

5 Self-Regulated Translanguaging Strategies of Multilingual Students in Upper Secondary School in Austria

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Introduction

An increase in international and transnational migration worldwide has presented schools with the continuing task of providing inclusive living and learning spaces that accommodate linguistically and culturally diverse students' learning needs, allowing them to achieve educational success. The growing linguistic diversity within educational settings prompts us to consider how we can effectively incorporate all students' languages into classroom interactions, thereby empowering them to harness their linguistic and semiotic resources to enhance their learning experiences and outcomes (Cenoz & Gorter, 2025; Galante, 2022; Duarte, 2019; Dirim & Mecheril, 2018; Gogolin, 2017; Herzog-Punzenberger *et al.*, 2017).

In the European region, the Council of Europe (CoE), a leading human rights organisation, is actively involved in the promotion and maintenance of European languages in order to strengthen the political, social and economic cohesion of the European Union by encouraging linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue (Vallejo & Dooly, 2020). According to the CoE's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, all European citizens should learn two additional European Union languages besides their other languages. Based on the idea of a holistic, interrelated plurilingual repertoire, the CoE's plurilingual approach aims to support students in using their plurilingual resources flexibly to enrich their language and content learning (CoE, 2020). Nevertheless, the CoE's

language education policy does not yet do full justice to the diversity of the European linguistic landscape, as regional varieties, especially language minorities and so-called ‘migrant languages’ are not sufficiently taken into account owing to the prevailing language ideologies and the supremacy of the prestigious world languages in school systems.

In Austria, too, recognising the language resources of all students equally as an educational goal and establishing them as an integral part of the curriculum and instruction remains a major challenge. This is because, despite the multilingual population, the national language German, which is also the official language of instruction, dominates in most regions (Krumm, 2020; Stubler, 2018). In the 2020–2021 school year, 27.2% of students reported using a language other than the language of instruction at home. In addition to German and regional dialects, Turkish, Serbian or Bosnian, Croatian, Hungarian, Romanian and Arabic are the languages most widely spoken in Austrian schools (Statistik Austria, 2021). Austria is characterised by a school system that is, in principle, monolingual and prioritises language competence in German over competence in other languages (Allgäuer-Hackl *et al.*, 2021). In particular, it is assumed that knowledge and skills in German are key to obtaining higher educational and professional qualifications, as well as to ensuring educational success (Dirim & Mecheril, 2018). Because of this prevailing understanding of monolingualism and migration-related multilingualism, students’ family languages (FLs) are often perceived as a barrier to educational success (Duarte, 2019; Gogolin, 2008, 2017). Although there are efforts and initiatives in Austria that valorise multilingualism and postulate a plurilingual education and, in addition, mother tongue instruction (heritage language lessons) offered in more than 26 languages, little attention is paid to languages other than German in regular classes. In particular, students with migration experiences or from minoritised communities are assigned a socially marginal status owing to the power of the dominant school languages, and their linguistic repertoires are therefore not acknowledged as educationally relevant in learning contexts (Dirim & Mecheril, 2018; Dirim & Heinemann, 2016).

However, a broad range of studies focusing on multilingualism and different components of dynamic language use have demonstrated that encouraging students to utilise their full linguistic resources is beneficial (Pfenninger & Singleton, 2019; Poarch & Bialystok, 2017; García & Li, 2014). In this context, the studies by García and Kley (2016) and Duarte (2019) suggest that students’ FLs should be purposefully used in learning environments, as students’ learning can only be effectively promoted when they are not constrained or stigmatised by monolingual and monocultural ideologies, thus reinforcing the value and legitimacy of all languages. On the basis of this understanding, ‘the concept of translanguaging has emerged, giving space to the dynamic practices of multilingual people all over the world’ (García, 2019: 370) and has gained increasing acceptance

in recent years. In contrast to the CoE's aforementioned concept of plurilingualism, which focuses on the ability of speakers to alternate flexibly between or among the languages in their plurilingual repertoires, the contemporary theorisation of translanguaging assumes that multilingual speakers have a unitary linguistic system that they develop by engaging in various kinds of social interactions, and that it does not correspond to a system of socially and politically defined boundaries between named languages (García & Otheguy, 2020; García & Li, 2014). Translanguaging posits that the naming of languages is socially constructed and the process of selecting linguistic features for communication builds on a sociocultural understanding of the features associated with named languages (García & Otheguy, 2020). Translanguaging, according to García and Li (2014: 20), encompasses 'both the complex language practices of plurilingual individuals and communities, as well as the pedagogical approaches that use those complex practices'. The aim of a translanguaging pedagogy is to cultivate a learning environment in which students can utilise their entire linguistic repertoire purposefully and strategically, thereby expressing their linguistic, cultural and ethnic identities (Cenoz, 2019; Creese & Blackledge, 2015). Li (2011) proposed the idea of a 'translanguaging space', a social space of contact and continuity created by and for translanguaging practices, free from monolingual ideology (García & Li, 2018; Flores & García, 2014). Hence, translanguaging is a way for students to co-construct knowledge through the fluent and flexible use of their entire linguistic repertoire and to make their language practice more flexible and dynamic, as well as to improve their communicative meaning-making systems and to achieve their learning goals (García & Tupas, 2018; García & Li, 2018). Based on current research, it is assumed that an important relationship that affects students' learning and achievement exists between their use of translanguaging strategies and their self-regulated learning (García & Kano, 2014; Velasco & García, 2014). Accordingly, translanguaging has the potential to function as a self-regulatory system for multilingual learners to engage independently in their individual processes of learning. This is because, according to García and Li (2014), multilingual learners are able to take control of their own learning and purposefully self-regulate their linguistic resources.

