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## Towards translanguaging in CLIL: a study on teachers' perceptions and practices in Kazakhstan

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### ABSTRACT

Since its inception in the 1990s Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has transformed from an initiative to improve communicative competence in foreign languages into a complex language-aware construct in which translanguaging and curriculum integration are identifiable pedagogical practices. This shift of paradigm in its conceptualisation has run parallel to the inclusion of multilingual practices in education, and it has been influenced by the so-called multilingual turn. However, despite the conceptualisation of CLIL becoming more complex, and translanguaging making an interesting case for research in multilingual and CLIL scenarios, there is still a dearth of studies dealing with translanguaging practices in different contexts. This article reports the results of an exploratory qualitative study investigating CLIL teachers' perceptions on the pedagogical use of translanguaging and the impact of those perceptions on their teaching practices in different trilingual schools in Kazakhstan. Findings (1) showed that **teachers' stance on translanguaging is rather ambiguous**; and (2) led us to identify a set of teaching practices related to **how teachers make use of translanguaging: exclusive use of the target language as an ideal (end-goal); translanguaging as a way of scaffolding content; translanguaging as a transitional practice (temporary fix) and code-switching; and translanguaging as a way to counter teachers' own language proficiency limits.**

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### Introduction: CLIL and the multilingual turn

The conceptualisation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) throughout the years has shifted from 'the potential lynchpin to tackle the foreign language deficit' (Pérez Cañado, 2016) to the complex language-aware construct (Otto & San Isidro, 2019) in which translanguaging (Nikula & Moore, 2019) and curricular integration (Llinares et al., 2012; San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2020) are identifiable pedagogical practices. This paradigm change has run parallel to the inclusion of multilingual practices in education, and it has been influenced by the so-called multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2013), critical movement in education originated in the United States and used by applied linguists to critique the traditional monolingual views on foreign or additional language

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learning on the grounds of the ecological understanding of multilingualism (Canagarajah, 2014; García, 2009; Meier, 2016; Turnbull, 2018), based on equity and social justice. This ideological positioning transcends the traditional monolingual bias characterised by language separation, drawing on (1) the concept of multilingualism as the 'coexistence, contact and interaction of different languages' (Li, 2013, p. 26); and (2) the fact that multilingual individuals acquire and use their linguistic repertoire in given social contexts, shaping these contexts with communicative interaction (Canagarajah, 2011). The alternative to the traditional perspective of language separation is a focus on multilingualism (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011) hinged on three parameters: the multilingual speaker, the linguistic repertoire as a whole and the social context. Multilingual speakers use multimodal features from a unitary linguistic repertoire in different contexts for different communicative purposes (García & Wei, 2014) and those inherently communicative features are learned dynamically through activities and 'experiences in the physical and social world' (Vogel & García, 2017, p. 6).

The multilingual turn has brought this complex language-dynamic perspective into classroom settings in the form of flexible and fluid linguistic practices. The connection of language learning to the relationship between, and influence of the different languages in the learners' linguistic repertoire is unquestionable, above all, in multilingual settings. In a learning environment, the way additional language learning takes place is impacted by a number of aspects related to the learners' first, second or other languages. San Isidro (2019) notes that those aspects include the linguistic distance between the different languages, the learners' level of proficiency in their first language(s) and their knowledge of the additional language, the dialect(s) used, the status of the students' language in the community along with the societal attitudes towards the learners' first language. The influence of the multilingual turn, which acknowledges the value and role of broad linguistic repertoires, along with its adaptation to different contexts and policies around the world have made CLIL contexts start embracing the inclusion of translanguaging practices and become language-rich scenarios (Nikula & Moore, 2019; Otto & San Isidro, 2019).

In broad terms, translanguaging – as distinct from code-switching (Lin, 2019) – is related to the teachers and students' systematic use of and change between the different languages (San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019b) in connection with the flexible linguistic practices multilingual individuals engage in when interacting (García & Wei, 2014). In other words, it relates to strategic and systematic classroom language planning combining two or more languages within the same learning task (San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019b). It aims to help multilingual speakers to make meaning through shaping their own experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of the languages in use and even of the content being taught (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). According to García (2009), translanguaging refers to processes which entail multiple discursive practices, in which learners introduce classroom language learning into their own language repertoire. This is why translanguaging may create a space for social justice and sociolinguistic equity (Prada & Turnbull, 2018) for multilingual speakers in the classroom 'by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitudes, beliefs and performance' (Li, 2011, p. 1223). A translanguaging classroom is thus 'a place in which learners of linguistically diverse backgrounds can integrate social spaces and language codes previously practiced in separation' (Prada & Turnbull, 2018).

According to García (2009), the flexible and strategic use of the different languages makes learners free from the constraints of language separation or sociolinguistic matters, such as language prestige and identity, something that usually affects the performance of speakers of minority or minoritised languages in traditional monolingual classrooms.

Cenoz (2017) states that the inclusion of translanguaging practices in the classroom lies at the heart of the multilingual turn. Although, according to Canagarajah (2011, 2014) and Hornberger and Link (2012), there is no specific set of teaching strategies with a number of commonalities across classroom settings to make translanguaging generalisable in a pedagogical way, the implementation of translanguaging practices is considered to be an appealing task for education professionals and researchers, and it may allow multilingual learners to be aware and use a wider range of language practices as well as develop rich and varied communicative repertoires (García, 2009; Hornberger & Link, 2012). Nonetheless, according to Lasagabaster (2016, p. 252), 'the effectiveness of translanguaging strategies as a classroom practice in CLIL settings still needs to be researched, evaluated, and critiqued'.

