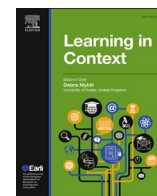


Utrecht University Repository

Title	Students' voices on translanguaging in primary newcomer education
Authors	Stolte, Lianne; Bakker, Arthur; Smit, Jantien; Blom, Elma
Published in	Learning in Context
Publication Date	2026-06
Link	https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/486379
Citation	Stolte, L, Bakker, A, Smit, J & Blom, E 2026, 'Students' voices on translanguaging in primary newcomer education', Learning in Context, vol. 3, 100020, pp. 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lecon.2026.100020
Versions / License	Publisher version
Rights	https://www.uu.nl/en/university-library/license-and-reuse-conditions



Students' voices on translinguaging in primary newcomer education

Lianne Stolte^{a,*}, Arthur Bakker^{b,2}, Jantien Smit^{c,3}, Elma Blom^{a,4}

^a Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 8, Utrecht 3584 CS, the Netherlands

^b University of Amsterdam, PO Box 1968, Amsterdam 1000 GG, the Netherlands

^c HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, Padualaan 97, Utrecht 3584 CH, the Netherlands

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Student voice
Newcomer education
Translinguaging
Multilingualism

ABSTRACT

Research on translinguaging is expanding, yet student voices are still largely missing. This study focuses on the voices of students in primary newcomer education. We interviewed twelve students (age 9–12), six from Syria and six from Iraq, who spoke Arabic and Kurmanci at home respectively and had been attending a Dutch reception class for less than a year. We asked them about their experiences with the use of home languages at school. Using a lens of multivoicedness, we coded five to seven voices per student. This multivoicedness lens, illustrated with the students' quotes, emphasizes that each individual student has multiple voices on translinguaging which are rooted in different contexts, including the educational setting, social relations with others, personal histories, and future wishes and intentions. Therefore, we recommend a contextualized approach to newcomer translinguaging practices, sometimes explicitly encouraging the use of home languages, and sometimes encouraging use of the language of instruction. This respects both students' desire and need to employ home languages and their wish to learn the language of instruction. We suggest a developmental perspective in which the balance between languages changes over time as students advance in both content knowledge and proficiency in all of their languages.

1. Newcomer students' voices on translinguaging in primary school

Newcomer students, defined as recently arrived immigrant or refugee children who are new to the host country's school system, face a double challenge of learning the language of schooling while at the same time learning content in that new language. One way to help students overcome this double challenge is by developing a translinguaging classroom practice, which is a multilingual pedagogy with the central mechanism of using the entire linguistic repertoire of multilingual students for content learning and participation (e.g., Creese & Blackledge, 2010; DiNapoli & Morales, 2021). Translinguaging encompasses the use of all language varieties acquired by the student across diverse settings (e.g., home environment, school, neighborhood), expressed through oral and written modalities. Research shows that translinguaging can improve students' sense of belonging, enhance their engagement in classroom activities, and lead to improved comprehension of learning

content (for a review, see Moraru et al., 2025). This pedagogy challenges monolingual norms that are still prevalent in education, and aims to do justice to the needs of all students by using students' linguistic resources as a scaffolding tool for content learning (Yilmaz, 2021).

Implementing a translinguaging approach is challenging, and multiple studies have, therefore, investigated teachers' experiences with translinguaging (e.g., Gallagher & Scrivner, 2024; Gorter & Arocena, 2020). However, teachers are not the only stakeholders, and limited research has examined the experiences of students with translinguaging (Moraru et al., 2025). In particular, there is hardly any research on the experiences of students who are newcomers, and for whom a translinguaging approach is perhaps most relevant, if not inevitable. Therefore, this study focuses on the identifying and interpreting of voices of students in newcomer education concerning translinguaging. In doing so, we draw on the research tradition of multivoicedness (for an overview, see Aveling et al., 2015) with its cultural-historical background (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981). In line with this tradition, we interpret

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: l.e.stolte@uu.nl (L. Stolte), a.bakker12@uva.nl (A. Bakker), jantien.smit@hu.nl (J. Smit), w.b.t.blom@uu.nl (E. Blom).

¹ <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4598-5699>

² <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9604-3448>

³ <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7257-9365>

⁴ <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8984-3650>

what students say – the “text” – in the broader “context” of what matters in understanding the situational complexity of their learning (Damşa et al., 2025). This implies that we do not just describe the setting of a newcomer school, located next to a reception center for asylum seekers, with its specific institutional norms and expectations about using languages for learning. When it comes to translanguaging, we aim to interpret what students say about lived experiences and meaning making in terms of their social relations (with each other, the teachers, and their families), their personal histories, and future wishes and intentions.

1.1. Why study students' voices?

As students are stakeholders in translanguaging, it is important, or even their right (e.g., Liebel, 2012) to include their voices in translanguaging research. Namely, students' perspectives are key to understanding the situational complexity of learning (Damşa et al., 2025) and they are capable persons with legitimate voices, which are worth involving in determining their learning goals and choosing educational approaches (Levin, 1994). A nuanced and rich perception of students' voices on translanguaging in education is needed to inform more responsive and inclusive educational policies and practices in newcomer education.

Following Cook-Sather's (2007) interpretation of student voice as “a voice to talk about the experiences they have and would like to have in school” (p. 344), we speak of newcomer students' voices on translanguaging as a way to provide insights into their personal experiences with translanguaging as well as insights into what they would wish to experience. Based on Agee (2009) and Van Manen (2016), a focus on experiences in the interviews enabled us to access the diverse subjective accounts of translanguaging from the students' perspectives. Inspired by Moustakas (1994) we set out to describe both *what* is experienced, and *how* one experienced it.

1.2. Multilingual student voices in different educational settings

In settings other than newcomer education, several studies have investigated the experiences and attitudes of multilingual learners regarding the use of minority languages (i.e., languages spoken by a minority of the inhabitants of a country including the home languages of migrants) in school. Among these are EFL settings (learning English as a foreign language, e.g., Raja et al., 2022), trilingual schools (e.g., Leonet & Saragueta, 2024, including Basque, Spanish, and English), and regular education with clear language separation (e.g., Dekker et al., 2021; Van Gorp & Verheyen, 2024).

In an EFL setting in Indonesia, it was shown that students can feel guilt when practicing translanguaging strategies (Raja et al., 2022). In fact, in this questionnaire study, 29 out of 40 students (age 13–14) showed negative attitudes towards translanguaging. They said that using a language other than English made them feel embarrassed, inappropriate, inconvenient, not good, odd, and guilty. Possibly this negative association with translanguaging is tied to the learning goals of this setting: communication in English is the goal of EFL education, and therefore can be seen by the students as more valuable and successful, than communication in other languages. Indeed, 11 students in this group ‘insisted that the EFL class should use English only’, perhaps indicating that the use of languages other than English signaled insufficient skills in the English language instead of a view that other languages such as Indonesian or indigenous languages were a legitimate source of knowledge which support learning of the target language, English.

In the bilingual province of Fryslân, the Netherlands, students in regular primary schools were found to favor the language of instruction (Dutch) over both the regional minority language (Frisian) as well as migrant languages (e.g., Moroccan Arabic). They were also found to exhibit a bias against accents associated with migrant languages (Dekker

et al., 2021). Here, students might have adopted language ideologies that are prevalent in society as a whole, as Dutch had more societal prestige.