This paper draws on Li's (2011) idea of 'translanguaging spaces', which builds on the notion of languaging from a psycholinguistic perspective and encompasses the process of using language to acquire knowledge, make meaning, articulate one's thoughts and communicate. It also draws on Zimmerman's (2002) cyclical model of self-regulated learning. On this basis, the doctoral research on which this chapter is grounded aimed to investigate the self-regulated use of the linguistic resources available to multilingual learners, and the potential applications of translanguaging in the classroom from the perspective of students in

Austrian secondary schools who have migration experiences and who have acquired German as an additional or second language (Kart, 2025). This study was based on a multi-method approach. Using qualitative research methods, including interviews, digital learning diaries and a group discussion, this research aimed to contribute to an understanding of the ways in which students self-regulate their multilingual resources when encountering academic language demands in their subject-based lessons at upper secondary level. The results of this study demonstrate whether and how translanguaging strategies and self-regulated learning can help students to improve their understanding of language and subject content and enhance their subject-specific and academic language skills, thereby achieving their learning goals, improving their learning outcomes and increasing their educational opportunities in a monolingually oriented school system.

Theoretical Background

Translanguaging as a transformative learning space

Translanguaging space (TS) is defined by Li (2011) as a space where teachers and students can use their full linguistic repertoires unrestricted by the constraints of socially constructed language and educational systems. The construction of the TS is a dynamic and ongoing lifelong process, with its boundaries continually shifting (Li, 2011). Following Lefebvre's (1991) idea of a trialectics of spatiality, Li (2011) used the notion of TS to describe a zone for and created by the translanguaging practices of individuals, which is shaped by a three-way dialectic between perceived, conceived and lived space. In this sense, translanguaging as a lived space is created through everyday social practices. The idea of a socially created space that is constructed through conceived, perceived and lived experiences challenges binary understandings of language and space. This critique allows the generation of new knowledge and discourses, thus establishing what Soja (1996) calls a 'third space'. Soja (1996) articulates three interrelated configurations of space. The 'first space', or physical space, features materialised social and economic practices and relations. It is the tangible, physical environment in which these interactions occur. The 'second space' refers to symbolic space, which includes discursive negotiations as well as mental representations such as the cognitive, affective and emotional processing of stimuli occurring in the first space. The 'third space' refers to social space, which involves the interpretation, evaluation and critique of social developments, conflicts, resistances and dominant relations. According to Li (2011), the TS has the power to merge the first and second spaces into a third space, which is a lived and socially constructed space. As Li (2018) points out, this TS has much in common with Soja's (1996: 23) concept of the third

space, which is ‘a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange’ and goes beyond the traditional view of a physically bounded space. Furthermore, Li (2011: 1223) highlights the transformative properties of translanguaging, arguing that TS ‘is not a space where different identities, values and practices simply co-exist, but combine together to generate new identities, values and practices’.

Multilingual speakers can draw on different ‘multiple meaning-making systems and subjectivities, to generate new configurations of language and education practices, and to challenge and transform old understandings and structures’ (Li, 2018: 23). Therefore, the TS involves the ability of multilinguals to think and act creatively and critically. In addition, Li (2018) suggests that language users do not think in a unilingual way, even when they are in a monolingual situation and are using only one language for specific types of verbal or written communication. They think beyond language, which involves using a variety of cognitive, semiotic and modal resources. Accordingly, there are ‘no clear-cut boundaries between the languages of bilinguals’; instead, there is ‘a languaging continuum that is accessed’ (García, 2009: 47). Therefore, translanguaging is a transformative process in which multilingual language users get the best out of their ‘creativity and criticality’ (Li, 2011: 1233). This means that multilingual learners are able to apply their different linguistic and semiotic resources, forms, signs and modalities simultaneously and flexibly during their learning process (Cenoz & Gorter, 2025; Gorter & Cenoz, 2015).

The concept of translanguaging is pivotal in understanding how linguistic practices evolve in multicultural and multilingual settings. It underscores the fluidity and adaptability of language use, emphasising that language learning and usage are not confined to traditional boundaries but are instead deeply intertwined with social identities and cultural practices. Therefore, in order to translanguage in a classroom dominated by monolingual norms, a space needs to be created in which students can use all their linguistic resources in their daily lives at school (Cenoz & Gorter, 2025). Moreover, a translanguaging pedagogy respects and supports formal transformative spaces ‘where students are encouraged to be their own agents in selecting appropriate features to communicate their meaning’ (García & Li, 2018: 5). Hence, translanguaging creates a social space in which multilingual individuals bring together different features from their linguistic repertoires and registers, as well as their ‘personal history, experience, and environment; their attitude, belief, and ideology; their cognitive and physical capacity, into one coordinated and meaningful performance’ (Li, 2018: 23).