Translanguaging, thus, makes an interesting case for research on multilingual settings in general, and CLIL scenarios in particular. With this conceptual overview in mind, this article explores CLIL teachers' perceptions on translanguaging in different trilingual schools in Kazakhstan. We have organised the article as follows. First, we provide an overview of the research literature on translanguaging in CLIL scenarios. Next, we describe the main characteristics of the study followed by the presentation of the findings. In the final section, we discuss the findings drawing some conclusions and pedagogical implications based on our results.

## Literature review

Research on CLIL has mostly focused on the analysis of its effects on both foreign (additional) language learning (Airey, 2004; Järvinen, 2005; Admiraal et al., 2006; Ackerl, 2007; Zydati, 2007; Gallardo del Puerto et al., 2009; San Isidro, 2010; Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2013; Roquet & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Pérez Cañado, 2018) and attitudes and motivations towards language learning (Merisuo-Storm, 2007; Seikkula-Leino, 2007; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Lasagabaster, 2011; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009; Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2017). There is still a dearth of studies on the effects of CLIL on content learning (Stohler, 2006; Van de Craen et al., 2007; Grisaleña et al., 2009; Fernández-Sanjurjo et al., 2017; San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019a) and on the first language(s) – L1 – (Bergroth, 2006; Admiraal et al., 2006; Cenoz, 2009; Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018; San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019a; Navarro-Pablo & López Gándara, 2020).

Despite the studies of the effects of CLIL on L1 being still thin on the ground, the majority of them have been articulated around the question on how L1 is impacted. Results seem to indicate that CLIL does not have a detrimental effect on L1. However, although CLIL has been widely adapted to and endorsed by a myriad of countries, research related to L1 in CLIL has shown a consistent lacuna, as it has not analysed the development of the learners' plurilingual competence through the use of their whole linguistic repertoire for meaning-making. Surprisingly, from the very inception of CLIL, research has blatantly disregarded translanguaging practices in different contexts, whether multilingual or not. Cenoz and Gorter (2011) and Cenoz et al. (2014) pointed out that

multilingual practices in the classroom have been under-researched, a statement also supported by Lasagabaster (2013), who claimed that research on translanguaging practices in CLIL environments is almost non-existent. A possible explanation for this might lie in the fact that CLIL education has lagged behind in acknowledging the value of multilingualism as part of pedagogical practice. The CLIL-oriented language policies in the different contexts aiming at monolingual mediums of instruction, i.e. one subject-one (target) language policies, seem to be well-established in CLIL settings.

Only in the past few years, there has been an emergence of research devoted to CLIL-related code-switching (Llinares Garcia & Whittaker, 2009; Nikula, 2010; Viebrock, 2012; Lasagabaster, 2013; Gierlinger, 2015; San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019b) and translanguaging (Sandberg, 2015; Lasagabaster, 2016; Lasagabaster, 2017; Lin & He, 2017; Gallagher & Colohan, 2017; Bieri, 2018; Nikula & Moore, 2019; Pavón & Ramos Ordóñez, 2019).

Regarding code-switching – understood as the phenomenon typically occurring in bilingual speech which consists in alternating, i.e. moving back and forth between two languages (Riehl, 2005) – in CLIL settings, with some exceptions (San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019b), research has revealed that there is a need for studies focusing on real classroom data and providing some deeper or systematic significance to this phenomenon.

Vis-à-vis translanguaging, according to Lin and He (2017), research unrelated to CLIL has by and large analysed the role of learners' home languages and community cultures in pedagogical scaffolding in multilingual contexts (Cummins et al., 2015; Lin & Wu, 2015). However, the gradually growing body of research on translanguaging practices specifically related to CLIL (Lasagabaster, 2013; Lin & Lo, 2017; Lin & Wu, 2015; Moore & Nikula, 2016) has reported different conclusions in different contexts and has mostly shown results from teachers and students sharing the same L1, i.e. contexts that are not really multilingual.

Research literature devoted to perceptions on translanguaging as pedagogical practice in CLIL scenarios is still scant and has focused on how teachers perceive the use of L1 as a pedagogical tool (Lasagabaster, 2013; Sandberg, 2015) or, more recently, the role of translanguaging practices in the development of the students' plurilingual competence (San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2019c).

Conversely, in the past years there has been an emergence of studies on CLIL-related translanguaging which have put the spotlight on classroom practices, i.e. on trying to identify and analyse pedagogical patterns related to translanguaging practices. Gablasova (2014), for instance, identified translanguaging as a strategy in assessing bilingually-educated students in Slovakia, understanding translanguaging as the pedagogical use of L1 and L2 to make content knowledge available to the students. Gablasova's (2014) study was anchored on four different aspects related to formal academic language – accuracy, fluency, appropriate academic format and appropriate vocabulary – and compared the results between two groups of students – L2-instructed students and L1-instructed students – who had gained the same knowledge. Both groups were balanced regarding proficiency. Although testing took place in L1 (Slovak) and L2, her conclusions were more focused on L1. Results showed that CLIL and non-CLIL students performed equally well in L1 in relation to formal definitions, accuracy and speech rate. But CLIL students underperformed with respect to the proportion of informative speech and lexical choice. The difference between L1 and L2 answers in the CLIL group might indicate problems in transferring literacy skills from one language to another.

