that they had changed any of their translanguaging practices as a result of the parent workshop. As discussed earlier, this is likely due to the fact that they came to the translanguaging workshop already engaging in this pedagogical approach at home.

### 4.3 Interventions

All three participants, spoke about the importance of the translanguaging interventions (other than the workshop) that had been put in place by the school. They spoke positively about the translation of school emails and school curriculum documentations, noting that this allows them to engage in conversations with their children around their learning and educational activities.

“For example, the last two months the emails, I like them when they are translate.”

They also expressed how important it was to them that languages are celebrated at school and that the ‘International Coffee Mornings’ and ‘International New Year’s Party’ have brought the community of multilingual speakers closer together which has encouraged them to continue to use translanguaging both at home and within the school community.

“It is really nice that languages are at school you have a good opportunity to touch other cultures and other languages. It opens up how we speak other words. The languages gives to us connect.”

The parents also shared an understanding that the school wanted them to maintain their home language and use translanguaging at home. They expressed that they felt supported and helped by the school and this in turn helped them to continue to use translanguaging practices at home. Although this theme, which emerged from the data, does not directly answer one of the research questions it is important in showing the impact of the wider work around this project.

### 4.4 Conclusion

It became clear through the parent workshop and the interviews that all three parents came to the translanguaging workshop with positive attitudes towards translanguaging and strong translanguaging practices already in place at home. The observational notes show that their eagerness to engage in conversation about their translanguaging practices grew through the parent workshop and it seemed that their confidence in what they were doing was reinforced. In contrast to the start of the parent workshop, by the end and during the interviews all three parents spoke confidently and happily about the translanguaging practices their families engage in.



However, despite this shift in confidence, the parents' attitudes towards translanguaging and the amount of translanguaging they engaged in with their children did not change. This is likely to be because they came to the workshop already holding positive attitudes towards this pedagogical approach. Therefore, future research is needed to consider the impact of a translanguaging parent workshop on parents who do not hold positive views of translanguaging. Encouraging these parents to attend a parent workshop will need some careful consideration and involve targeted conversations to engage them in the process before the workshop as a blanket approach as described in the methods section of this project did not work.

## Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Implications

The focus of this small-scale investigation has been to explore whether a parent translanguaging workshop within a monolingual school impacts parents' attitudes towards and use of translanguaging.

In response to the first research question (*How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the attitudes of parents towards translanguaging?*) this investigation found that despite English being the dominant discourse in the community, the multilingual parents' attitudes towards translanguaging were positive. All three parents spoke confidently about the advantages of translanguaging. They also spoke about the cultural importance of maintaining home languages and the positive impact on their children's sense of identity. Unlike Moody *et al.* (2022), the parents did not counter this feeling of cultural importance with the need to keep languages separate in order to maintain dominant monolingual ideologies. Instead, they seemed confident that translanguaging was supporting their children's development across all languages.

These findings were different to the anecdotal evidence presented in chapter three where parents at our school shared concerns about speaking their home languages due to previous conversations around the English-only model being important for their child's English development. Although it was outside of the scope of this small-scale investigation, the positive discourse presented in this small-scale investigation may have been caused by the wider work the school has been doing, since these initial conversations, to raise the profile of language within school. All three of the parents spoke positively about these additions to school life, explaining how this has helped them to engage more with their children's learning, build a stronger multilingual community and given them the confidence to continue to engage in translanguaging.

In answer to the second research question (*How does a translanguaging parent workshop affect the amount of translanguaging parents engage in with their children?*) all three parents shared how they frequently engage in planned and casual translanguaging practices at home. These practices went further than merely translating, aiming to develop all the children's languages rather than using one to

support another (Velasco and García, 2014). Instead of aiming to maintain their children's home language, they encouraged cross-language semantic remapping by reading in one language and discussing what they had read in another (Lewis *et al.*, 2012). They described practices that clearly encouraged their children to use their full repertoire of language to develop their literacy skills (García and Kleyn, 2016).

Despite these findings, this investigation did not find that parent attitudes or use of translanguaging changed as a result of the parent workshop. This is likely due to the fact that the parents came to the workshop already positive and engaged in translanguaging pedagogy. However, the investigation did find that the parents' confidence to share about their attitudes towards and use of translanguaging grew once they knew that the workshop facilitator held a positive and supportive view. In addition, all three parents spoke more confidently when in the presence of the other parents. This highlights the power of the workshop as a tool to support parents to share and engage in discussion around translanguaging.