In order to create translanguaging spaces in the school context, it is essential to engage with existing concepts in the field of language policy. Flores and García (2014) believe that the concept of a third space can be used to make the classroom a linguistic third space capable of transforming

traditional views of language as well as ethnolinguistic subjectivities. There remains, therefore, a need to re-imagine the routinised, everyday monolingual practices in classrooms. Current studies highlight the potential of creating a third space in which new opportunities can be generated and where multilingual speakers can gain access to the use of their full linguistic repertoires (Kayumova, *et al.*, 2025; García & Kleyn, 2016). Translanguaging can therefore be considered a practice of the third space that goes beyond the boundaries of communication in one language and transforms language learning and language use into a lived experience. It represents a space characterised by openness, criticality, power and creativity (Li, 2016).

Self-regulated learning and translanguaging

Self-regulation is considered fundamental for gaining lifelong learning skills, which are essential for students' educational success (Zimmerman, 2002). Zimmerman (2008: 166) describes self-regulated learning (SRL) practices as 'proactive processes that students use to acquire academic skill, such as setting goals, selecting and deploying strategies, and self-monitoring one's effectiveness'. SRL is grounded in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and involves the integration of processes and beliefs within an integrative cyclical process. Zimmerman and Moylan (2009) divide this cyclical process into three phases: (1) forethought, including goal setting, strategic planning and self-motivation beliefs; (2) performance and volitional control, including self-instruction, attention-focusing, self-observation and metacognitive monitoring; and (3) self-reflection, including self-evaluation, causal attribution and self-reactions. During self-regulation, learners are able to modify their skills and strategies in order to adapt to personal and contextual conditions so that they 'can initiate use of the skills and strategies, incorporate adjustments based on situational features, and maintain their motivation through personal goals and a sense of self-efficacy for attaining them' (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007: 13). Moreover, Zimmerman and Moylan (2009) concluded that learners who acquire good metacognitive and self-regulatory skills are better at monitoring and directing their own learning than those who do not. Translanguaging in the context of SRL helps multilingual learners to purposefully use their unified language system and, in this way, self-regulate their own learning and translanguaging practices (García & Li, 2015). In this regard, the self-regulation involved in translanguaging practices enables students to cope with challenges in language comprehension and production. These practices also offer possibilities for developing proficiency in negotiating language use; this leads to the development of a strengthened metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, which, in turn, can facilitate self-regulation in learning (Cenoz, 2019; García & Kano, 2014; Velasco & García, 2014;

[Herdina & Jessner, 2002](#); [Zimmerman, 2002](#)). In particular, multilingual learners who engage in translanguaging demonstrate a high level of competence in that they develop linguistic, cognitive, critical thinking and social skills, as well as gaining a more profound understanding and experience of sociocultural engagement ([García & Kleyn, 2016](#); [Creese & Blackledge, 2015](#)). Moreover, translanguaging practices make students more aware of their language use, including metalinguistic awareness and cross-linguistic flexibility ([Cenoz, 2019](#); [García & Kano, 2014](#)). To illustrate this further, the study by [García and Kano \(2014\)](#) shows that students are able to consciously use translanguaging as a self-regulation strategy to develop their bilingual skills. Similarly, [Galante \(2022\)](#) highlights that multilingual students use cognitive strategies such as reflection, reasoning and comparison when undertaking multilingual tasks to understand the similarities and differences between diverse languages and cultures. Likewise, [Velasco and García \(2014\)](#) argue that translanguaging may function as a self-regulatory mechanism that facilitates the language learning process. Therefore, an advantage of a translanguaging pedagogy, as [García and Kano \(2014: 272\)](#) note, ‘is that by making use of the full linguistic repertoire available to students, it also allows students to self-regulate their development of either language’. In this sense, as stated by [García and Li \(2015\)](#), the use of translanguaging strategies encourages a significant level of self-efficacy as students self-regulate their learning. Finally, [Zimmerman \(2002: 65\)](#) asserts that ‘because of their superior motivation and adaptive learning methods, self-regulated students are not only more likely to succeed academically but to view their futures optimistically’; this also applies to the fact that translanguaging practices do not limit students’ chances of educational success.

Considering the notion of translanguaging in the context of SRL, this chapter seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What translanguaging strategies do multilingual students develop in their subject-based classrooms, and to what extent can students self-regulate their multilingual resources and skills and use them constructively for learning?

RQ2: To what extent can students improve their achievement and learning outcomes in their subject-based classrooms by self-regulating their translanguaging practices?

The Present Study

This study employed a multi-method approach ([Morse, 2003](#)) and combined different data collection methods for the qualitative research. A constructivist–interpretive paradigm, which states that reality is socially constructed, was applied in order to understand and reconstruct the interview participants’ subjective sense-making concerning multiple social

