

13 Translanguaging and Education: Questioning Migrant Speakers' Perceptions Regarding Translanguaging Practices

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Introduction

Increased migration flows in many European countries and the spread of globalisation have accelerated the development of multilingual and multicultural societies. Like other European countries, Italy has been affected by these migration flows, rapidly becoming a ‘superdiverse’ society (Blommaert & Backus, 2012: 28). This term indicates the heterogeneity of migration not only in terms of nationality, ethnicity, language and religion but also highlights diversity in terms of the motivations, modes and migratory paths of individuals reaching the country and settling down to start new lives. Such changes in society have urged scholars to see sociolinguistic phenomena and processes as determined by mobility and to examine them from a new perspective. To describe the flexibility and hybridity of communicative practices determined by mobility and globalisation, scholars have developed a new way of describing and analysing language use in late modern societies by adopting a translanguaging perspective.

Translanguaging emphasises the uniqueness of every speaker’s communicative repertoire (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015: 281) and allows researchers to investigate the complexity of everyday communicative practices in a globalised and multilingual world. Studies on translanguaging have focused mainly on two issues: (1) evaluating translanguaging practices in school settings and their potential to create an inclusive learning environment (Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García *et al.*, 2017), and (2) examining the creativity and hybridity of speakers’ translanguaging practices, and

their functions and uses in a range of interactional settings such as families, city markets and sport clubs (e.g. [Hua et al., 2017](#); [Mazzaferro, 2018](#); [Moore, 2014](#); [Williams, 2020](#); [Wu & Lin, 2019](#)). However, as for the analysis of speakers' interactions, little emphasis has been placed on speakers' own perceptions of their translanguaging practices. Such information could help to understand the ways in which speakers consider their communicative repertoires and value their multilingual practices, which have consequences for their language use and language learning. Taking this into account, the aim of this chapter is to investigate, on the basis of data collected through informal interactions and semi-structured interviews, migrant speakers' interpretations, perceptions and positioning regarding their translanguaging practices.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section reviews previous studies on translanguaging and speakers' perceptions and positioning; the second presents the study methods; the third reports evidence of translanguaging practices during informal interactions and allows readers to familiarise themselves with the setting in which the data were collected; the fourth reports the results of the study of speakers' perceptions and positions regarding their multilingual practices by presenting data collected through interviews; and the fifth draws conclusions.

In general, the results suggest a tension: on the one hand, the data collected through informal interactions highlight the flexibility of multilingual speakers' communicative practices and the spontaneity with which these occur in their daily lives, while, on the other hand, the data from the interviews underscore the negative connotations that the speakers attribute to their own translanguaging practices, revealing the influence of the ideology of monolingualism.

The Multilingual Turn

In response to increased migration flows and the spread of globalisation all over the world, several terms (e.g. *transidiomatic practices* ([Jacquemet, 2005](#)), *polylinguaging* ([Jørgensen, 2008](#)), *flexible bilingualism* ([Creese & Blackledge, 2010](#)), *codemeshing* ([Canagarajah, 2011](#)), *metrolingualism* ([Otsuji & Pennycook, 2011](#)) and *translanguaging* ([García & Li, 2014](#))) have emerged to describe the development of speakers' complex multilingual repertoires and to criticize the monolingual ideologies originating in the nation states that have dominated research in applied linguistics and second language acquisition. All these terms, which can be grouped under the umbrella term *multilingual turn* ([May, 2013](#)), focus attention on bilingual and multilingual speakers' ability to mobilise creative, critical and spontaneous practices that pertain to their communicative repertoire.

Following this notion, in this chapter, the term ‘translanguaging’ is used to describe how, depending on the various elements of the interaction, such as the interlocutor, the topic of conversation and so on, the speakers select the elements of their repertoire, creating hybrid and flexible communicative practices. A translanguaging perspective considers non-standard features, regionalisms and influences from multiple languages as fully fledged and valid communicative practices (García & Li, 2018), thus going beyond a monolingual understanding of language. Moreover, from a translanguaging perspective, speakers’ communicative repertoire is understood as a transsemiotic system (García & Li, 2014), suggesting a multimodal perspective on communication that includes both verbal and non-verbal codes.