Also in Europe, Gallagher and Colohan's in-class study in Italy (2017) explored the effectiveness of using bilingual skills as a tool in a CLIL geography classroom. Their findings showed that a planned use of L1 is effective for meaning-making. In the same vein, Bieri (2018) analysed 31 transcripts of biology lessons in English (CLIL) and German (non-CLIL) in Switzerland. Results showed that planned translanguaging seems to be an effective tool for meaning-making. Conversely, Lasagabaster's study in the Basque Country (2017) reporting on CLIL secondary teachers' beliefs on translanguaging revealed that current practices lack planning and teachers make decisions out of their own beliefs and classroom experience.

A more recent cross-contextual exploratory study (Nikula & Moore, 2019) has contributed to the discussion on translanguaging practices through analysing extracts from recordings of CLIL lessons in three different countries – Austria, Finland and Spain – concluding that translanguaging is a valuable tool in bilingual learning situations, but recommending longitudinal research. The same as the European studies mentioned above, the analysis of Nikula and Moore (2019), despite being cross-contextual, made use of classrooms in which the participants shared the same L1.

A completely different scenario is the one studied by Lin and He (2017) in Asia. They analysed translanguaging in the interactions among South Asian ethnic minoritised students – with different languages, e.g. Cantonese and Urdu – and their science teacher in a CLIL classroom in Hong Kong. Their study provided a complex linguistic background and showed rich data on how translanguaging flows when the students are engaged in meaning-making about specific topics. This happens despite the language policy being oriented to a monolingual medium of instruction.

The dearth of literature specifically related to the multilingual turn in CLIL scenarios seems to suggest a need for research pointing in two different directions. On the one hand, the need for research focusing on CLIL multilingual contexts in which students do not share the same L1 and, as a consequence, need a space for their multicultural voices to be heard in their learning settings. On the other hand, a focus on how teachers' perceptions on the pedagogy of translanguaging can make an impact on their classroom praxis. This is precisely the niche our research study aims to address.

## **The study**

Our research study is an exploratory qualitative research design aiming to analyse CLIL teachers' perceptions on the pedagogical use of translanguaging and how these perceptions can make an impact on their teaching practice.

## **The research context**

Kazakhstan is among the first countries within the post-Soviet context in Central Asia to introduce CLIL into its education system as part and parcel of an ambitious national plan which promotes trilingualism (Nazarbayev, 2007). While the teaching of Kazakh, Russian, and English as language arts had been no stranger to Kazakhstan, the new policy sets out the use of these three languages as languages of instruction to teach different subjects in the school curriculum, thus replicating the model other multilingual contexts have used, e.g. the Basque Country in the European context (Cenoz, 1998), or Brunei in Asia (Nawi &

colleagues, 2015). In order to test this model of trilingual education and translate their experience to the rest of the schools, in 2008, the Government of Kazakhstan set up an elite network of 20 state-funded Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools – NIS

The NIS adopted a model of trilingual schooling which stipulated using Kazakh and Russian for instruction in Grades 7–10 and teaching most subjects through English in the senior years. The main goal of trilingual instruction is teaching students in three languages so that they can not only master content subjects in those three languages but also develop the capacity to dialogue in different fields of business. The Kazakhstani context makes an interesting case in terms of language and ethnicity. After a post-independence de-Russification and de-Sovietization process (Kissane, 2005), the Kazakh language has been granted an official status, and Russian has not only preserved its prestigious status but also become the language for interethnic communication. Besides ethnic Russians using it as an L1, according to Smagulova (2008), many ethnic Kazakhs speak Russian instead of Kazakh as a first language – L1 –, even though the Kazakh language sports an official status now and is considered as an emblem of Kazakh ethnic identity. Interestingly, Kazakhs mostly unanimously – 97% in 1989 according to Smagulova (2008) – claim that Kazakh is their first language even though they do not speak it. Furthermore, according to Kazakhstan constitutional laws, minority languages in the country (e.g. Uyghur, Kyrgyz, Uzbek or Nogai) are protected, and, as a matter of fact, they are taught in some mainstream state schools.

In the educational context of NIS, however, only three languages are used: Kazakh, Russian and English. The educational policy prescribes one subject/one language teaching framework. Thus, there are two streams divided by the main medium of instruction, which is either Kazakh or Russian. Regardless of this division, in Grades 7–10, both groups learn about 10% of the curriculum subjects through Kazakh or Russian as a second language – L2 –, and 90% in Kazakh or Russian as their L1. In grades 11–12, the three languages are used as mediums of instruction whereby 40% of curriculum subjects are taught in L1 and L2, and about 60% in English – L3 – (Karabassova, 2018). Surprisingly, in terms of school language planning, there is no official presence of minority languages in NIS, despite the classrooms being inherently multilingual, i.e. despite teachers and students coming from different L1 backgrounds. This is precisely why the Kazakhstani NIS context is specially interesting to undertake research on translanguaging practices.