constructions of meaning and knowledge (Mertens, 2015). In addition, sociocultural discourse analysis (Mercer, 2004) was employed in order to examine the students' experiences and to clarify whether and how the participants independently use and benefit from their existing linguistic skills when engaging with subject-specific and academic language requirements in subject-based classes. This study therefore investigated students' self-regulated translanguaging processes to gain insight into their perceptions of their multilingualism and to understand how they employ translanguaging strategies for their own learning and communicative purposes. The survey consists of three consecutive phases: (1) interview, (2) learning diary and (3) group discussion. Although a total of 21 schools were contacted to participate in this study it was not possible to recruit any schools; whether they declined to participate owing to a lack of interest in the topic of multilingualism in upper secondary education or because of COVID-19-related school closures cannot be said with certainty. Whatever the case, the students in this study were recruited outside of school in youth centres and public places or via social networks. Owing to COVID-19-related restrictions, and also to avoid the risk of infection, the interviews were conducted and recorded in online video calls lasting from 25 to 45 minutes via Skype and Facetime and saved as audio files. Interviews were conducted individually, with open-ended questions related to students' self-regulated learning and their experiences with multilingualism and translanguaging in school. At the time of the survey, the students ranged from 14 to 18 years of age and attended upper secondary school in Tyrol, a province in western Austria (see Table 5.1). Apart from three, all the students were born and raised in Austria, and all mentioned that their families had migration experiences. All students reported using languages other than German in their daily lives. They acquired the language of instruction as a second or additional language when they entered kindergarten and later learnt other languages in foreign language classes. Therefore, they stated that they regarded themselves as multilingual individuals. In addition, only one student was attending heritage language lessons at the time of the survey. Six students had attended heritage language lessons in primary school but had dropped out in secondary school because of a lack of time and, in some cases, a lack of interest (Kart, 2025).

After completing the online interviews, the students were asked to document their multilingual learning practices in a learning diary for 6 months. The goal of the learning diary was that the students would attempt to employ translanguaging strategies to optimise their academic performance through the creative and constructive use of their multilingual resources and skills in a self-regulated process in the classroom. Eight students agreed to participate in this study for 6 months. After their agreement, the topic of multilingualism, translanguaging and SRL was presented to them in detail and the students' questions were answered.

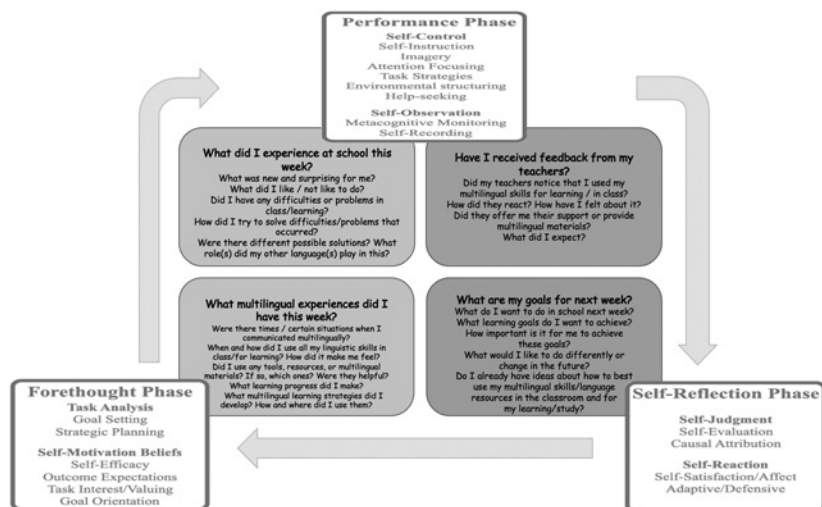


Figure 5.1 The open-ended guiding questions in the learning diary were developed for this study based on components of Zimmerman and Moylan's (2009: 300) cyclical phase model of SRL

After that, the online learning diary was introduced. This diary contained open-ended guiding questions. These questions were based on components of the cyclical phase model of SRL (Zimmerman, 2002; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009), which consists of three phases: forethought, performance and self-reflection (see Figure 5.1). Next, a few selected examples of translanguaging strategies were presented, based on the Translanguaging Guide for Educators developed by City University of New York – New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals (cf. Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Hesson *et al.*, 2014). These strategies were tried out and used by students in different ways during the learning diary phase, depending on their learning needs and goals. However, many creative ideas and strategies were also developed spontaneously by the students themselves and were used autonomously and purposefully for their learning (see Table 5.2). The students documented their learning practices and translanguaging strategies weekly in their learning diary. A learning diary entry that they turned in every Sunday was used to capture the self-regulated learning experiences and translanguaging practices of that week. After approximately a month, three of the students dropped out, stating that completing the learning diary alongside their school assignments and examinations was too much work for them. However, five students completed their learning diary entries over the full 6-month period. In total, 91 learning diary entries, which varied in content and length, were received. After the learning diary phase, a final group discussion was conducted to reflect on the students' experiences and the overall process of this study (Kart, 2025).