In a trilingual school setting (Spanish as the majority language, Basque as the minority language, and English as a foreign language), seemingly in contrast, students (age 10 years) evaluated new translanguaging materials as “useful and enjoyable” (Leonet & Saragueta, 2024). Perhaps this positivity regarding translanguaging was a result of language ideologies in Basque society, where the Basque language has recently been revitalized (for an overview, see Leonet, Cenoz, & Gorter, 2017). Interestingly, in a monolingual Belgian school setting, students (age 9–13 years) generally indicated that they felt happy, calm, and in control when speaking minority languages (Van Gorp & Verheyen, 2024). Still, many students in that same study refrained from using minority languages in practice during multilingual tasks that were administered as part of the study. These tasks involved presenting in front of a ‘multilingual camera’, using different languages. The authors explained that here, again, the students might have been used to the monolingual norm, showing linguistic insecurity, language anxiety, and awareness of language norms and language status in a multilingual context. The discrepancy between students' positive reports, on the one hand, and the observations which show that they refrained from translanguaging, on the other hand, might indicate a multiplicity of voices within each student rather than a generally positive or negative voice. Taking this perspective, every student might feel that in some cases it is appropriate for them to voice happiness or pride with their minority languages, while in other cases feelings of insecurity take the upper hand as well as conformation to societal norms.

In combination, the findings from these various educational settings shed light on how translanguaging experiences can differ. Societal language norms and ideologies have been established to play a role in how students talk about translanguaging, exposing how the setting may determine students' voices. Still, in order to make sense of students' experiences, a more contextualized approach is needed in which diverse student voices within a setting can be interpreted. Context then, in this paper, is understood as students' social relations with others, following Bakhtin's work on dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1981), students' personal history (including their past experiences, for example, with education), as well as their future wishes and intentions. As such, it helps us to interpret newcomer students' voices on translanguaging.

To this end, we use a conceptual framework tailored to this purpose: Rather than trying to find a single or unitary voice in the students' stories, we see different voices as situated in and arisen through social relations with others (Hermans & Gieser, 2011; Linell, 2009; Grossen & Salazar-Orvig, 2011). Drawing on dialogical self theory (Hermans, 1999; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007), which understands the students' positions as dynamic and multiplex instead of unitary or monolithic, we relied on the concept of multivoicedness (Aveling et al., 2015) to interpret different voices that are present in individual students' experiences. Different voices become apparent, for example, when individuals repeat or paraphrase words of others (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010), showing that their voice constitutes not only their own thoughts, but also of those others around them. A contextualization of different voices that students express can help us to better understand the ways in which these students value their languages for learning. Therefore, the lens of multivoicedness can help to interpret different voices, identifying particular themes that educators need to address if translanguaging is to be developed and sustained as a pedagogy in newcomer education.

1.3. Newcomer education and the role of translanguaging

The goal of newcomer education is to prepare students for regular education by familiarizing them with the language of instruction and the educational system. Newcomers can be enrolled into reception classes in regular schools or into schools specifically for newcomer students (Al Battashi, 2022; Simopoulos & Magos, 2020). Newcomer classrooms are

often characterized by a superdiverse student population in terms of languages, cultures, and educational experience. Students have often followed education in multiple countries, exposed to cultural differences in what they learned and how they learned it. There could be gaps in their education history and students may face trauma (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). It is thus clear that newcomer education is a challenging setting.

One specific challenge relates to the fact that the language of instruction is new for all newcomer students. After some time, students' fluency in the language of instruction will develop but it will take time before they master the language of instruction enough to fully rely on it for understanding and contributing to classroom discourse. For newcomer students, a multilingual pedagogy – which enables students to use all of their languages for learning – holds potential (Moraru et al., 2025).

1.4. Multilingual student voices on translanguaging in newcomer education

Little is known about newcomer experiences with translanguaging in primary schools. This can partially be explained by the fact that newcomer students are not always encouraged by their teachers to translanguage, as shown in a study by Daniel and Zybina (2019), who interviewed nine refugee teens in the United States, originally from Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Each teen expressed that their school limited the use of their multiple languages. Monolingual school language policies are common (Daniel & Zybina, 2019; Van Gorp & Verheyen, 2024; Bosch et al., 2025), which makes it challenging to find and study classrooms where a translanguaging pedagogy is enacted. In addition to this, research with newcomers is methodologically complex because of language barriers between researchers and participants, cultural differences, and ethical considerations. It is, for example, challenging to inform parents well and gain their trust.

In newcomer education settings, studies also report differing experiences, especially regarding students' reports on whether or not switching between languages (which is at the core of translanguaging, see Moraru et al., 2025) is confusing to them (Ticheloven et al., 2019; Daryai-Hansen & Drachmann, 2024). In an interview study by Ticheloven et al. (2019) most students (age 11–25) were positive about the use of different languages in the classroom. For example, students expected translanguaging to help them sustain their other language(s) or it brought them joy as the language(s) helped them making friends and making jokes. Such positive experiences were also found in an in-depth multiple case study by Daryai-Hansen and Drachmann (2024). They interviewed six students from grades 1, 5, and 7 (age 6–13) on attitudes towards translanguaging and found that especially the *éveil aux langues*-approach, characterized by its emphasis on metalinguistic awareness, was appreciated by the students.

Although the above observations may suggest mostly positive experiences with translanguaging in newcomer education, the same studies (Daryai-Hansen & Drachmann, 2024; Ticheloven et al., 2019) also report more negative ones: students fearing linguistic isolation, and feeling reluctant to use more languages because it made them feel confused. Students also mentioned that it was sometimes good for them to be “forced” to use the language of instruction, so that they could learn the language of instruction more quickly. These results show that in a school where all students are still learning the language of instruction, language hierarchies and prejudices can co-exist with more positive orientations to multilingualism (Daryai-Hansen & Drachmann, 2024).

To better understand students' experiences, and to get insight into why students switch between languages while working on content, Clarkson (2007) tested four high-performing newcomer students (Australian–Vietnamese) on their mathematics and language skills, and asked them why they switched between languages while doing mathematics. They found that students switched languages according to the difficulty of the task, weighing which language's way of problem solving

was “easier.” They also found influence of respected others, such as family members, having taught the students how to solve similar problems in their home language. Both Ticheloven et al. (2019) and Gorter (2017) mentioned that research could clarify when and where translanguaging can “work best,” distinguishing between for example certain subjects, specific ages, and learner group compositions. Similarly, Uddling and Reath Warren (2023) noted that different students might benefit from different translanguaging strategies, and that more research is needed to establish what such relevant differences might be.

1.5. The present study

In newcomer education, the use of a translanguaging approach holds potential for content learning (Moraru et al., 2025). However, few studies have investigated newcomer students' voices on translanguaging, and particularly studies focusing on students in primary education are lacking. Yet, students are important stakeholders. There are indications that their voices are mixed, suggesting both positive and negative experiences (e.g., Daryai-Hansen & Drachmann, 2024; Ticheloven et al., 2019). To engage with these seemingly contradictory experiences, and voices, more deeply, we interpret them in their situated sociocultural context. We approach this by viewing students' voices as linked to the educational setting, but also their personal history, social relations with others, and future wishes and intentions.

The study took place in a primary newcomer classroom in the Netherlands. Dutch legislation promotes Dutch as the language of instruction, but linguistic diversity may be employed to support the learning of both content and the Dutch language (Onderwijsraad, 2025). There is no national policy and authorities (e.g., a municipality or a school board) can decide if and how home languages are incorporated in education. On the school level, there is variation: while some schools have formal, written guidelines, other schools rely on informal, verbal agreements. In the classroom that we studied, one of the most prominent educational goals for the students was to learn the language of instruction (Dutch). Yet, each student was multilingual and used their home language on a daily basis for learning, both guided by the teachers as well as on their own incentives. This school maintained an informal language policy where teachers encouraged students to practice the language of instruction (Dutch), and encouraged students to use other languages for learning content. The students were allowed to use home languages at all times – both in class and during breaks – as long as this supported meaning making and communication. If home languages were used to deliberately exclude people from a conversation, this was not allowed. All teachers regularly engaged in open discussions with students on why certain languages are used in certain moments.