### **Research questions**

With the previous context in mind, our study was designed with a view to answering the following research questions:

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions on the pedagogical use of translanguaging in NIS CLIL contexts?

RQ2: How do teachers' perceptions on translanguaging influence their pedagogical practices?

### **Participants**

This study is a part of a larger mixed-methods study on teachers' conceptualisation and implementation of CLIL in Kazakhstan. The permission to conduct it was gained from

**Table 1.** Participants.

Teacher	Teachers' L1	Teaching Experience	Subject taught	Language of instruction	Students' L1
Ainur	Kazakh	10 years	History of Kazakhstan	Kazakh	Russian
Aisha	Russian	20 years	World History	Russian	Kazakh
Zhadyra	Russian	15 years	Chemistry	Russian-English	Russian
Kuralay	Kazakh	10 years	Geography	Kazakh	Russian
Paul	English	17 years	Physics	English	Russian
Salamat	Kazakh	10 years	Global Perspectives	English	Russian
Nurzhan	Kazakh	12 years	Kazakhstan in modern world	Kazakh	Russian
Sultan	Kazakh	20 years	Kazakh history	Kazakh	Russian
Yerzhan	Kazakh	8 years	Chemistry	English	Kazakh
Dana	Kazakh	11 years	Kazakh history	Kazakh	Russian
Zhannur	Kazakh	20 years	Physics	English	Kazakh

the Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education Research and Ethics Committee, the Nazarbayev University Ethics Committee (IREC) and the Autonomous Educational Organisation (AEO) NIS chairperson. In addition, a research permission form attaching the survey, interview and observation protocols was submitted to the AEO NIS Research Department, which, after granting permission, informed the schools and teachers about the planned research. Then, the schools and teachers communicated their willingness and availability to participate. Data collection included surveying, interviewing and observing teachers from the network of NIS. For the quantitative part of the project, the 20 NIS schools were targeted and 275 teachers from all of them participated. The teachers who completed the survey in the first phase of the project were asked to express their willingness to take part in the qualitative phase, on which the present study is based. From the ones that agreed to participate, we purposefully selected 11 teachers who taught through students' L2 (Russian or Kazakh) or L3 (English) at different schools in the NIS network. They are referred to by the pseudonyms Ainur, Aisha, Zhadyra, Kuralay, Paul, Salamat, Yerzhan, Nurzhan, Sultan, Dana and Zhannur (Table 1). The commonality between the selected cases is that they all taught a content subject through a language which was not the students' first language.

For Ainur, Kuralay, Dana, Sultan and Nurzhan the medium of instruction, Kazakh, was their L1 and they had fair proficiency in students' L1, Russian. Similarly, for Aisha the medium of instruction, Russian, was her L1, and she spoke fluent Kazakh. Paul was not a native speaker of English either, but he claimed that English was his strongest language despite his strong accent and speech inaccuracies observed during interviews and classes. For Zhadyra, Zhannur and Yerzhan (IELTS band score 4.0) the medium of instruction, English, was a foreign language in which they were not fluent. Salamat, the Global perspectives teacher, completed a degree at an EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) university abroad, and perceived his own proficiency as enough for teaching content.

### ***Instruments and procedures***

Four interviews and one lesson observation were conducted with each of the participating teachers. We used semi-structured interviews with a general framework of themes pertaining to CLIL. The questions were open-ended in order to allow the participants



to explain and justify their perspectives more broadly. In order not to intimidate teachers, who are not familiar with the concept, the term 'translanguaging' was not used explicitly. Instead, the questions used were rather general and mostly related to students' language skills, teachers' own language competence, scaffolding strategies, teachers' ideals about language distribution, the use of L1 and the development of the target language. Interviews were conducted in Kazakh, Russian and English based on the teachers' preferences. KMI (Kazakh as a medium of instruction) and RMI (Russian as a medium of instruction) teachers used the language of instruction to answer the questions, while EMI teachers chose either Russian or Kazakh to answer. Only Paul, the international teacher, chose to be interviewed in English, which was his strongest language. Furthermore, with KMI and RMI teachers, the researcher and the respondents naturally switched between Kazakh and Russian sometimes.

Regarding the connection between the interviews and the classroom observations, during pre-observation interviews, the teachers shared their plans and hopes for the lesson formulated as content and language learning objectives. While content learning objectives were detailed and SMART (Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic and Time-bound), language learning objectives were very generic and most often limited to subject terminology. The focus of the observations was the implementation of CLIL strategies in lessons, i.e. scaffolding content and language, explicit focus on the target language, or resorting to translanguaging. The post-observation interviews were organised based on the notes in the lesson observation protocol.

The qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were transcribed and manually coded in an inductive or 'bottom-up' way which is described as a process of open-ended coding without trying to fit into the predefined coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 12). The themes were identified at the latent level which goes beyond the surface meaning of the data to examine the underlying ideas and conceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of latent analysis involved interpreting and theorising the patterns and their implications.

### ***Data collection***

The research site was visited three times: May 2016, February 2017 and November 2019. The interviews and classroom observations took place in May 2016. Interviews were conducted with teachers prior to and after the classroom observations. Pre-observation interviews were conducted on the same day, and post-observation interviews within one or two days after the observation, based on the teachers' availability. However, given that the present study was part of a larger study on teachers' conceptualization and implementation of CLIL, where translanguaging was not an explicit focus, follow-up interviews were conducted in February 2017 and November 2019 to complete some gaps in the data.