Studies on translanguaging have not only moved away from the traditional perspective on languages, but have also empowered multilingual speakers by validating their communicative practices and recognising ‘broken’ or incomplete linguistic forms as equally valid and correct. In educational contexts, Carbonara and Scibetta’s work proved that adopting a translanguaging perspective in classroom activities, hence encouraging students to use their full communicative repertoire, had positive results, such as generating the weakening of language regimes and supporting the affirmation of the notion of global citizenship (Carbonara & Scibetta, 2020). Similarly, Cenoz examined the potential of translanguaging to empower Basque–Spanish bilinguals by legitimating their discursive practices (Cenoz, 2017). Moreover, Hurst and Mona (2017) focused on how English monolingualism in the classroom can disempower L2 students, whereas translanguaging pedagogies have the potential to empower them. These studies stressed the importance of allowing speakers to use their L1, since this would affirm the value of their repertoires and, as a consequence, could potentially empower them as legitimate speakers.

By looking at the complexity of multilingual interactions (e.g. Hua *et al.*, 2017; Mazzaferro, 2018; Wu & Lin, 2019) and underscoring the potential for adopting a translanguaging perspective in classrooms (e.g. Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García *et al.*, 2017), studies on translanguaging have investigated the benefits of legitimising speakers’ full and complex repertoires. However, until now, speakers’ own perspectives on their translanguaging practices and (potentially) their own legitimisation of such practices have been the object of limited research (Ritzau & Madsen, 2016, 2018).

Studies analysing speakers’ perceptions of translanguaging have focused mainly on educational contexts by addressing teachers’ and students’ perspectives on their multilingual practices in classroom environments or in relation to pedagogical translanguaging activities in the classroom. For instance, Carstens (2016) addressed the topic of translanguaging as a pedagogy for L2 learning and investigated students’ perceptions of this practice. Similarly, Moody *et al.* (2019) examined graduate students’ beliefs about translanguaging and found that they were

positive, particularly in relation to L2 learning. With regard to teachers' perceptions, [Cenoz *et al.* \(2022\)](#) examined translanguaging as a tool to reduce teachers' feelings of anxiety and guilt about using more than one language in the classroom. These studies have underscored the importance of examining speakers' perspectives and analysing their discourse regarding their multilingual practices. However, to the author's knowledge, speakers' perceptions and the positioning of their translanguaging practices have not been investigated in more hybrid contexts, for example practices that occur in an educational setting but not during classroom interactions. This study situates itself precisely in this hybrid setting since, although the data were not collected in or during class, they were still collected at an Italian language school and the conversations took place among language learners and teachers. This environment (still connected to the classroom environment but not during class time) makes the dynamics of power and status related to speakers' linguistic practices more prominent, and issues related to language ideologies and monolingualism come into play.

Research on migrant speakers' language ideologies and perceptions of linguistic practices has analysed speakers' discourse on issues such as language learning ([Berman, 1998](#); [Miller, 2014](#)). In addition, it has examined elements of identity construction and identity categories that emerge in multilingual speakers' narratives ([De Fina & Tseng, 2017](#)). In relation to this, studies have investigated specific categories such as migrant writers ([Pavlenko, 2001](#)), adult migrants ([Miller, 2014](#)) and migrant women ([De Fina & King, 2011](#); [Relaño Pastor, 2014](#)). In these studies, speakers' perceptions are analysed through the lenses of positioning ([Bamberg, 1997](#)), agency ([García, 2017](#); [Miller, 2014](#)) and membership categorisation ([Clary-Lemon, 2010](#); [Sacks, 1992](#); [Van de Mierop, 2012](#)). Similarly, this chapter analyses speakers' discourse in relation to their translanguaging practices by addressing the positionings that emerge in their narratives.

The Project: Data Collection, Participants and Method

The results presented in this chapter are part of a study conducted between November 2019 and October 2021. The data collection for the study was conducted at Centro Interculturale MoviMenti (CIMM), a school in the municipality of Cesena (northern Italy) that offers integration and support services (including Italian language classes) to the migrant community residing in Cesena. The participants in the study included 38 foreigners from 20 different countries (see [Table 13.1](#)) between the ages of 18 and 60 years old.

The participants in the study agreed to be recorded and signed a confidentiality agreement. The data collected through informal interactions and interviews were entirely anonymised, and fictitious names were assigned to the participants.