The study aims to identify and interpret the multiple voices that newcomer students use to talk about experiences they have and would like to have with translanguaging. We address the following research question: What are newcomer students' voices when they share their experiences with translanguaging in school?

2. Methods

2.1. School setting

This interview study took place in a newcomer school, geographically located next to a reception center for asylum seekers in the Netherlands, where both the teachers and students initiated the use of minority languages. The school's student population regularly varies between 40 and 60 students in total. At the time of interviewing, the school counted 50 students ranging from age four to 12, which is the typical age range for primary education in the Netherlands. The languages spoken in the school were Arabic and Kurmanci (in the classroom that we studied) and Turkish, Spanish, and English (in the other classrooms).

This classroom was unique in the sense that translanguaging had

been enacted there for years. The school had carefully developed their translanguaging practice together with us researchers in a co-design study for 3 years prior to the start of this study. This gave the opportunity to interview students on translanguaging as business-as-usual, instead of as an intervention. Not being part of the same communities as the interviewees, the interviewer (first author) undertook elaborate preparation for the study. Over one school year, she worked as a teaching assistant in the school under investigation to get acquainted with the student population and teachers involved. She also read about culture and politics of Syria and Iraq, including the Yazidi, and learned some words in the students' languages. During classroom observations she saw practices similar to what has been characterized as translanguaging practices in other studies, including moments of free flow of languages in a session (Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2022), drawing attention to cognate forms (Arteagoitia & Howard, 2015), use of glosses in a minority language in the margins of a text written in the majority language (Van Viegen, 2020), teaching of phonological awareness (Hopp et al., 2021), the use of multimodal cues (including gestures) to enhance understanding of content (Tai & Li, 2021), translation and interpreting (Heugh et al., 2019), and linguistic landscaping (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2016; Carbonara & Scibetta, 2022; Daniel, 2018). This teaching practice, which displayed a large variability of translanguaging strategies, constituted an optimally rich case, which we hoped would bring forth experiences or voices which have not been found in more conventional settings where monolingual policy is the norm.

2.2. Participants

In total, 12 students between nine and 12 years old (six boys and six girls) were interviewed. Together they constituted a class, taught in one classroom by the same two teachers. All students had migrated to the Netherlands less than one year before the interviews. They were learning the language of instruction at the time. Table 1 shows an overview of the students, their languages, and their grouping for the language portrait interview and follow-up interview.

Participants were recruited through the school since a longstanding

Table 1
Participants, their languages, and interview grouping.

Name	Home language(s)	Other language(s)	Focus group nr	Follow-up pairing
Aras	Arabic (Syria)	Turkish, Kurmanci, Dutch, English, Spanish	1	Individual
Zerya	Arabic (Syria)	English, Dutch, Kurmanci	1	Pair with Nina
Nasir	Kurmanci	Farsi, Arabic, English, Dutch, Greek, Turkish	1	Pair with Zayn
Nina	Kurmanci	Dutch, Turkish, English, Greek, Arabic	1	Pair with Zerya
Adam	Arabic (Syria & Palestine)	Turkish, Dutch, English, Spanish, Chinese, Somali	2	Pair with Yusuf
Aelin	Arabic (Syria)	Turkish, Dutch, English, Chinese	2	Individual
Yusuf	Arabic (Syria), Turkish	Kurmanci, Dutch	2	Pair with Adam
Jaliyah	Kurmanci	Dutch, English, Spanish	2	Pair with Raha
Kayan	Arabic (Syria)	Dutch	3	Individual
Laniya	Kurmanci	Arabic, Dutch, Greek	3	Individual
Raha	Kurmanci	Arabic, Dutch, Greek	3	Pair with Jaliyah
Zayn	Kurmanci	Turkish, Arabic, Dutch, Greek, Spanish, Chinese	4 ^a	Pair with Nasir

Note. "Other languages" refers to languages they've had exposure to and still spoke, or were learning at the time of measurement. Determined via language portraits. Amount of exposure and fluency were not assessed.

^a Zayn was scheduled for focus group 3, but could not make it due to personal circumstances and had a private language portrait session to catch up.

partnership with the school was already in place. We interviewed all students in this class, whose teachers we had been working with to develop the translanguaging approach for three years prior to this study. Before signing consent, the students' caretakers were invited into the classroom with the students to be informed orally about the study and decide whether they wanted to participate. The first author presented the study plans to the caretakers and students, joined by an interpreter who spoke the caretakers' languages (Syrian Arabic and Kurmanci) and who was himself part of the community, also having lived in a reception center for asylum seekers when he was 10 years old and attended a Dutch newcomer classroom similar to the one under investigation. An information letter was provided in Arabic, Kurmanci, English, and Dutch, as well as a summary in each language. The presentation was supported with a trilingual powerpoint, including Dutch, Kurmanci, and Arabic. In presenting the study plans, in order to act ethically and trustworthily, the researcher was transparent about the study's goals. She first explained to the caretakers and students that the use of home languages could be beneficial for learning, explaining what we know from the literature about multilingual learning, but that we know little about students' own experiences with multilingual pedagogies. The researcher further explained that she was genuinely interested in the students' experiences and that there were no right or wrong answers. She clarified the study's ultimate goal: to involve students into shaping their education and to share the lessons learned with other schools. Caretakers' and students' clarification questions were answered by the researcher, interpreter, and school staff.

2.3. Study design and procedure

With the same interpreter joining each interview, students were encouraged to share their experiences in the language that they felt most confident in. All students first attended a task-based focus group (45 min), followed by an interview either in pairs or individually (30–45 min) a few days later. In the focus groups, four students worked on language portraits (e.g., Yoshida & Nichols, 2024) while the researcher asked clarifying questions about their language backgrounds and their experiences with multilingualism in school. These focus groups promoted a sense of safety and empowerment among the students and reduced power differentials between the researcher and participants, creating a less threatening environment to share their views (following Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). Because students could respond to peers' statements, the focus groups helped exploring collective experiences as well as individual ones (Smithson, 2000). We scheduled students into smaller groups based on extensive consultation with the school leader and teachers, taking into consideration the school's planning, students' wellbeing (friendships, quarrels), their languages, and gender.

For their second interviews, students were invited in pairs or individually, depending on students' comfort levels in the first sessions and their teachers' advice as to which approach would fit best for the specific student. This interview went more in-depth regarding their experiences with translanguaging in school, asking students to recall specific situations from the past as well as wishes for their future education. Saturation was ascertained with three interviews still to go, and we finished all interviews as planned. Doing two interviews with each student gave them time to reflect on their language practices between interviews, enriching the data quality, and helped confirm the accuracy and stability of the students' reports (Roulston, 2010).

2.4. Data collection instruments

2.4.1. Language portraits

A language portrait is a coloring task in which the participant is asked to color a silhouette, choosing specific colors for each language they speak. Thereby, they provide an overview of how they visualize their languages as located in their own body. While doing the coloring task, they talk about how well they speak these languages, with whom

they speak them, and why they choose a specific body part related to this language. For example, a student may choose the color red for Syrian Arabic and green for Dutch, and subsequently color the head red and hands green because a lot of their thinking is in Syrian Arabic, while in school they write their texts in Dutch. The language portraits introduced the students to the interview topic in a playful way and helped them reflect on their language practices (DeBacker et al., 2020). At the same time, the portraits provided visual information on the students’ linguistic experiences in and out of school (Morali & Manoli, 2025) and their relationships with the languages (e.g., Göksel & Elif, 2024; Morali & Manoli, 2025; Soares et al., 2021; Yoshida & Nichols, 2024).