Moving forward, the next step of the action research cycle, within this setting, will be to engage parents who do not hold positive attitudes towards translanguaging in the parent workshops. Engaging parents in school life, especially when they are not interested in the topic of discussion, is difficult. As I found for this investigation, when trying to engage parents in the process, building relationships with them is crucial. Therefore, time will need to be committed in order to build on the relationships we have with these families so that we can understand why there is this lack of engagement in translanguaging and then work to employ strategies to overcome these challenges. Furthermore, changing the name of the 'workshop' to 'discussion' might support parents to understand the collaborative nature of the project rather than feeling they are going to be told what to do. Drawing on the multilingual parents who are engaged and confident in translanguaging as buddies to support other families, may also help.

As well as engaging these families, further research into the impact of translanguaging on children's academic performance, involvement in school life, confidence and emotional well-being within monolingual schools is needed. Now that we know that there are parents who hold positive views of and are engaging with translanguaging within our school setting, more research is needed to look at the

difference that this makes to their children's school journey versus those that do not engage in translanguaging. In addition, there is scope for research into the impact on children's understanding and engagement when teachers use more formal translanguaging strategies in conjunction with parents to supplement school-based learning as seen in Song (2022).

This investigation was small-scale by nature only gathering information from three participants. Although small, the research approach and methods as outlined in chapter three allowed for the data required to be collected in order to answer the research questions. However, due to its size and the insider researcher nature of the study the findings are not generalisable as they are limited to the school where the study took place (Thomas, 2023). The method that was followed during this investigation is set out clearly in chapter three, providing a framework that could be used by other schools wanting to develop their approach to translanguaging. For further conclusions to be drawn, wider research with higher participant numbers and in different school settings is needed to determine whether the findings are consistent.

The findings from this study will be disseminated via email to the leaders of other schools within the trust and local collaboration that my school is part of so that others can learn from these findings.

## **Post-Script – Narrative Critical Reflection**

Reviewing my reflective journal, there are two clear areas of development that I have been working on this year. The first, raised in my EMA feedback for module EE815, was making sure that my ideas and assumptions were backed up by literature and theory. The second was making sure that I stayed true to my critical theory lens throughout my dissertation and really understood the link between Freire's work in critical pedagogy and the work of critical theorists. For evidence of further feedback and reflections see my reflection evidence grid which can be found in Appendix 5.

Having come across translanguaging in EE815, I was intrigued and immediately started to read around the subject. I also started to implement different elements of what I was reading within my classroom. As a result, when writing the EMA for EE815 there were times when I wrote about changes and outcomes I was seeing in my classroom without backing it up with literature or theory. I also made assumptions about what I would see in my proposed research project based on the readings but without evidence of it happening. Having received feedback from my EMA, I made sure that when planning my dissertation, I used a clear planning grid to make sure that all the points I was making in each chapter were backed up by clear theory and literature. I created a literature map to show the literature that linked to each point I was making. I also asked someone who had not heard about translanguaging to read through my dissertation to check that I wasn't making any assumptions and was clearly explaining and justifying each point.

Throughout the dissertation process, I have found staying true to my critical theory lens challenging. Writing my second TMA, revealed that I was not clear on the distinction between critical theory and Freire's work on critical pedagogy. I therefore set aside time over the Easter holidays to read a number of different articles about critical theory, including *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* by Max Horkheimer (Horkheimer, 1972). I also spent time delving further into the work of Freire, reading a number of chapters of his book 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' (Freire, 2000). These readings gave me a clearer understanding of what critical theory and critical pedagogy were. In addition, they allowed me to reflect on the research methodology I was proposing and make changes to make sure that I was staying true to my critical theory lens. The main changes were around the parent translanguaging

workshop. In TMA02, I had included a series of slides which explained to parents the importance of translanguaging and how it helped children. My tutor noted that this was not true to the nature of critical theory as I was proposing to tell them what to do. Reading Freire's work helped me to understand the need to give the multilingual parents a space to share their thoughts and to show my vulnerabilities as an educator rather than use the time to educate them in what I thought they needed to be doing. In addition, I had also been drawn towards a semi-structured interview as I was worried about not collecting the 'right' data and therefore not having enough to write up about. A conversation with my tutor along with reading around inductive analysis and the importance of the themes emerging from the data helped me to understand the power of using an open interview to elicit the parent's views.