Table 13.1 Participants' countries of origin

Country of origin	Participants' L1	Number of participants
Afghanistan	Pashto	1
Albania	Albanian	3
Algeria	Arabic	2
Argentina	Spanish	2
Bangladesh	Bengali	4
Brazil	Portuguese	3
Bulgaria	Bulgarian	1
China	Chinese Mandarin and Wenzhounese	1
Denmark	Danish	1
Germany	German	1
Kazakhstan	Kazakh	1
Morocco	Arabic	5
Moldova	Romanian	1
Poland	Polish	2
Romania	Romanian	1
Russia	Russian	3
Senegal	Wolof	2
Thailand	Thai	1
Tunisia	Arabic	1
Ukraine	Ukrainian	2

Informal interactions among the participants

The informal interactions, which are presented below, were video recorded during the tea break between the first and second half of the Italian language class that the migrants attend once a week. This moment was chosen since the participants can move freely around the room in which the class is taking place and can have tea and an informal chat. The data were collected in order to find evidence of translanguaging practices occurring in informal interactions at CIMM. In the excerpts provided in this chapter, the speakers' turns are numbered in ascending order, and the students are referred to as S1, S2, S3, etc. in order of speaking, while the Italian language teacher is referred to as IT1. A translation of the speakers' turns is presented in italics at the end of every turn.

Semi-structured interviews with the participants

After the collection of data from the informal interactions, the study included the conducting of semi-structured interviews. These were recorded with 16 of the 38 participants who took part in the first part of

the study. Being semi-structured, the same interview template containing the same questions was used for all 16 interviews. However, during these interviews, the participants were given the freedom to relate personal stories and experiences without being interrupted. For this reason, although all the interviews were carried out using the same structure and the same number and type of questions, the interviews differ from each other in terms of both their duration and the interactions between the participants and the interviewer (who is also the author of this chapter). In order to reduce the effect on the participants, the interviewer did not know the participants prior to the interviews and was introduced to them as a researcher by their language teacher. All the interviews were conducted in Italian (the interviewer's mother tongue), apart from the interview with speaker S12, which was conducted in Spanish.

In general, the interview model was structured so as to start with generic questions relating to participants' personal data, such as information on the languages in their repertoires and the duration of their stay in Italy, and then move to more personal questions such as their migration histories and their perspectives on their multilingual practices and language choices (Tagliamonte, 2006). The semi-structured interviews carried out with the participants were intended to investigate speakers' perspectives and positioning regarding their multilingual practices and were analysed through the lens of the narratives produced by the participants. Narratives can be understood as stories, descriptions, explanations, comments, evaluations of past, present and future events, situations, etc. Baker (2006) argues that narratives are social constructions, in which the observed 'reality' is interpreted and told in different ways. From this perspective, narratives are produced in all communicative processes (Fisher, 1987), and narrating in social interactions implies a co-construction and negotiation that gives meaning to 'facts' and interprets experiences (Bamberg, 2011). As we will see through the speakers' narratives, positioning (Bamberg, 1997) emerges, reminding us that language in use is invested with sociopolitical and cultural interests that emerge in the ways in which speakers express themselves (Prinsloo, 2017).

Data Analysis: Evidence of Translanguaging in Informal Interactions

Before moving on to the analysis of speakers' perceptions and positioning regarding their translanguaging practices, this section presents evidence of translanguaging practices in the data collected from the informal interactions. This is important for understanding the speakers' everyday communicative practices at CIMM and to become familiar with the environment in which the data were collected. Before moving to the main focus of the study, in which speakers' perceptions and positions

regarding their multilingual practices are presented and where the participants are asked about their translanguaging practices, it is necessary to confirm the occurrence of translanguaging practices during interactions at CIMM. As already mentioned, a translanguaging perspective understands non-standard features, regionalisms and influences from multiple languages to be valid linguistic practices, and it allows the researcher to examine them as effective means of communicating. The two excerpts that are presented in this section exemplify the speakers' practices. They portray verbal turns where the different elements of the speakers' linguistic repertoires emerge, illustrating the speakers' complex and hybrid linguistic practices while interacting in a heterogenous place such as CIMM. Excerpt 1 below presents Speaker S2 from Morocco translanguaging while communicating with Speaker S3 from Albania. The excerpt shows complex practices, where the elements of the speakers' multilingual repertoires come into play.