### ***Findings***

The data coming from the interviews were coupled with classroom observations of actual teaching, with the aim to explore what teachers think (i.e. how teachers perceive

translanguaging), and what they actually do in their teaching praxis (i.e. how their perceptions impact their pedagogical practice). The coding and analysis of interview transcripts and observation notes made it possible to identify the following themes: (1) exclusive use of the target language as an ideal (end-goal); (2) translanguaging as a way of scaffolding content; (3) translanguaging as a transitional practice (temporary fix) and code-switching; and (4) translanguaging and teachers' own language proficiency limits. We now present our findings considering every thematic strand. All the extracts have been translated into English as accurately as possible.

### ***Exclusive use of the target language as an ideal (end-goal)***

The data clearly show the way teachers and students have to contend with a policy that does not promote translanguaging and at the same time find their way to develop good pedagogical practices. Findings indicate that teachers participating in the study had to teach a demanding enquiry-based curriculum to students with different abilities and different proficiency levels in the target language. Hardly any of the participating teachers had previous experience in teaching through students' L2, and thus, tended to believe that students should join a CLIL program with a high command of the target language to be able to master subject content through it. Paul, the foreign teacher, who had previously taught physics in an Asian international school, expected students to be fluent despite English being L3 in the context of NIS:

#### Extract 1

They are not fluent. The word we use is 'fluent'. So, we want them to be at a point when they are not paying attention to language, they are just doing calculations and they do everything in English without a second thought. That is the skill they have to reach. They are making progress, but not there yet. (Paul, EMI, Pre-OI, May 17, 2016)

Teachers who taught geography or Kazakh history through KMI also set high expectations for students in terms of language skills as they encountered challenges in teaching content. Interestingly, they linked language to ethnicity as the following extracts suggest:

#### Extract 2

At the beginning of the program, Grade 7 students did not understand Kazakh at all. They asked to translate every single word they read or heard while I was presenting a new topic. Especially, it was painful to see how ethnic Kazakh children did not understand their mother tongue, Kazakh. (Kuralay, KMI, Pre-O, May 10, 2016)

#### Extract 3

I have a student. Her name is Shahzoda. She is not Kazakh. But she speaks Kazakh better than Kazakh children (ethnic Kazakhs). I would also like to mention another student, Darina. Even though it is difficult for her, she is very diligent. She tries a lot. (Ainur, KMI, Post-O, May 10, 2016)

Similarly, Aisha, world history teacher, had high expectations of her students' communicative competence in Russian as an L2, possibly due to her belief that Russian was widely spoken in the region where the school was situated. As classroom observations

indicated, Aisha tended to be very demanding in terms of the correct usage of Russian as an L2 in Grade 8 lessons. She corrected students' language errors while they were reading questions in groups:

- Student 1: [Reads fluently and enunciates clearly without any accent.]  
 Student 2: [Reads fluently and enunciates clearly without any accent.]  
 Aisha: Not OblAstyah [regions], but OblastYAh! (R)  
 Student 3: [Reads without much confidence, less fluently.]  
 Aisha: Let's check. So, Group 1, what is your heading? (R)  
 Group 1: The heading of our text is 'The history of the origins X-rays' (R)  
 Aisha: Not the origins of but discovering. Next? (R)  
 Group 2: [Silence. The group struggles to give a heading]  
 Aisha: Let's help them. They cannot combine two themes. (R) (Observation, May 15, 2016)

Participating teachers indicated that the exclusive use of the target language (one teacher-one language) was a policy requirement within the school. As teachers reported, while monitoring teachers' classes, school administrators expected them to only use the target language for instruction. This policy discourages teachers from resorting to translinguaging as they could even face disciplinary action. For example, Yerzhan, the chemistry teacher, when asked about this mandatory exclusive use of the target language stated:

#### Extract 4

I can tell you about a situation that happened to my colleague. He teaches a subject in English. His English is like mine, weak. It is the first year he is teaching in Grade 11 in English. The school principal enters his class for observation. Despite the principal sitting there, he switches to Kazakh [students' L1] to explain the topic as he sees that the students do not understand. Later, he did not get a disciplinary, but still he was reprimanded for using Kazakh. My understanding is that you should use only English as you entered the class. (Yerzhan, KMI, Interview, November 21, 2019)

This was also confirmed by the physics teacher Zhannur:

#### Extract 5

I don't remember which meeting exactly, but seems like at Pedsovet [Pedagogical Council] the school administration showed statistics based on lesson observations. They said that the teachers were using English for instruction less than using students' L1, Kazakh or Russian. Those teachers were reprimanded. Therefore, it is very stressing for teachers who don't speak English fluently. (Zhannur, Interview November 23, 2019)

Classroom observations showed that teachers perceived the exclusive use of the target language as an ideal. As a matter of fact, all the participants were abiding by the policy, teaching their subjects in L2 or L3. They tried to use the target language throughout their classroom practice, and encouraged their students to use it at all learning stages. In general terms, during the observed lessons that took place at the end of the academic year, although the students seemed to both make meaning and understand teachers' instructions in L2 or L3, translinguaging seemed to naturally flow between the teachers' and students' dynamic interactions and activities in the classroom.