Table 5.1 Sociodemographic characteristics of the 18 participants

Name (pseudonyms)	Age	f/m	Country of birth	Level in upper secondary school	Family language(s) spoken	German as second language	Foreign languages	Attendance of heritage language lessons
1.Nicola	15	f	Chechnya	2	Chechen, Russian	✓	English	secondary school
2.Lidja	14	f	Austria	1	Bosnian	✓	English, Italian	-
3.Zeynep	14	f	Austria	1	Turkish	✓	English, Italian	-
4.Yonca	18	f	Austria	5	Turkish	✓	English	-
5.Gamze	18	f	Austria	4	Turkish	✓	English, Italian	-
6.Sarya	17	f	Austria	4	Turkish	✓	English, Italian	-
7.Hakan	18	m	Austria	4	Kurdish	✓	English, Latin	-
8.Tugba	18	f	Austria	4	Turkish	✓	English, Italian	Primary school
9.Tekin	18	m	Austria	4	Turkish	✓	English, French	Primary school
10.Melina	18	f	Austria	4	Serbian	✓	English, French, Italian	-
11.Derin	18	f	Austria	4	Turkish	✓	English, French, Italian	Primary school
12.Sena	18	f	Austria	4	Turkish	✓	English, French	Primary school
13.Yaren	18	f	Austria	5	Turkish	✓	English	-
14.Melis	18	f	Germany	4	Bosnian	✓	English	-
15.Ana	18	f	Austria	4	Croatian	✓	English, Spanish	-
16.Selma	16	f	Austria	4	Albanian, Turkish	✓	English, French, Latin	Primary school
17.Bogan	16	m	Austria	1	Georgian	✓	English, Italian	Primary school
18.Hazal	18	f	Turkey	5	Kurdish	✓	English, French, Italian	-

Table 5.2 Three examples of Sarya’s self-regulated translanguaging strategies documented in her learning diary

Forethought phase		Performance phase		Self-reflection phase		Translanguaging strategies
		Cognitive learning strategies	Metacognitive learning strategies	Resource management		
1	<u>Subject – Italian</u> Goal setting: Planning to study vocabulary over the weekend for the test Outcome expectation: Earning a passing grade on the oral vocabulary exam	Memorisation techniques: Creating vocabulary flashcards and repeating them many times	Identifying words in Italian that sound similar to words in Turkish and writing them on the back of the flashcard Changing flexibly between the languages in their repertoire	Purposeful use of all language skills Employing accurate time management Setting adequate goals	Self-monitoring and evaluation: Improving motivation and emphasising the advantages of the FL in studying Improving vocabulary acquisition	Flexibly moving between the languages Comparing languages Translating Metalinguistic switching
2	<u>Subject – Mathematics</u> Identification of learning needs: Experiencing difficulties with comprehending percentages Goal setting: Planning to learn together with a friend who speaks the same languages	Conducting research: Searching for information and selecting the relevant sections Looking for learning videos in Turkish on the internet to better understand percentages	Cross-language connection strategies: Comparing the explanation of the mathematical terms in Turkish and German	Using social and digital sources to facilitate content understanding Combining different measures and making connections between languages	Achievement motivation, self-monitoring and evaluation: Improving understanding after learning maths in Turkish Improving grades in maths Attracting teachers' attention	Clarifying own understanding Using FL as a thinking tool Translating and interpreting
3	<u>Subject – English</u> Identification of learning needs: Experiencing pronunciation difficulties Goal setting: Conversing with peers mostly in English to improve pronunciation	Building relationships with others: Asking questions, listening, speaking and repeating outside class with other English-speaking persons	Connections to prior knowledge: Applying English skills in everyday life to improve communication skills	Using existing linguistic resources for conversation Focusing on improvement of pronunciation	Self-efficacy and satisfaction: Feeling proud of improved English skills through active communication Language mixing being positively perceived Receiving positive feedback from teacher Achieving high levels of motivation	Metalinguistic awareness Metalinguistic switching Translating

Data collection took place between October 2020 and June 2021, which meant that it partly overlapped with the distance learning brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected confidentially, and students' responses are presented using pseudonyms. The data obtained were analysed using structured qualitative content analysis in accordance with Kuckartz (2018). In a combined and sequential process of coding, pattern finding and theme development, both deductive and inductive reasoning were used. After developing an initial coding structure that served as a guide for further analysis, the interview and group discussion material was coded in MAXQDA. In addition, type-building content analysis (Kuckartz, 2018) was conducted to develop a typology of the students' perceptions of their multilingualism; this contained statements on whether they were able to utilise their multilingual resources for their own learning and the specific ways in which they did so. The category system for analysing the learning diaries was based on the cyclical phase model of SRL (Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009), on the concept of translanguaging (García & Kleyn, 2016; García & Li, 2014) and on the orientation questions (see Figure 5.1). This is currently considered the best approach for addressing the importance of the use of FLs in the educational context (discussed above). This was followed by the creation of subcategories inductively obtained from the collected data, which were used to capture the students' self-regulated translanguaging strategies.

Results

Interviews

This section begins by presenting the results of the interviews to demonstrate how the students perceived and experienced their multilingualism in the school environment. The analysis of the data revealed that most participating students did not use German exclusively when learning new content, doing their homework and completing tasks. Overall, the students utilised their entire linguistic repertoire in a self-regulating and flexible way in order to make meaning and facilitate communication and learning during instruction. In addition, most of the students indicated that they did not participate in heritage language lessons in upper secondary school, nor did most possess academic language proficiency or skills in their FLs. Nevertheless, they actively leveraged all their available linguistic resources to better understand the content in the context of subject-based learning.

Excerpt 1

Interviewer: Do you learn only in German or do you use your other languages in your learning? If yes, in which subjects do you use all your language skills?

- Sarya:** Actually, I only learn German, but if I don't understand something, I like to build mnemonic devices in Turkish or in another language, which I then use.
- Melina:** So, when I count so internally, in my head, I don't count in German, but mostly in Serbian.
- Nicola:** Is always different. I check if I understand in German. Most of the time it's explained in such a complicated way, and if I don't understand it, I look it up in Russian or I ask my parents if they can explain it to me in more detail.