2.4.2. Interview guide

All interviews were conducted following an interview guide which consisted of four question categories (Table 2 for a short overview; Supplementary Material 1 for the complete interview guide). The first two categories came from a phenomenological tradition which operationalizes experiences into two distinct aspects: *what* is experienced (the students’ reports on *when and how* they use their different languages for learning, in all modes, in school); and *how* it is experienced (the students’ feelings connected to those experiences, to underline their subjectivity). The third category, inquiring their experiences with the school language policy, followed from discussion with one of the teachers. By adding this category we aimed to contextualize the students’ experiences without assuming students perceived the norms as intended by the school staff. Finally, to solidify our interest in the students’ voices, the fourth interview category requested students to “dream” about the best possible education for multilingual children and their advice based on their subjective experiences. The interview guide was checked by one of the students’ teachers and an ambulatory support worker in newcomer education to make sure that the interview questions suited the students’ ways of thinking and talking. In doing so, we hoped to make it as easy as possible for the students to think about and answer the questions.

2.5. Data analysis

The first author transcribed interviews with Amberscript voice-to-text software and edited them to make them more legible and accurate. After pseudonymization, the audio recordings were erased. We conducted a systematic analysis of multivoicedness, as described by Aveling et al. (2015). The analysis comprised of two steps aiming to identify the voices that the students spoke from, even in cases where the participants were not necessarily aware of all the voices with which they spoke. First, we identified so-called I-positions from which the participants spoke. We did this in NVivo version 15 (Lumivero, 2023) by

Table 2
Question categories in the interview guide, their descriptions, and example questions.

Question category	Description	Example question
What is experienced by the student	The students’ reports on when and how they use their different languages for learning, in all modes, in school.	I want to understand how the languages in your head work together when you’re learning. Can you tell me about that?
How it is experienced by the student	The students’ feelings connected to those experiences, to underline their subjectivity.	What do you appreciate / find difficult about using your home language at school?
Perception of language norms	The students’ reports on rules around language use.	In which moments does the teacher tell you to only speak Dutch?
Dreams	The students’ expressed desires for language use in school, including the school they would soon enroll, or schools in general.	When you go to another school, which languages would you want to speak there?

marking all first-person pronouns and the utterances pertaining to them. When the pronouns referred to an experience relevant to the research question, they were coded into distinct voices such as “I-as-newcomer” or “I-as-student,” by answering the question “who is doing the talking?” Each I-position was then characterized with its salient experiences.

The second step was identification of inner-Other voices. These are discourses of other individuals or groups reflected in the students’ talk (“the teacher says...”). Again we started by coding all uses of third-person pronouns and their surrounding text to which the pronoun referred. After completing step one and two, for each student, we constructed a table of all the voices that were heard within their reports, with experiences related to each voice and excerpts to illustrate them (see Table 3 for an example, or Supplementary Material 2 for the complete analysis per student). In choosing excerpts from the transcripts, we adhered to the following principles: the excerpts should be representative for their category, provide experiences of different students, and be concise and coherent. Ideally, they revealed students’ reasoning or emotions. Considered jointly, they should provide a representative and complete image of the students’ voices. All coding was done in an iterative manner to make sure that progressive insight was applied to all interviews. Finally, a general table was made, sorted by voice, to integrate all the students’ individual experiences into the final coding scheme (see Supplementary Material 3). To validate the analysis, doubtful cases were discussed in the team.

Table 3
Example of analysis which characterizes the voices coded for one student (Aelin).

Voice and characterization	Illustrative quotes
I-as-multilingual Learning languages at home via translation tool on phone. She wants to show how much she knows in all her languages. Proud to know so many languages. Emphasized love for learning new languages. Practical approach to language use and being understood: using the language that makes most sense in the given context.	‘Arabic is present in my whole body.’ ‘I really enjoy speaking Dutch. (...) I also enjoy English, but it is difficult.’ Aelin: ‘I once responded to the teacher in both Arabic and Dutch. Then he said “I don’t speak Arabic.” Researcher: ‘And what did you think then? Or what did you feel?’ Aelin: ‘I didn’t feel anything? But I simply stopped speaking Arabic, because he couldn’t understand me anyways.’
I-as-newcomer The Dutch language is more relevant for Dutch society.	‘I am in the country ‘the Netherlands’. And if I talk to Dutch people in Arabic, then nobody will understand me. So if I learn Dutch more, then I can talk to everyone here, about anything.’
I-as-student Accepting what is being decided for her. She will speak in the language that is asked of her. Learning by herself (in and out of school), she uses Arabic and Dutch. She taught the teacher Arabic words. She has translated between the teacher and peers.	‘If I should go to a school where they talk to us in Arabic, then I will speak Arabic. But if it’s Arabic AND Dutch, or only Dutch, then I’ll do so.’ ‘Well, with mathematics. I do calculations in Arabic. Or in Dutch. (...) I have them in my head, in my brain, Arabic and Dutch.’
I-as-peer/friend Using all languages to help each other (helping peers, and being helped by peers). Often speaks Arabic with classmates.	‘I help other students a lot. When they cannot speak Dutch, I help them.’ ‘Sometimes I speak in Arabic with other classmates.’ ‘I was speaking Arabic to a girl. Then the teacher said: you have to speak Dutch so I can understand you too. But the girl just didn’t understand Dutch.’
The teacher(s) as Inner-Other When the teacher needs to understand what is said, the rule is to speak Dutch. She discussed moments when teachers wanted her to teach them Arabic words.	‘But the teacher says: I want you to speak in Dutch, so that I understand what you are saying.’

As suggested by Aveling et al. (2015), we deliberately tried to check whether students were expressing “the interviewers’ voice” or what the students might have expected this to be. However, we did not find indications of an interviewer’s voice in the students’ reports.

3. Results

For each student, we distinguished between five and seven voices. Four voices were found for every student: I-as-peer/friend, I-as-student, I-as-multilingual, and the teacher(s) as Inner-Other (see Table 3 for an example). In this section we illustrate these voices and what experiences they entailed for each student as well as the voices coded for some but not all of the students: I-as-newcomer, I-as-migrant, and the parent(s) as Inner-Other. The student interviews revealed positive experiences regarding the use of multiple languages in and out of school. Many students shared aspirations to improve and expand their linguistic repertoires. How exactly the students envisioned their futures differed per person: While one student had set the goal to eventually speak Dutch with all their friends (Laniya) and a second student even with their parents (Zerya), a third student emphasized their home languages as part of who they were without the wish to fully transfer from one language to another (Adam).

Although the interview and research questions were set up to investigate experiences with translanguaging specifically, students also reported experiences which we would classify in the periphery of translanguaging, related to multilingualism in general. For example, engaging in language learning outside of school might not be a translanguaging experience strictly following our definition, but it was brought up by students, possibly because they deemed it relevant in light of their experiences. Given our commitment to identifying the students’ authentic voices, we decided for a more liberal approach enabling us to include not only the prototypical translanguaging examples or experiences but also those at the periphery.