### ***Translanguaging as a way of scaffolding content***

While teachers tried to stick to the use of the target language during the observed lessons, most of the participating teachers referred to the use of the students' L1 as a scaffolding tool helping students' to make meaning. Zhadyra, who taught chemistry bililingually together with Elaine, a foreign teacher, reported that they switched from English to the students' L1 in order for the students to understand the content:

#### Extract 6

There are moments when a student does not understand the question or the task in the third language, English, and when we cannot continue at all, we stop and use Russian. Chemistry is a demanding subject, and is not very popular among high school students. Therefore, we explain certain things in Russian, and then we continue in English. (Zhadyra, FUI, February 20, 2017)

Zhadyra's colleague, the Global perspectives [GPPW, subject] teacher Salamat, also mentioned using students' L1 to guarantee understanding:

#### Extract 7

For instance, I need to explain to students how to reference. No matter how well I explain it in English, students may not understand it at all. If I say a little in Kazakh, just a couple of sentences, for instance 'This is a reference, this is in-text' that might be enough for them to understand. As I am a GPPR teacher, I don't perceive myself as the one who teaches them language [English]. I think that content is important for me. Language is a tool for mastering content. If there is a language deficiency, you can switch to the mother tongue. (Salamat, Interview November 20, 2019)

The same as Zhadyra, Nurzhan – teaching history of Kazakhstan – mentioned the unplanned use of students' L1 as a way to make meaning. However, he also referred to the more intentional use of translanguaging. He seemed to conceive students' language repertoire as a multilingual one, and using translanguaging as a discursive practice:

#### Extract 8

When I teach 'Kazakhstan in the modern world' [history of Kazakhstan in high school] to RMI students through Kazakh, I do not try to translate international words or new trends entirely to Kazakh. I give them as they are whether in English or in Russian. This is because, first, it is clear for them. Second, they will memorize them in that way. For instance, a certain process. If I translate it, it might lose its meaning. Students can get confused, otherwise. Later, in exams, they will reproduce from their memory, no matter in which language. (Nurzhan, Interview November 20, 2019)

Teachers' perceptions also showed that links between languages were needed as a way to foster students' comprehension of the subject matter. The physics teacher Zhannur, for example, said:

#### Extract 9

When we explain the new topic, as Grade 11, students are used to learning it all in Kazakh and listening in Kazakh, even though I explain in English, students still want to hear Kazakh equivalents. For instance, in physics, in English medium resources they have to learn 'escape velocity'. But in our textbooks, we don't have such a concept. We have the first, second and third cosmic speed. But they [West] don't have these notions at all. They want to learn through matching these to equivalents in Kazakh. (Zhannur, Interview November 23, 2019)

Besides translanguaging being perceived as a scaffolding strategy for comprehension, observations also showed students making use of translanguaging as a resource for peer scaffolding. For instance, in Paul's class, physics through EMI, it appeared that some students misunderstood his instructions about making a revision. Paul explained the instructions again. A student, who understood the instructions, translated them into Russian. Students confirmed that they understood. Nevertheless, when Paul offered switching to Russian as one of the students requested, students expressed a desire to continue in English:

Extract 10

- Paul: Would you like to mix answers in Russian and English? Dinara is suggesting doing so. If you want, you may use Russian. (E)  
 Students: No, let's continue in English. It is easier in English. (E)  
 Paul: Dinara, are you comfortable with English? (E)  
 Dinara: Yes. (E)  
 Paul: Ok, let's get back to the questions now. (E) (Observation, Paul, May 18, 2016)

Interestingly, in the interviews, some teachers stated that they resorted to translanguaging as planned pedagogical practice to favour understanding. For example, according to Ainur and Kuralay (both KMI) in their practices, a translanguaging strategy involved watching videos in Russian (students' L1) and discussing the content in Kazakh (students' L2). However, this was not evident during the observed classes. This mismatch between the observational data and self-reported data cannot be expanded given the limited number of observations undertaken. Ainur mentioned that she used this strategy in make-up classes rather than in regular lessons, while Kuralay reported that the use of translanguaging was cancelled a long time ago as it was deemed to be an ineffective practice by the school administration.

### ***Translanguaging as a transitional practice (temporary fix) and code-switching***

Teachers in the present study seemed to perceive translanguaging as transitional time practice when students join the CLIL program. In other words, teachers seemed to resort to translanguaging as a 'temporary fix' strategy in order to help students to understand the subject matter and mitigate their language difficulties. Teachers tried to work towards the exclusive use of the target language through a gradual decrease in the use of L1 as Dana, the history teacher, said:

Extract 11

I use Russian, students' L1, at the outset of the program, in the first term. Well, students have previously been taught in Russian, for 6 years [they join NIS CLIL program in Grade 7]. It is difficult to stop them from using Russian straight away, and conduct lessons only in Kazakh. Students don't understand. So, I use Russian in Terms 1 and 2 in order to help students adapt. (Dana, Interview, November 25, 2019)

Regarding the unplanned natural and dynamic flow between the languages, code-switching seemed to be part and parcel of everyday practice. The following comment illustrates that switching to students' L1 (code-switching as distinct from planned translanguaging practices) was inevitable, given the concern over curriculum access:

## Extract 12

In terms of language proficiency, Grade 9 is weaker this year. We are forced to use Russian with them; otherwise they do not understand. We have a shortage of time. It is difficult to meet the time framework of the lesson. If the lesson is conducted entirely in Kazakh, the coverage of the lesson materials decreases to less than 50%. Students can understand, but they still respond to my questions in Russian as they automatically switch to it. (Kuralay, FUI, February 25, 2017)

During the observed lessons, students often switched to their L1 to clarify certain things from their classmates. In Kuralay's words,

## Extract 13

When they turn to each other's help, they switch to Russian. I cannot stop them from speaking Russian or saying Russian words. It is impossible. (Kuralay, F-UI, February 25, 2017)

While admitting the inevitability of switches, Ainur (KMI) and Kuralay (KMI), interestingly, often reminded their students of the necessity to speak the target language, although these remarks were often ignored.

Some participating teachers reported that they tried to prevent students from switching to their L1, and considered students' code-switching an unfavourable practice. The following extract reflects the participating teachers' negative attitude towards the use of L1:

## Extract 14

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Interviewer:                 | Are your students allowed to draw on their L1 when they face problems?        |
| Ainur:                       | Yes, yes  |
| Interviewer:                 | To speak Russian in order to ...  |
| Ainur (after clarification): | Oh no, no, I don't allow them to speak Russian. (Ainur, Post-OI, May 5, 2016) |

Despite disapproval of the use of students' L1 in the classroom, teachers appeared to have a dilemma about not allowing students' switches to their L1:

## Extract 15

Students in Russian medium classes cannot express themselves in Kazakh. They do not know how to demonstrate what they know, but we require speaking Kazakh. They should use only Kazakh, and we [teachers] use only Kazakh. It is a great pity, on the one hand, but otherwise the level of Kazakh will not enhance. (Ainur, Pre-OI, May 4, 2016)

However, disapproval of the use of students' L1 was explained by the fact that students might get used to resorting to their L1 if allowed to, thus making it a habit. Teachers believed that students would benefit from more exposure to L2, and viewed their own use of code-switching as a bad model for students:

## Extract 16

If my teacher [colleague], tandem teacher, switches from English to Russian, all the kids follow ... if the teachers cannot continue in English ... cannot continue with the descriptions in English, if they switch, kids instantly would think: ok, we can do it too then. (Paul, F-UI, February 22, 2017)

### ***Translanguaging and teachers' own language proficiency limits***

For the bilingual teachers, the ones who spoke the target language as an L1 (Ainur, Salamat, Nurzhan, Aisha, Kuralay), translanguaging was a strategy for enhancing students' comprehension. For non-bilingual STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) teachers, whose self-perceived English language proficiency was not sufficient for teaching content through it, translanguaging was an inevitable practice. Despite not feeling confident about teaching through English, the participating teachers were required to shift to EMI in high school. The participating local STEM teachers unanimously mentioned that students' English language proficiency was very good and even stronger than their own:

#### Extract 17

They can give thorough explanations. They can even write essays about the negative effect of acid rain, its economic and ecological consequences. (Yerzhan, KMI, Interview, November 21, 2019)

Commenting on the NIS requirement to teach STEM subjects entirely in English, Yerzhan explained that he uses translanguaging to make up for his own proficiency limits:

#### Extract 18

In our school, there are some teachers whose English is very good. Unfortunately, I am not among them. Yes, there is a requirement to provide 100% instruction [grins]. However, in reality, we only say key words and definitions in English. The real mechanisms, explanations are in Kazakh. Otherwise, students don't really understand. I am not just saying that. Even when my team teacher [foreign teacher] explains in English, it is obvious that students don't understand. Students then ask me to explain in Kazakh. (Yerzhan, KMI, Interview, November 21, 2019)

Zhannur shared the same opinion regarding the use of translanguaging as a way to balance her lack of competence in English:

#### Extract 19

In our school, there are teachers, like Dias, who provide 100% instruction in English. Because his English level is very high. I admit that I cannot teach entirely in English. But all the resources I provide are in English, and I don't use Russian or Kazakh for tasks. Video materials as well. If it is team-teaching with a foreign teacher, English instruction is up to 80%. I also try to use English sometimes. When I teach alone, I limit English to resources. I explain everything in Kazakh. (Zhannur, Interview November 23, 2019)

In the case of bilingual teaching, when the local teacher taught in a tandem with a foreign colleague, translanguaging was considered to be legitimate practice since teachers had a distribution of language and roles. While talking about natural switches between two languages, and the distribution of teachers' roles and languages, Zhadyra mentioned that the same material could be merely duplicated in two languages:

#### Extract 20

This is not our case that one teacher is dominating; we both have the same opportunities. Of course, we plan lessons and discuss in advance: what we will teach, who starts when, so we arrange the lesson. The language use is spontaneous. For example, I give instructions in

English, and at the same time definitions in Russian. I give handouts in two languages. (Zhadyra, Pre-O, May 10, 2016)

In Zhadyra's (EMI) teaching practice, translanguaging involved reading texts in Russian (their L1) and discussing their content in English (their L3), or reading task instructions in Russian textbooks, and solving them in English.