Furthermore, the analysis implied that students flexibly alternated between languages in their linguistic repertoire during conversations in multilingual settings. The majority of the students described using all their linguistic resources, thereby translanguaging at both the word and sentence levels, which they commonly referred to as 'language mixing'. According to the participating students, spontaneous linguistic switching occurred quite often, especially during communication with students who spoke the same languages. They also interacted spontaneously in the appropriate language when someone changed to another language that they had in their linguistic repertoire. The students primarily employed the full range of their linguistic resources during peer collaboration sessions. This practice was instrumental in enhancing the comprehension of complex content, as well as in obtaining clarification on assignments, homework and examinations. By leveraging their multilingual capabilities, students could fill gaps in understanding, ensure accuracy in their academic work and support each other in mastering difficult concepts.

Excerpt 2

- Interviewer:** Which languages currently play a role in your school life?
- Tugba:** Yes, so sure, before school exams or tests we meet and actually talk mainly in Turkish.
- Ana:** With my friends who also speak Croatian, I usually speak mixed: a few words in German and a few words in Croatian.
- Lidja:** For example, just talking to friends in class, I always mix my languages, somehow, when it comes to homework or explaining complicated words that I don't understand at all.

In this sense, the students' translanguaging practices often involved borrowing lexical items from their FLs because they did not know the meaning of complex words and, accordingly, sought a corresponding explanation in their FLs. This occurred habitually and spontaneously and was perceived as an effective method for understanding complex language. However, translanguaging practices are often identified through the unconscious multilingual thought processes described by students, which reveal that students select features from their linguistic repertoire that require socially constructed language, depending on the context and situation. In essence, the dynamic use of translanguaging not only served

as a practical communication tool but also enriched the educational experience by fostering a collaborative and inclusive learning environment. This linguistic flexibility allowed the students to navigate and bridge linguistic and cultural divides, thereby enhancing both individual and collective academic success.

Excerpt 3

- Interviewer:** Can you please describe when and how you use all your language skills?
- Hazal:** Yes, it happens unconsciously; I don't use it knowingly, but it happens subconsciously, I think. I have already noticed the fact that it has already helped me once, but, so, the process itself I cannot describe now in detail.
- Yonca:** It happens quite often that I mix two to three languages in one sentence [...] it is just noticeable and if you do it unconsciously, because you do not know the words from, for example, the Turkish, but in German I can explain it better and then in a Turkish started sentence and then mention the German word so very briefly.

However, most of the students reported that they did not use their multilingual resources when teachers were present in the classroom. Most teachers do not approve of or accept the use of other languages or code-mixing in class, and they remind students that the language of instruction – German – should be spoken in the classroom. Therefore, the students preferred to speak German in class and avoided using their FLs during instruction. Interestingly, all the students agreed with the monolingually oriented instruction and did not question why their FLs were not incorporated into the lessons.

Excerpt 4

- Interviewer:** How do your teachers deal with your multilingualism? Do you use your other languages in class?
- Derin:** Exactly, so when we speak among ourselves in our language, they [the teachers] scold us. They are against speaking in other languages. They think that we are in school and German is spoken here and not another language.
- Bogan:** Yes, so when the teacher is in the classroom, the teacher just says that you should only speak German, because the teacher also wants to understand what you are saying.

The students empathised with their teachers, arguing that the teachers could not learn and understand all the students' languages. Therefore, they agreed that only German should be spoken in class, and they also stated that they were able to speak their FLs freely during teachers' absences and class breaks. This clearly indicates that the students themselves contribute to the reproduction of the monolingual habitus of

schools by agreeing with and not questioning the teachers' monolingual norms. The fact that this belief is strictly upheld by students leads them to create a safe space for their translanguaging practices beyond the monolingual norms of the classroom.

Excerpt 5

- Derin:** I try to avoid Turkish so that we can understand each other; the teachers are actually right about that, so we actually always speak in German.
- Sena:** Yes, I mean, yes, they [teachers] are actually right, because they don't understand our language and that can just come across so wrong.

All the students reported that they had rarely experienced multilingualism and translanguaging in the classroom and that their teachers had never used the students' FLs as learning tools in lessons or given them multilingual study materials. Some of the students mentioned that they were occasionally asked about the similarities between German or English words and their FLs. However, despite translanguaging strategies occurring in a marginalised space, the students enjoyed using all their languages, not only outside school but also in the educational context. When asked whether they could imagine multilingual classes, most of the students answered that creating multilingual classes would be more complicated for the teachers because they could not learn and understand all the students' languages. Moreover, they shared that the implementation of translanguaging in classrooms would be too confusing and difficult, so they did not expect their teachers to include their FLs while teaching; instead, they wanted their multilingual and cultural identities to be accepted and valued.

Excerpt 6

- Yonca:** However, it depends on the teacher because I have not seen any teacher who agrees with this because they still want to have control over his or her lessons in a certain respect because he doesn't know whether they're really talking about the topic at hand or whether they don't have a clue about their free time or something like that.
- Derin:** Yes, but in my opinion that would be perfect if the teachers would support us, but unfortunately, they do not.

The next section presents the results from the learning diaries, in which the students documented their self-regulated translanguaging practices and learning strategies. Analysis of the collected data revealed that the students had different ways of creating a TS wherein they self-regulated their multilingual resources and translanguaging strategies for language and subject learning.