Completing this small-scale investigation alongside full time work as a teacher and member of the senior leadership team within our school has been challenging. Juggling the different time pressures whilst making sure that this project was given the time it deserved has been difficult. However, I feel like I have learnt a lot from this process and developed a clear research paradigm along with a secure understanding of methodology and ethics which will allow me to carry out further research in the future. I am looking forward to moving forward with the next cycle of action research as discussed in the conclusion.

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## Appendix 1 – Ethical Appraisal Form

## E822 Ethical Appraisal Form



Masters: Education, Childhood and Youth

**NB: it should be noted that The Open University is unable to offer liability insurance to cover any negative consequences students might encounter when undertaking 'in-person' data collection. It is therefore very important that you follow appropriate research protocols which should include seeking Gatekeeper permissions to undertake any data collection within your setting and adhering to ethical principles for the safety of yourself and your participants.**

**Because ethical appraisal should precede data collection, a completed version of this form should be included with TMA02 for those developing a Small-Scale Investigation (SSI) and as part of the EMA submission for those completing an Extended Literature Review and Research Proposal (EP) form of the Dissertation.**

Fill in section 1 of this document with your personal details and brief information about your research.

For section 2, please assess your research using the following questions and click yes or no as appropriate. If there is any possibility of significant risk please tick yes. Even if your list contains all “no” you should still return your completed checklist so your tutor/supervisor can assess the proposed research.

## Section 1: Project details

a.	Student name	Emily Young	
b.	PI		
c.	Project title	An action research project into a parent translanguaging workshop in a monolingual primary school.	
d.	Supervisor/tutor	Anita Pilgrim	
e.	Qualification	Master's in Education	X

		Masters in Childhood and Youth	
f.	MA pathway (where applicable)		
g.	Intended start date for fieldwork	17 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	
h.	Intended end date for fieldwork	7 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
i.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in  <i>If you are resident in the UK and will be conducting your research abroad please check <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk">www.fco.gov.uk</a> for advice on travel.</i>	United Kingdom	

Section 2: Ethics Assessment		Yes	No
1	Does your proposed research need initial clearance from a 'gatekeeper' (e.g. Local Authority, head teacher, college head, nursery/playgroup manager)?	Yes	
2	Have you checked whether the organisation requires you to undertake a 'police check' or appropriate level of 'disclosure' before carrying out your research? <sup>1</sup>	Yes	
3	Have you indicated how informed consent will be obtained from your participants (including children less than 16 years old, school pupils and immediate family members)? Your consent letters/forms must inform participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. <sup>2</sup>	Yes	
4	Will your proposed research design mean that it will be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)? If so, have you specified appropriate debriefing procedures? <sup>3</sup>		No
5	Does your proposed design involve repetitive observation of participants, (i.e. more than twice over a period of more than 2-3 weeks)? Is this necessary? If it is, have you made appropriate provision for participants to renew consent or withdraw from the study half-way through? <sup>4</sup>		No
6	Are you proposing to collect video and/or audio data? If so, have you indicated how you will protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality and how you will store the data?	Yes	

7	Does your proposal indicate how you will give your participants the opportunity to access the outcomes of your research (including audio/visual materials) after they have provided data?	Yes	
8	Have you built in time for a pilot study to make sure that any task materials you propose to use are age appropriate and that they are unlikely to cause offence to any of your participants?		No
9	Is your research likely to involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. adult/child relationships, peer relationships, discussions about personal teaching styles, ability levels of individual children and/or adults)? What safeguards have you put in place to protect participants' confidentiality?	Yes	
10	Does your proposed research raise any issues of personal safety for yourself or other persons involved in the project? Do you need to carry out a 'risk analysis' and/or discuss this with teachers, parents and other adults involved in the research?		No
11	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		No
12	Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS or the use of NHS data?		No

If you answered 'yes' to questions **12**, you will also have to submit an application to an appropriate National Research Ethics Service ethics committee (<https://www.hra.nhs.uk/about-us/committees-and-services/res-and-recs/>).

## **Appendix 2 – Information Letter to Parents**

Dear Parents,

Alongside my teaching, I am completing a masters in equality and diversity in education through The Open University. As part of this, I am undertaking a research project into the power of translanguaging (speaking, reading, discussing, listening across languages) for multilingual families. The project will involve a one-hour workshop for parents on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 2-3 o'clock in my classroom. The workshop aims to provide parents with the opportunity to share how they are using translanguaging in their homes; to help me understand how we as a school could support this more; and to give parents confidence to use translanguaging more.