When the teachers tried to continue in the target language despite any language difficulties in class, we observed an interesting case of teacher code-switching in Aisha's (RMI) practice. Despite the fact that her students spoke fluent Russian and could perfectly understand her instructions, Aisha used short phrases and commands in Kazakh, such as 'Hurry up!' and 'Settle down' when students were late, or 'Pick up one card please!', 'Please, tell me ...' or 'Then?' 'Next', 'What else?' when she tried to speed up students. When asked, Aisha could not immediately provide the rationale for this instance of code-switching and suggested that this helps her to gain students' attention and discipline them.

## Discussion and conclusions

A key contribution from this study is the way a parallel can be drawn between the established, yet problematic CLIL policy of one subject/one language and the multilingual turn that is taking place on the ground. Our study has made us recognise the way in which teachers and students have to contend with outside forces that do not promote translanguaging and at the same time find their way to develop good pedagogical practices. The one teacher/one language policy in the context analysed in our study has a clear orientation towards developing a monolingual medium of instruction (English). Nonetheless, our research context, due to its multilingual nature laden with an ethnicity component, has shown a complex linguistic background. This tallies with previous studies (Lin & He, 2017) undertaken in contexts in which, despite language policies aiming to develop a monolingual medium of instruction, translanguaging flows mainly when the students are engaged in meaning-making about specific topics.

Regarding the first research question, teachers' stance on translanguaging as a pedagogical practice appears to be rather ambiguous, most probably due to the way the participating teachers have to implement the language policy. The clash between the demands from the policy itself and the communication-oriented pedagogy shows that teachers do not have a shared understanding about what translanguaging is. On the one hand, teachers are mostly self-guided – this coincides with the results from Lasagabaster (2017) –, standing on their head to ensure adherence to the school policy and fulfilment of the content goals of a rather demanding curriculum. On the other hand, the need for making content accessible for all the students makes teachers resort to the student's L1. The implication is that commonly agreed guidelines for using L1 should be developed in collaboration with practitioners, while acknowledging the importance of sensitivity to each classroom context. Most importantly, it would be helpful for teachers to have a working knowledge of translanguaging as pedagogical practice.

Vis-à-vis the second research question, as explained in the literature review (Canagarajah, 2011; 2014; Hornberger & Link; 2012), there appear to be no specific identifiable teaching strategies across classroom settings to make translanguaging generalisable in



a pedagogical way. However, in line with previous studies (García, 2009; Gallagher & Colohan, 2017; Bieri, 2018), the data gathered and analysed in our study led us to identify four main thematic strands related to how teachers' perceptions on translanguaging as pedagogical practice impact on their classroom practice: (1) exclusive use of the target language as an ideal (end-goal); (2) translanguaging as a way of scaffolding content; (3) translanguaging as a transitional practice (temporary fix) and code-switching; and (4) translanguaging and teachers' own language proficiency limits.

Teachers seemed to agree on the importance of the exclusive use of the target language as an ideal in agreement with the one teacher/one language policy. As a matter of fact, they showed some assumptions about (1) the expected fluency of students using Russian as an L2 in a geographical area in which Russian is widely used as a second language; and (2) the expected good fluency of students in L3 (English). Conversely, KMI teachers complained about the ethnic Kazakh students' lack of skills in Kazakh to learn content in a KMI environment. This might be indicating a lack of socio-linguistic equity (Prada & Turnball, 2018) in this language policy regarding the promotion and status of long-term minoritised Kazakh. Despite teachers' expectations, interviews and classroom observation showed that translanguaging appears to be common practice.

As to the use of translanguaging as a way to scaffold content, the data analysed showed that translanguaging is used (1) as a planned strategy intended to help students make meaning, (2) as a discursive practice, and (3) as peer scaffolding. Nonetheless, there was a mismatch between the self-reported answers and the observed lessons, in which the intended and planned use of translanguaging was not evident.

Interviews also showed that teachers use translanguaging as a way to mitigate language difficulties. They appeared to agree on the students' use of code-switching, but teachers' answers showed an ambiguous attitude about allowing its use on the grounds that code-switching might be detrimental to the development of the target language. Regarding the use of translanguaging as a way to make up for the teachers' limited proficiency, non-bilingual teachers perceived translanguaging as an inevitable practice, whereas bilingual teachers viewed it as a natural strategy to aid students' comprehension.

The main goal of this research study has been to contribute to the discussion of the use of translanguaging in CLIL scenarios. Certainly, it is not free from limitations whatsoever as the scope of the data clearly leaves many questions open for further research. On the one hand, the lack of presence of minority languages in the context of NIS would, for instance, clearly make an interesting case for analysis. Although as elite school contexts, NIS have served the purpose of piloting CLIL in Kazakhstan, from the school year 2019–2020 this approach has become mainstream in STEM subjects in all schools. Thus, the analysis of translanguaging practices in multi-ethnic and multilingual mainstream schools could also be a perfect niche for future research. On the other hand, our analysis of pedagogical practice was limited to a few classroom observations which took place at the end of the academic year, when students adjusted to L2 or L3 instruction. More classroom observation in a longitudinal way is needed to identify how translanguaging is used in multi-lingual CLIL contexts.

Despite the limitations, besides extending previous research and providing a deeper insight into teachers' perceptions of translanguaging pedagogical practices in L2 and L3 CLIL classes, this study provides a new perspective from a trilingual CLIL context in a post-colonial country.

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