3.1. I-as-peer/friend

The voice I-as-peer/friend refers to translanguaging experiences in relation to classmates both in and out of school. All students used the word ‘friend’ to refer to a classmate, which is why we did not distinguish between the two. All students reported experiences with the use of home languages to help each other in class, that is, both helping others and being helped by others, using home languages. When asked to explain why helping each other in home languages is so important, four students (Raha, Jaliya, Aras, Aelin) explained that they saw the use of home languages as a *necessity* to communicate and get access to the curriculum:

I would say that I have no choice and I am forced to. That the other student can’t do it and doesn’t understand it. So I am forced to help them in Kurdish. If they could speak Dutch well, then I wouldn’t need to help. But just because I speak Dutch, doesn’t mean that another student does, too. (Raha)

Students also reported that being able to help peers in home languages made them happy (Aras, Kayan), and Raha specified that it made her feel capable: “I get really happy when I help someone. It makes me see myself as their interpreter and then I think: hey, I *did* learn something.” Three other students (Adam, Nasir, Zayn) explained that they are generally asked to speak Dutch with peers, but that they do not (always) obey.

Five students reported mixing languages with friends, in and out of school (Zerya, Raha, Laniya, Zayn), in oral and writing modes. Students reported that speaking home languages with classmates also helped them to learn new languages (Aras, Zayn), and study together at home (Raha). Additionally, they reported encouraging each other to practice the language of instruction together (Zerya), and using the language of instruction as lingua franca with students who spoke different languages

than them (Jaliyah).

3.2. I-as-student

We use the label I-as-student to refer to experiences with school work, the school system, and the relation to the teacher. Pertaining to this voice, every student explained that they used more than one language for learning individually. For example, Aelin said: “Well, with mathematics. I do calculations in Arabic. Or in Dutch. (...) I have them in my head, in my brain, Arabic and Dutch.” Zerya reported that she refrains from speaking in class unless she is confident in her ability to construct sentences accurately. Given that her proficiency in Dutch is still developing, this results in reduced participation in contexts where only Dutch is allowed. Consequently, a strictly monolingual language policy may limit her engagement in classroom discussions.

Nasir and Laniya reported that even though they used multiple languages, they felt that their home languages were most suitable for learning content. In line with this, Raha emphasized a gradual component of her language use, where she covered the more basic content in Dutch, while she preferred to use her home language when working on more complex content. In contrast, Nina said that in school she used Dutch more often than Kurmanci, because her Dutch was actually better than her Kurmanci, at least for discussing content. Zerya and Nasir explained that especially in the first weeks at this school, they used English as a lingua franca with the teacher.

Three students (Zerya, Raha, Laniya) reported that for them, in many cases, content was already familiar, and only translations were needed. For example, Raha said: “We all practice mathematics in Dutch, because in Kurdish, we can already do it. We already know how to do it in Kurdish and we want to learn to do it in Dutch.” Three students (Laniya, Jaliyah, Kayan) reported that school restricted the use of a phone for translation, while this was their main translation resource out of school. As a result, Zerya and Raha reported that they regularly took unresolved schoolwork home with them, where they have a phone, to look up translations which they could not find at school. The students could ask the teacher for translations in class, but the teacher did not always have time to look those up for them.

Six students (Adam, Aelin, Aras, Zayn, Jaliyah, Yusuf) reported experiences with translating for teachers and/or parents in the school setting, often upon teachers’ request. This made them feel useful, as Adam explained: “It is useful, for me and for other people, if I speak Turkish and Arabic well. Because I can help people. Not only children, also adults here at school.”

For Aelin and Laniya, the utterances coded as I-as-student were characterized by compliance, feeling peace with whichever language they were asked to speak in different settings. For example, Aelin did not give a personal language preference: “If I should go to a school where they talk to us in Arabic, then I will speak Arabic. But if it’s Arabic *and* Dutch, or only Dutch, then I’ll do so.”

Adam reported that there have been moments where the teacher was the only person he could practice the language of instruction with. Raha said that she appreciated it when the teacher showed interest in her home language and wanted to learn from her:

And back then, she (teacher) didn’t know the Arabic translations for ‘plus’ and ‘minus’. So she asked me to tell her, and then she wrote that down in her book. (...) Yes, I liked that. Because I wanted to learn something in Dutch, and she also wanted to learn something. (Raha)

3.3. I-as-multilingual

For nine out of 12 students, the “I-as-multilingual” voice constituted a positive outlook on languages/multilingualism, for example by voicing their pride to speak many languages (Adam, Aelin, Aras, Nina, Zerya, Yusuf) and/or claiming that language learning is fun, and “the more, the

better” (Adam, Aelin, Nina, Zerya, Raha, Laniya, Jaliyah, Yusuf). This voice also comprised more neutral outlooks on their multilingualism, such as reporting that their languages “take turns” (Aelin, Zayn) and referring to culture and politics linked to languages (Aras, Nasir). Four students (Nina, Zerya, Laniya, Kayan) emphasized equality of languages, for example, Nina: “And you should never say ‘this language is here (gestures high above her head) and that language is here (gestures below her chest).”

Another important characterizing experience of the I-as-multilingual voice is the adaptation of language practices according to context. Seven students (Aelin, Nina, Zerya, Nasir, Laniya, Jaliyah, Yusuf) reported using the language that made most sense in context, referring to a person (e.g., classmate) or country of residence. Laniya: “If they are Kurdish, then I will talk to them in Kurdish. If they are Arabic, then I can also just speak Arabic. And if it has to be Dutch, then I have to practice my Dutch a lot, to be able to speak with them in Dutch.”

Adam described the use of home languages in school as a right, linked to their identities: “If teachers said we could never speak Arabic or Kurdish again, we would get angry. How would we then talk to each other? These are *also* our countries. We *need* to speak in these languages.”

3.4. Teacher(s) as Inner-Others

The teacher(s) as Inner-Other voice was coded most in interview sections where students were asked about language rules in the school (language policy). All students referred to one or more teachers and often directly quoted teachers to illustrate their experiences. Interestingly, the students seemed to have slightly different experiences of what the school rules entailed, each emphasizing different aspects of the policy, while they were in the same classroom everyday with the same teachers.

Five students referred to a school rule to speak as much Dutch as possible, while home languages were allowed for helping each other only if a student cannot do it fully in Dutch (Adam, Nina, Nasir, Zayn, Jaliyah). In Jaliyah’s words: “In that case, the teacher doesn’t mind that we speak Kurmanci.” Aelin and Kayan emphasized that the rule was to speak Dutch specifically when the teacher needs to understand what is being said: “But the teacher says: I want you to speak in Dutch, so that I know what you’re saying.”

Six students explained that the rules are focused on learning Dutch, and because Dutch is a skill, one should practice it often in order to progress (Aras, Nina, Zerya, Raha, Nasir, Laniya). According to Laniya: “Look, there is a time for Kurdish. Then we can talk Kurdish too. But sometimes, the teacher says: we will now only speak in Dutch, so that we can learn Dutch.”

Zerya explained that if swear words were used in home languages, the rule was to speak Dutch all day. Yusuf, on the other hand, explained that all languages were allowed in general, but it depended on the goal when which language was used. He said that he did not know the specifics and could not clarify further. Kayan and Raha emphasized that speaking Dutch in class was a matter of respect:

He (teacher) says you have to speak Dutch. But he says talk in Dutch so that you can learn. We are from all these different countries, and if we would all start talking Kurdish or Arabic, then the teacher can’t understand it and we also wouldn’t learn anything. He (teacher) also puts in effort to try and teach us something. So I think we should listen to him when he talks, and we should just talk Dutch so that we can learn. (Kayan)

Interestingly, all interviewees found it challenging to talk about how they felt about the language policy. They repeated the teachers’ rules, but did not reflect on them further when invited to. Although we could not check where this came from, we suspect there could be several reasons: It could be lack of trust of the interviewer, or genuine agreement with the school policy. It could also be the children not being used

to an adult asking them about their opinions regarding the rules at school, or not being used to talking about their feelings in general. When discussing this finding with one of the teachers, she suggested that perhaps the employment of home languages is so ordinary to the students that they never gave it a second thought.