Planning of translanguaging strategies during the forethought phase

The forethought phase, which precedes the learning process, involves setting goals and determining the personal and material learning resources needed to achieve them. The determination of learning needs and the formulation of learning objectives were based on the teachers' learning requirements. The most appropriate translanguaging and learning strategies were developed and planned, depending on the learning content, homework or examinations that the students were required to complete. In addition, three students were concerned not only with using their linguistic skills to improve their academic performance; they also developed an increasing interest in promoting their FLs, setting a goal to read books in their FLs and engaging in improving their FL grammar and writing skills. [Table 5.2](#) provides a detailed overview of 3 of a total of 24 examples from the analysis of the learning diary entries by a student, who documented her learning goals and the most appropriate strategies to achieve them in the learning diary, based on open-ended guiding questions (see [Figure 5.1](#)).

Use of translanguaging strategies during the performance phase

The students' holistic use of their available linguistic resources mostly took place in their French and Italian foreign language classes, as well as in science classes. This was especially the case when clarifying complicated subject content. The students used all the languages in their multilingual repertoires in order to clarify tasks or deliver detailed information about a scientific concept. In addition, they employed translanguaging strategies when elaborating on content or a specific term that they wanted to understand and have explained in the class or that they wanted to learn for vocabulary tests and examinations. In particular, they frequently created mnemonics and also used tools from the internet, such as Google Translate, to search for information their teachers required them to learn. Students also engaged in translanguaging practices to find equivalent terms in their FLs for unknown German words or vice versa. In addition, the strategy students most commonly employed was comparing the languages they spoke and identifying similarities between them. Analysis of the learning diary entries indicates that the students elaborated on the topic at hand in the language they were familiar with, using self-regulated translanguaging strategies to improve their learning outcomes (see [Table 5.2](#)).

Self-reflection on translanguaging practices

Analysis of the learning diaries showed that the students experienced more temporal and spatial freedom through self-regulation of their own

learning and used different forms of multilingualism for conversation and collaboration than before the use of the learning diary. This phase demonstrated that the learners were willing and able to engage in their own learning and to use their resources to achieve their learning goals in a specific context, which was ensured by the continuous use of SRL and translanguaging strategies. Consequently, this was accomplished by ensuring that the learners regularly assessed and evaluated their learning outcomes during the self-reflection phase. This included evaluating their learning progress and, if necessary, taking corrective action to optimise their own learning to achieve better outcomes. Moreover, it should be mentioned that the results are based on the participants' self-assessments and self-perceptions; students revealed that they benefited from the advantages of multilingualism and achieved their learning outcomes through their own efforts. These frequent positive assessments were, in turn, confirmed by the positive feedback and praise they received from their teachers and from their grades, which improved by using translanguaging strategies and SRL. It is interesting to observe the role that these self-efficacy beliefs and especially the motivational aspects served in ensuring that the more positive experiences the students had with the use of multilingual resources and translanguaging strategies, the more their creativity increased in the multiple ways in which they used linguistic resources to improve their performance.

The final focus group led to in-depth discussions among the participants and provided a more comprehensive picture of multilingual students' perspectives on self-regulated learning and translanguaging in the context of educational success. After 6 months of intensive engagement with their own multilingualism and their self-regulated learning processes, the students reported that while they had learnt a lot about self-regulating their own learning processes, using multilingualism was not new to them. Nicola said she had always learnt multilingually but had not been aware of it. Lidja explained that she was very sceptical at first, not expecting that using translanguaging strategies and SRL would improve her learning so greatly. In addition, they increasingly questioned the teachers' monolingual norms, which they had considered to be 'normal' during the interview, and developed an awareness of their linguistic resources without viewing their FL as less valuable or useful than German. Students concluded that they were now aware of their language resources and of how to use them purposefully and adaptively in each situation and context, regardless of the school's monolingual requirements and expectations.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present multi-method study was conducted to analyse multilingual students' translanguaging practices and SRL in upper secondary school. Overall, this study revealed the different ways in which

students use their multilingual resources and translanguaging strategies, especially when dealing with academic language demands and challenges in order to understand academic content in their subject-based classes (RQ2). The analysis demonstrated that, in particular, spontaneous translanguaging practices are resources students use to facilitate their learning processes and make learning content accessible. Accordingly, it was determined that the students' multilingualism was not deficient or inadequate and that their translanguaging practices were not always coincidental; these practices were, in fact, thoughtful, systematic and purposeful when they used the potential of their entire linguistic repertoire for their learning.

The students' learning diaries and interview data (RQ1) revealed their ability to develop constructive and creative learning strategies and self-regulate their linguistic resources and skills, leading to improved academic achievement. The findings presented in this article align with Heikkilä and Lonka's (2006: 101) statement that students with self-regulating skills are able to set task-related, reasonable goals, take responsibility for their learning and maintain motivation. Additionally, self-regulated learners are capable of employing various cognitive and metacognitive strategies, adapting their approaches to successfully complete academic tasks.