After the workshop, I would like to interview a number of parents to talk about how they found the workshop and their experience of translanguaging in their home. The interview will be 45 minutes long, after school at a time that is convenient for you. It will be audio recorded and all names will be changed so that participants are anonymous. Translating tools will be available throughout the workshop and interview. All personal information will be stored on a password protected laptop and destroyed at the end of the project. You can withdraw from the project up until two weeks after the interviews have been completed and your information will be destroyed.

If you would like to be involved, please fill in the attached consent form and return to the office by 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024. If you would like any further information, please feel free to email the office or come and talk to me on the gate.

Thanks.

### Appendix 3 – Interview Consent Form

Please indicate YES or NO for each of the questions below and return the completed form by 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to the school office.

Have you read (or had read to you) the information about the parent workshop and interview?	YES	NO
Has the interview been explained to you?	YES	NO
Do you understand what this interview is about?	YES	NO
Have you asked all the questions you want?	YES	NO
Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?	YES	NO
Do you understand it is OK to stop taking part at any time?	YES	NO
Are you happy for the interview to be audio recorded?	YES	NO
Are you happy with how your data will be stored?	YES	NO
Do you understand that your real names as well as any identifiable information will be removed from what will be shared after the interview?	YES	NO
Are you happy to take part?	YES	NO

If any answers are 'no' you can ask more questions. But if you **don't** want to take part, please let me know and **don't** sign your name.

If you **do** want to take part, please write your name and today's date

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your help.



## **Appendix 4 – Open Interview Question**

Open Interview – Question to start the interview:

What are your thoughts on translanguaging?

## Appendix 5 – Reflection Evidence Grid

Category	Feedback received, targets achieved and areas of development worked on	How did this shape my dissertation
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	<p><u>Feedback from TMA01:</u> I would like to see you explain how you know there is a gap in the literature: this should be either because the rest of the literature says so, or you can show how you did your literature search and that it was rigorous so it's believable that there is a gap - we can be confident you haven't missed anything.</p>	<p>I struggled to understand how to write about a literature search at first as having spent nearly two years researching translinguaging it felt like an impossible task. However, a discussion with my tutor helped me to understand the purpose of defining your search in the context of showing a gap in the research. I had read a number of papers that stated that more research was needed in this area of research. However, I now understood I also needed to show that a literature search would also show a gap. I read a range of the OU published master's papers to see how they had written this section up and this helped give me a structure to follow to write my own.</p>
<b>Critical analysis and evaluation</b>	<p><u>Feedback from TMA01:</u> Theoretically, you are under-referencing. You have got an idea about how you are going about your study, but it isn't pinned down to specific texts</p>	<p>Whilst planning my dissertation, I made sure that I created clear tables that indicated which literature supported my thinking. I started by making sure that I had a good grasp on the literature I</p>

	<p>which will be supporting you as you continue to develop your conceptual framework.</p> <p><u>Feedback from TMA02:</u></p> <p>Shown good evidence of an ability to make connections between theory and practice; shown good level of practicality in the use of arguments and empirical evidence.</p>	<p>had read and bullet pointed what each piece of literature showed me. I then collected the papers together into groups depending on whether they were linked to methodology, research paradigm or translanguaging. I then created a planning grid for each section which included my main points and the literature for each point.</p>
<b>Links to professional practice</b>	<p><u>Feedback on questions from TMA01:</u></p> <p>Can you have a think about the third research question you've put here? Bear in mind that you will only have time for a SMAL scale project - do you think these questions might be expanding the project beyond what you can achieve in the timescale?</p>	<p>Reflecting on feedback on TMA01, from my tutor, I realised that the scope of my project was too big for a small-scale investigation. I therefore decided that considering I was facing challenges at work with parent's views of translanguaging and the literature was showing that parent engagement has a significant positive impact on children's literacy I would focus my attention on parent engagement. I therefore rewrote my questions and focused on just two.</p>
<b>Structure, communication and presentation</b>	<p><u>First Draft Chapter Feedback:</u></p> <p>It is clear how your chosen methods will elicit data to answer your research questions, however the questions have not been explicitly used? Or if they</p>	<p>Feedback from my first draft chapter highlighted that I was not explicitly using my research questions to structure my writing. Therefore, whilst creating a plan for each chapter, I mapped out how I was going to include my</p>

	<p>were, as a reader I wasn't aware of them being explicitly discussed?</p> <p><u>Second Draft Chapter</u></p> <p><u>Feedback:</u></p> <p>Good to have the research questions integrated into the chapter.</p>	<p>research questions. I started with them at the centre of the plan and then mapped out how the rest of the writing built around the questions to make sure that they were explicitly discussed.</p>
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