3.5. Voices coded for a subset of participants

3.5.1. I-as-newcomer

The voice ‘I-as-newcomer’ was coded for expressions of being new in a space (the classroom or society). It is characterized by a focus on learning Dutch because this is the majority language in the Netherlands (coded for Aelin, Nina, Raha, Zerya, Nasir, Yusuf, Kayan). This voice reinforces (or is a result of) power differences related to language status. For example, it was coded for excerpts which emphasize the importance of Dutch for being able to participate in the education system and society as a whole. Zerya shared: “It’s not a choice for us to speak Dutch. Because it’s *their* language, the Dutch language. So we have to learn Dutch. (...) I am learning a new language, so that’s it. I will speak the new language as soon as I’ve learned it.”

Raha and Zayn spoke in detail about their first weeks as a newcomer in the classroom. They experienced not being able to participate in class due to too little knowledge of the language of instruction. Raha’s experiences might be interpreted as anxiety, not being able to sleep, and feeling like she was not good enough: “Back then, when the teacher asked a question, everyone raised their hands, and I thought, yeah, I am not good. But later, it improved. Later there were also tests and then I wouldn’t sleep all night until I had studied.” Zayn’s experience highlights the feeling of anger related to not being able to communicate: “When I had just arrived in Greece, I didn’t know any words (in Greek). I punished everyone who would talk to me. (...) It was *really* difficult.”

After some time in the Netherlands, finally learning to speak Dutch gave Raha a feeling of accomplishment. In order to learn Dutch as fast as possible, students expressed the wish to only have Dutch speaking peers in the classroom (Zerya, Kayan). They explained that it would be “one year, or one and a half years” of having to learn Dutch, but then eventually, it would be good for them to have been immersed.

Under the I-as-newcomer voice, we also coded Adam’s experience with racism and getting into fights specifically related to the languages that he used. Due to such experiences, he would prefer for others not to know which languages he spoke: “I don’t want a lot of people to know how many languages I speak. Or which languages I speak. That is better, because of discrimination.”

Some students expressed a preference for Dutch, German, and English, over their home languages. This preference was most salient when the students positioned themselves as wanting to succeed later in life, in this Dutch society, where these languages have high status (cf. Morali & Manoli, 2025).

3.5.2. I-as-migrant

This voice was coded when interviewees talked about experiences with living in other countries and how these experiences impacted their current translanguaging experience. Adam, Aras, and Laniya explained that the curricula of different schools did not line up for them, both internationally as well as different schools within one country, leading to unclarity and confusion. Aras said: “Well with multiplications... I’ve been to various different schools and I’ve learned a lot about multiplications. And at each school, they did it differently.”

3.5.3. Parent(s) as Inner-Others

Finally, the voices of parents as Inner-Others were coded. Aras said that his parents held him responsible to teach them the majority language (Dutch) because he was learning it at school. Aras now inserts Dutch words into his communication with his parents:

My parents said: since you're learning Dutch, you should teach us too. (...) So every now and then I tell them a Dutch word. For example *gang* (hallway). When I want to say 'hallway' or I want to go outside, I just say *gang* in Dutch. And now, they also know what *gang* is."

Zerya reported her mother's efforts to prevent home language attrition by practicing the home language more via translation requests: "You know, because I am in the Netherlands, I forgot Arabic a little bit. My mother says: 'What is that?' And I understand what it is in Dutch. But I couldn't say. I don't know it in Arabic."

4. Discussion

This paper aimed to identify and interpret newcomer students' voices on translanguaging, in a pedagogical climate in which students are used to translanguaging being promoted most of the time. By illustrating the students' voices with quotes, we shed light on the students' nuanced experiences with multilingual practices. For each student, we coded five to seven voices, which we summarize below.

4.1. Summary of the different voices

Sarr and Mosselson (2010) argued for recognition of the unique, but also heterogeneous, natures of true refugee experiences. Our results underscore their claim and revealed a variety of experiences in a group of newcomers which seems at first glance rather homogeneous (asylum seeker, 9–12 years old, born in Syria or Iraq, multilingual, currently in the same classroom).

The voice I-as-peer/friend was characterized by the use of home languages to help each other in class. Home languages were seen as helpful or even necessary to access the curriculum. Students also explained that they used home languages while studying together at home.

The voice I-as-student emphasized how students used home language for doing individual work, for example by alternating languages depending on complexity of content. Students reported that they take home their school work because there they can freely look up translations, showing that school sometimes limits their use of resources, similar to findings in the U.S. context (Daniel & Zybina, 2019).

The I-as-multilingual voice was characterized by generally positive feelings regarding multilingual identities, displaying pride and enjoyment in the use of multiple languages and expressing that all languages are, in principle, equal. Many students referred to the importance of home language maintenance, and a risk of attrition due to a focus on the language of instruction.

The teacher(s) as Inner-Other voice was characterized by reiterations of rules about language use. Students brought up various specific situations, explaining how languages were allowed to be used in each situation. This shows that the teacher discussed with students why certain languages were used, and that classroom language policy was not static but instead flexible and situational.

In addition to these voices, for some students, we coded I-as-newcomer, I-as-migrant, and parent(s) as Inner-Other voices. I-as-newcomer was a voice characterized by acknowledgment of high-status languages, contextualizing the student as being new to the classroom, or society as a whole, and having to adapt. Students expressed feelings of anxiety and anger related to not being able to communicate in the majority language, being unable to participate in class, and facing discrimination. The I-as-migrant voice exposed feelings of confusion because curricula of different schools did not line up. The voice of parent(s) as Inner-Others highlighted that home language maintenance is important. In the home, some parents purposefully intervened to prevent home language attrition, for example via translation requests (cf. Stoeber, 2018). Finally, children are sometimes given the task to teach their parents Dutch, the majority language of society.

We only coded voices when the transcript provided clear evidence for them. It is therefore possible that voices that we identified for a few students actually convey experiences shared by more, or even all students.

4.2. Voices in context

We have analyzed the "text" of students' voices in the "context" of their social relations (with each other, the teachers, and their families), their personal histories, and future wishes and intentions. For example, newcomer students feel strongly that the use of home languages in school is necessary for learning and participation in class. This is explained through various voices which depend on social relations with others. Namely, in relation to peers, using home languages is necessary for helping each other in class (see also Carbonara & Scibetta, 2022). Alternatively, in relation to teachers, discussing home languages fosters a more equitable teacher-student relationship. Lastly, in relation to their parents, students emphasized how translanguaging in school can help them to maintain their home languages (Daniel & Zybina, 2019).

These different social relations are interwoven with various future wishes and intentions. For example, linked to the relationship with family members, a student might wish to maintain their home language, because this improves communication with family. Indeed, studies have shown that heritage language proficiency is linked to improvement of family relationships (e.g., Jo et al., 2023) and emotional wellbeing (e.g., Ticheloven & Blom, 2025). Other wishes of students may be to get high grades in school, and to learn the language of instruction as fast as possible. Students explained that translanguaging helps them fulfill these wishes because it provides access to learning content, helps with solving complex problems, and supports the learning of the language of instruction. Similar student experiences are reported in previous research (Le Pichon et al., 2021; DiNapoli & Morales, 2021; Van Viegen, 2020).

Finally, the students' voices depended on their personal histories in terms of their language skills and prior experiences. This became most apparent when a student who had experienced discrimination in the past was less inclined to use his home language in class, even though he felt that using his home language was a fundamental right. Another example of how personal histories are linked to student voices is that some students explained that their home language was most suitable for learning complex content, but that this gradually shifted towards Dutch (language of instruction) related to their skills in both languages.