Accordingly, students have multilingual resources they can use as a foundation for developing their academic learning skills in both language and science subjects. However, they must also be knowledgeable about their self-regulation and translanguaging in order to perceive these skills as part of their lifelong learning and to channel them for their own learning purposes. To take advantage of these resources, students need strong self-regulation skills, comprising the development of linguistic, cognitive and social skills, as well as critical thinking, profound understanding and sociocultural engagement (García & Kleyn, 2016; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009). The development of these skills will lead to overcoming language comprehension and production challenges, as well as provide opportunities for building language negotiation skills. Such skills facilitate the development of increased metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, which are also important prerequisites for SRL (Cenoz, 2019; Velasco & García, 2014; Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Zimmerman, 2002). Students employ purposeful translanguaging strategies and activate prior knowledge and experiences encoded in their FLs to effectively transfer, reinforce and reproduce content, linguistic knowledge and academic skills in their languages. Further influences on effective SRL and the use of translanguaging strategies are the learning environment and the support offered by teachers. Therefore, students should be given more opportunities in the classroom to draw on their existing linguistic knowledge and, more importantly, to expand on and target their linguistic resources, skills and abilities through classroom exchanges in an independent and

self-regulated way; this would facilitate broader educational success (Cenoz & Gorter, 2025; Duarte, 2019).

Accordingly, in the self-reflection phase in particular, the students reported that their performance and learning outcomes in the subject-based lessons improved as a result of their self-regulation of the translanguaging strategies they used to achieve their learning goals (Velasco & García, 2014). In most cases, these statements were based on the students' improved grades and often on the positive feedback they received from their teachers, who noticed that their students had started to use all their linguistic resources while participating in this study (RQ2). Another very interesting and important observation in this study was that despite the teachers' monolingual norms, the students created a safe space for translanguaging by self-regulating their multilingual resources to achieve their learning goals. This aligns with Li's (2011) understanding of a third space as a space that is created through different translanguaging processes. In this study, despite the monolingually oriented instruction, students created a space in which they engaged in translanguaging and regularly documented this in their learning diaries. Moreover, regarding the process of creating the third space, it was also evident in this study, particularly in the group discussion, that when experiencing increased opportunities to engage in translanguaging, students questioned the monolingual and monocultural constraints in the school and therefore became more conscious of linguistic and cultural discrimination in their classrooms.

This chapter considered the notion of translanguaging based on the idea of the third space as a learning space that caters to students who use their linguistic resources and skills in a self-regulated, flexible and often spontaneous way in order to better understand classroom tasks and content. These students' translanguaging practices often took place on the sidelines because of the monolingual orientation of the classroom, which is consistent with Soja's assumption, as he describes the third space as a 'meeting place for those who have been marginalized from dominant societal interactions' (Soja, 1996: 50). In line with this, many current studies suggest that translanguaging plays a crucial role in monolingual educational contexts, that translanguaging pedagogical practices aim to ensure that students have access to the various ways of using languages that differ from those mandated by dominant educational institutions and that translanguaging enables students to develop a critical awareness of established language dominance (Kayumova *et al.*, 2025; García & Otheguy, 2020). In such a space, both students and teachers can use their linguistic repertoires as a resource for learning and, in the process, increase these repertoires in creative and transformative ways to successfully accomplish their learning goals.

In addition to TS, the diary model employed in this study, which was designed to enable the students to thoroughly document and reflect on

their self-regulated translanguaging practices, could be further developed and optimised for both individual and instructional purposes. By incorporating regular prompts and targeted activities, this model could encourage multilingual students to explore their linguistic resources and other modes of meaning-making such as visual aids, gestures and digital tools. For instance, students might be asked to create a multimodal project that integrates spoken, written and visual elements to convey their understanding of a topic. Students could reflect on their use of linguistic and semiotic repertoires, encompassing visual, auditory and kinaesthetic modes of communication. Teachers could facilitate this by providing specific activities or exercises that help students delve into and articulate these different modes, demonstrating how they can be integrated into their learning processes. To further enhance this model, it could be developed to scaffold students' exploration of individual meaning-making modes beyond linguistic and semiotic resources. Embedding reflection on these modes in the diary model presented in this chapter could enrich students' learning experiences and offer a more holistic and comprehensive educational approach.

This study also had several limitations. The population of students interviewed was relatively small. Owing to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, it was almost impossible to conduct interviews with more students. As mentioned above, in order to find interviewees for this study, a total of 21 schools were contacted and asked whether they would encourage their students to participate, thereby enabling the use of immigrant language resources in the classroom. However, because of COVID-19-related school closures and distance learning, the schools' willingness to participate was not as expected. Therefore, another follow-up study on teachers' and school administrators' perceptions of the establishment of migration-related multilingualism in secondary education would be useful, as would classroom observations that capture students' classroom translanguaging practices. The results of this study have implications for teachers of multilingual learners, including the idea that providing spaces for translanguaging practices can assist students in improving their skills by allowing them to use all their available linguistic resources for their own learning purposes. Accordingly, it is of great importance in this context that teachers reflect on their monolingual norms and are able 'to create safe spaces in classrooms and schools where students can practice translanguaging' (Canagarajah, 2011: 405). García-Mateus and Palmer (2017) point out that translanguaging scholars have increasingly argued that students are more likely to be academically successful if they have the opportunity to use their multilingual skills in the classroom. The fact that students are able to purposefully use their multilingual resources for their own learning achievements should be considered and supported by education stakeholders and policymakers.

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