A multivoicedness approach allows for multiple contradicting voices not only between students, but also *within* students. This insight may shed new light on previous study results, which did not analyze student voices on an individual level (e.g., Ticheloven et al., 2019; Daryai-Hansen & Drachmann, 2024). The insight that an individual can have contradicting voices might also explain why the current study's results are different from Albaugh and Poarch's (2025), whose survey found that students' opinions on translanguaging were "barely above indifference" (p. 11) and advised this "ought to be seriously considered before implementing (...) multilingual pedagogies" (p. 15). It might be the case that this indifference was the result of averaging at group level, which eliminates diversity between and within students. Adopting a multivoicedness lens, we suspect that perhaps each student had various voices which might not have come to the foreground in the survey. Another explanation for the difference in results is that the research contexts were different. Namely, Albaugh and Poarch (2025) identified relatively low proficiency in the students' home languages, while the students in our study were more proficient in their home language than in the language of instruction. Lower home language proficiency might then explain the students' indifference towards translanguaging in that specific study.

The insight that a newcomer student may express conflicting views on language use is relevant to the development of a responsive translanguaging practice. For example, when a student resists using their

home language, a teacher may prefer to investigate the underlying reasons rather than accepting the resistance at face value. This requires knowledge of why students may sometimes contradict themselves, and awareness that multiple voices can co-exist and be simultaneously relevant to a student. With such knowledge and pedagogical sensitivity, teachers can make informed decisions on language use, taking into account the complexity of newcomer students' multivoicedness.

Furthermore, as students indicated that their language use and preferences change over time, a developmental perspective on translanguaging (e.g., Axelrod & Cole, 2018) seems to be necessary. The relative use of students' languages may shift as they advance in content knowledge and linguistic proficiency. For instance, a newcomer student may initially rely on English, gradually integrate Arabic and Dutch, and eventually use predominantly Dutch while drawing on Arabic to engage with complex content. Hence, a school's language policy should in our view allow for supporting such shifts.

4.3. Limitations

Following Griffin (2022) we acknowledge the presence of power differences between the interviewer and the students in our study in several dimensions (most importantly ethnicity, age, and fluency in the country's majority language). Thereby, the interview setting in itself may have foregrounded particular voices (Mertkan-Ozünli, 2007). While the researcher made substantial effort to minimize power differences by conducting focus groups, working with an interpreter, and explaining explicitly that they were not a teacher, it is still probable that the interviewees felt it was not appropriate to share all of their experiences. We noticed in a few instances that the students addressed the researcher as "teacher," revealing that students felt a power difference. In analyzing, too, we are aware that how we understand the students' experiences can be shaped by our own. Finally, as the student sample included only two home languages (Syrian Arabic and Kurmanci), the findings cannot ascertain whether learners from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds might articulate voices not represented in this study.

5. Conclusions

Using a multivoicedness approach, this study shows that newcomer students' voices on translanguaging are nuanced and complex, that they are situated in sociopolitical contexts, and that they are influenced by voices of others around them as well as their personal histories and future wishes and intentions. To do justice to newcomers' diverse voices regarding translanguaging, we advise to refrain from the dichotomy between monolingual or multilingual approaches. Instead, translanguaging with newcomer students requires a responsive approach to language choices situated in context. This means that teachers should consider contextual factors, among which the relationships between students, their prior experiences, and their future wishes, when deciding on language use. We also recommend involving students in language policies, recognizing their agency, and adapting these policies and language use to their evolving needs and growing proficiency in the language of instruction.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Lianne Stolte: Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Arthur Bakker:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization. **Jantien Smit:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization. **Elma Blom:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization.

Ethics statement students voices

This study was approved by the Ethical Committee of Utrecht University Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, reference number 24–0551.

Funding

This publication is part of the project Multilingual Voices in Stem Education with project number NWA.1292.19.253 of the research program Research along Routes by Consortia (NWA-ORC) which is financed by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Acknowledgements

We express our gratitude to the school staff who facilitated the interviews. Thanks to Lyske Attaie-van den Berg for sharing her experiences with interviewing newcomer students. Thanks to Caitlín de Boer for assistance with editing the transcripts.

Appendix A. Supporting information

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:10.1016/j.lecon.2026.100020.

References

- Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4), 431–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512>
- Albaugh, C. L., & Poarch, G. J. (2025). Sure, I can, but do I want to? Exploring attitudes toward home language inclusion in the classroom: perspectives of primary school students. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2025.2589338>
- Arteaga, I., & Howard, L. (2015). The role of the native language in the literacy development of Latino students in the U.S. In J. Cenoz, & D. Gorter (Eds.), *Multilingual education: Between language learning and translanguaging* (pp. 61–83). Cambridge University Press.
- Ascenzi-Moreno, L., Hesson, S., & Menken, K. (2016). School leadership along the trajectory from monolingual to multilingual. *Language and Education*, 30(3), 197–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2015.1093499>
- Aveling, E. L., Gillespie, A., & Cornish, F. (2015). A qualitative method for analysing multivoicedness. *Qualitative Research*, 15(6), 670–687. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794114557991>
- Axelrod, Y., & Cole, M. W. (2018). The pumpkins are coming *vienen las calabazas* that sounds funny: Translanguaging practices of young emergent bilinguals. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 18(1), 129–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798418754938>
- Bagnoli, A., & Clark, A. (2010). Focus groups with young people: A participatory approach to research planning. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13(1), 101–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260903173504>
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. University of Texas Press.
- Al Battashi, S.K.M. (2022). *Translanguaging and young Muslim children's negotiations of intersectional Muslim identities in an English reception classroom: A linguistic ethnographic study* [Doctoral thesis, University College London]. University College London Discovery. (<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10148900/>).
- Bosch, J. E., Olioumtsevs, K., Santarelli, S. A., Faloppa, F., Foppolo, F., & Papadopoulou, D. (2025). How do teachers view multilingualism in education? Evidence from Greece, Italy and The Netherlands. *Language and Education*, 39(2), 337–356.
- Carbonara, V., & Scibetta, A. (2022). Integrating translanguaging pedagogy into Italian primary schools: implications for language practices and children's empowerment. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 25(3), 1049–1069. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2020.1742648>
- Clarkson, P. C. (2007). Australian Vietnamese students learning mathematics: High ability bilinguals and their use of their languages. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 64(2), 191–215.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2007). What would happen if we treated students as those with opinions that matter? The benefits to principals and teachers of supporting youth engagement

- in school. *NASSP Bulletin*, 91(4), 343–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636507309872>
- Creese, A., & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching? *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(1), 103–115.
- Daniel, S. (2018). Resettled refugee youth leveraging their out-of-school literacy practices to accomplish schoolwork. *Mind Culture and Activity*, 25(3), 263–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2018.1481092>
- Daniel, S. M., & Zybina, M. (2019). Resettled refugee teens' perspectives: Identifying a need to centralize youths' "funds of strategies" in future efforts to enact culturally responsive pedagogy. *The Urban Review*, 51, 345–368.
- Daryai-Hansen, P., & Drachmann, N. (2024). 'I like exploring other languages': primary and lower secondary students' attitudes towards plurilingual education. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–15.
- DeBacker, F., Slembrouck, S., & Van Avermaet, P. (2020). Language passports: The multilayered linguistic repertoires of multilingual pupils in Flanders, Belgium. In S. Brunn, & R. Kehrein (Eds.), *Handbook of the changing world language map* (pp. 3443–3457). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73400-2_161-1.
- Dekker, S. V., Duarte, J., & Loerts, H. (2021). Who really speaks like that?—Children's implicit and explicit attitudes towards multilingual speakers of Dutch. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(4), 551–569.
- DiNapoli, J., & Morales, H., Jr (2021). Translanguaging to persevere is key for Latinx bilinguals' mathematical success. *Journal of Urban Mathematics Education*, 14(2), 71–104. <https://doi.org/10.21423/jume-v14i2a390>
- Gallagher, M. A., & Scrivner, S. (2024). Teachers' beliefs about language diversity and multilingual learners: A systematic review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 95(4), 822–861. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543241257533>
- Gillespie, A., & Cornish, F. (2010). Intersubjectivity: Towards a dialogical analysis. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 40(1), 19–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.2009.00419.x>
- Göksel, E., & Elif, K. C. (2024). Exploring the potential of language portraits with refugees and migrants. In E. Piazzoli, & F. Dalziel (Eds.), *Performative Language Learning with Refugees and Migrants* (pp. 91–103). Routledge. (<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003093077-8/exploring-potential-language-portraits-refugees-migrants-eva-g%C3%B6ksel-kir-cullen-elif>).
- Gorter, D. (2017). Bringing language education policy and multilingual assessment closer. *Language and Education*, 31(3), 191–196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2016.1261895>
- Gorter, D., & Arocena, E. (2020). Teachers' beliefs about multilingualism in a course on translanguaging. *System*, 92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102272>
- Griffin, G. (2022). Cross-cultural interviewing. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Cross-Cultural Research Methods* (pp. 142–159). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800376625>.
- Grossen, M., & Salazar-Orvig, A. (2011). Dialogism and dialogicality in the study of the self. *Culture & Psychology*, 17(4), 491–509. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X1141854>
- Hermans, H. J. M. (1999). Dialogical thinking and self-innovation. *Culture & Psychology*, 5(1), 67–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X9951004>
- Hermans, H. J. M., & Dimaggio, G. (2007). Self, identity, and globalization in times of uncertainty: A dialogical analysis. *Review of General Psychology*, 11(1), 31–61. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.11.1.3>
- Hermans, H. J. M., & Gieser, T. (2011). *Handbook of dialogical self theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Heugh, K., French, M., Armitage, J., Taylor-Leech, K., Billingham, N., & Ollerhead, S. (2019). Using multilingual approaches: Moving from theory to practice. British Council. Priručnik - Primjena multilingvalnih pristupa - prelazak sa teorije na praksu.pdf.
- Hopp, H., Kieseier, T., Jakisch, J., Sturm, S., & Thoma, D. (2021). Do minority-language and majority-language students benefit from pedagogical translanguaging in early foreign language development? *Multilingua*, 40(6), 815–837. <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2020-0164>
- Jo, A., Richardson, S., & de Jong, E. J. (2023). I feel really special and proud that I am bilingual: Exploring a second-generation Korean American bilingual adolescent's emotions and sense of belonging through family language policy. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 27(2), 199–216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13670069221126272>
- Le Pichon, E., Cummins, J., & Vorstman, J. (2021). Using a web-based multilingual platform to support elementary refugee students in mathematics. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1916022>
- Leonet, O., & Saraguet, E. (2024). The case of a pedagogical translanguaging intervention in a trilingual primary school: the students' voice. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 21(4), 2112–2130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2023.2224009> (Onderkant formulier).
- Levin, B. (1994). Educational reform and the treatment of students in schools. *The Journal of Educational Thought*, 28(1), 88–101. (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23767543>).
- Liebel, M. (2012). Children's rights from below: Cross-cultural perspectives. Springer.
- Linell, P. (2009). *Rethinking Language mind and World dialogically Interactional and contextual theories of Human SenseMaking* Charlotte NC Information Age.
- Lumivero. (2023). NVivo (Version 15) [Computer software]. (<https://lumivero.com/products/nvivo/>).
- Mertkan-Ozünülü, S. (2007). Reflexive accounts about qualitative interviewing within the context of educational policy in North Cyprus. *Qualitative Research*, 7(4), 447–459. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410708230>
- Morali, F., & Manoli, P. (2025). How do refugee children perceive their plurilingualism? Exploring children's representations of their linguistic repertoires through language portraits. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 28(3), 391–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2024.2430257>
- Morar, M., Bakker, A., Akkerman, S., Zenger, L., Smit, J., & Blom, E. (2025). Translanguaging within and across learning settings: A systematic review focused on multilingual children with a migration background engaged in content learning. *Review of Education*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.70069>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Phenomenological research methods. Sage Publications.
- Onderwijsraad (2025). *Talige diversiteit benutten*. Onderwijsraad, publicaties. (<https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/documenten/2025/09/04/talige-diversiteit-benutten>).
- Raja, F. D., Suparno, S., & Ngadiso, N. (2022). Students' attitude towards translanguaging practice in Indonesian EFL classes. *Alshlah Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(1), 979–988. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alshlah.v14i1.1149s>
- Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective Interviewing: A Guide to Theory and Practice* - Sage - Torrossa. *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice*. Sage Publications.
- Sarr, K. G., & Mosselson, J. (2010). Issues in teaching refugees in US schools. *Teachers College Record*, 112(14), 548–570.
- Simopoulos, G., & Magos, K. (2020). Teaching L2 for Students with a Refugee/Migrant Background in Greece: Teachers' Perceptions about Reception, Integration and Multicultural Identities. *Global Education Review*, 7(4), 59–73.
- Smithson, J. (2000). Using and analysing focus groups: Limitations and possibilities. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 3(2), 103–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/136455700405172>
- Soares, C. T., Duarte, J., & Günther-van der Meij, M. (2021). Red is the colour of the heart: Making young children's multilingualism visible through language portraits. *Language and Education*, 35(1), 22–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2020.1833911>
- Stoewer, K. (2018). What is it in Swedish?: Translation requests as a resource for vocabulary explanation in English mother tongue instruction. In A. Filipi, & N. Markee (Eds.), *Conversation analysis and language alternation: capturing transitions in the classroom* (pp. 83–106). Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.295.05sto>.
- Tai, K. W. H., & Li, W. (2021). Co-learning in Hong Kong English medium instruction mathematics secondary classrooms: A translanguaging perspective. *Language and Education*, 35(3), 241–267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2020.1837860>
- Ticheloven, A., & Blom, E. (2025). Language proficiency and emotional wellbeing in multilingual adolescents: Comparing majority, heritage and foreign language. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 22(3), 1905–1923. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2025.2475013>
- Ticheloven, A., Blom, E., Leseman, P., & McMonagle, S. (2019). Translanguaging challenges in multilingual classrooms: Scholar, teacher and student perspectives. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(3), 491–514.
- Uddling, J., & Reath Warren, A. (2023). A newcomer's spontaneous translanguaging in lower-secondary physics education. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 17(3), 270–288.
- Van Gorp, K., & Verheyen, S. (2024). Primary school children's conflicted emotions about using their heritage languages in multilingual classroom tasks. *The Modern Language Journal*, 108(1), 101–126.
- Van Manen, M. (2016). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315421056>
- Van Viegen, S. (2020). Translanguaging for and as Learning with Youth from Refugee Backgrounds. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 60–76. <https://doi.org/10.29140/ajal.v3n1.300>
- Yilmaz, T. (2021). Translanguaging as a pedagogy for equity of language minoritized students. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(3), 435–454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1640705>
- Yoshida, R., & Nichols, S. (2024). The multiple resources of refugee students: A language portrait inquiry. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 21(1), 379–399. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2026359>
- Yuzlu, M. Y., & Dikilitas, K. (2022). Translanguaging in the development of EFL learners' foreign language skills in Turkish context. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 16(2), 176–190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2021.1892698>