Excerpt 1

Participants: S2 (Morocco); S3 (Albania)

Italian and French words and phrases are marked as follows:

Italian

French

- | | | |
|----|-------|--|
| 9 | S2 | <u>Mio marito non [parla con mi (.) ↓ italiano]</u>
<i>My husband doesn't [talk to me (.) ↓ Italian]</i> |
| 10 | S3 | [<u>Eh eh (.) perché non parla</u>] lui?
<i>[Eh eh (.) why doesn't he] speak?</i> |
| 11 | S2 | Il dit no (.) <u>per bambini che:</u> (.) prende arabo
<i>He said no (.) for the kids that: (.) learn Arabic</i> |
| 12 | (2.1) | |
| 13 | S2 | <u>Si italiano italiano italiano no</u>
<i>Yes Italian Italian Italian no</i> |
| 14 | S3 | <u>Lingue non è (.) si deve dimenticare (.) ha fatto bene</u>
<u>bravo</u>
<i>Languages is not (.) should be forgotten (.) he did well</i> |

The communicative practices of both speakers are characterised by their flexibility and by being far from standard Italian. For instance, Turn 9 would be 'Mio marito non mi parla in italiano'. Turn 11 shows that S2's

communicative elements can be associated with both Italian and French. The expression ‘il dit’ might come from the French expression ‘il dit’ and differs from the standard Italian ‘dice’. Similarly, the expression ‘prende arabo’ might derive from the French ‘apprendre’ (to learn) and not from the Italian ‘imparare’. Speaker S2 is Moroccan and, in addition to Arabic, speaks French. The silence in Turn 12, followed by another turn (13) from Speaker S2, shows that Speaker S3 takes time in replying and that she does not immediately understand Speaker S2’s turn. Yet, S3’s turn (14) is in line with what S2 stated in Turn 11, hence showing that the message was successfully conveyed. Apart from functioning as communicative elements, S2’s translanguaging practices bring out a relevant issue for the speaker, which is the family language policies. S2’s turns highlight the family dynamics in relation to which language should be used at home. Her words describe her husband’s monolingual ideology, which imposes the use of Arabic at home. The practice of using Arabic in the family context is described by the speaker as necessary to make the children learn the mother tongue of the parents and to avoid losing an element of their identity language (De Fina, 2012), which is Arabic. This idea is also confirmed by Speaker S3 in Turn 14: ‘Languages is not (.) should be forgotten (.) he did well’. Another example of the speakers’ flexible language practices is presented in Excerpt 2 below, showing the flexibility of a participant using the Cesena dialect in his verbal turns.

Excerpt 2

Participants: S4 (Senegal); S5 (Morocco); IT1 (Italian teacher)

Words and phrases in dialect are marked as follows:

Dialect

- | | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| 100 | S4 | No (.) rispettiamo molto
<i>No (.) we respect a lot</i> |
| 101 | S5 | [Si]
<i>[Yes]</i> |
| 102 | IT1 | [Bravo]
<i>[Well done]</i> |
| 103 | (1.4) | |
| 104 | S4 | Amiamo: (.) anche (.) dai anche quello si vede che (.)
abbiamo
dei bravi genitori a casa (.) la mamma e il babbo molto
bravo= |

- We love: (.) also (.) well also what can be seen that (.) we
have good parents at home (.) very good mum and dad=*
- 105 S5 =Sì
=Yes
- 106 S4 Non è noi (.) non è (.) un (cico) (.) ↑te capì?
It's not us (.) it's not (.) a (?) (.) ↑do you understand?
- 107 (1.7)
- 108 IT1 Te capì? ((sorridendo))
Do you understand? ((smiling))

Speaker S4's multilingual practices include the use of the dialect expression 'Te capì?' (do you understand?) in Turn 106, which he uses to communicate with his Italian language teacher. Apart from showing the speaker's capacity for adapting his communicative repertoire to suit his interlocutor, the turn highlights that, depending on the context and the moment in which they are produced, some semiotic forms are considered valid and others not. The dialectal expression is used exclusively in the presence of IT1, the teacher of Italian from Cesena, who would surely understand the expression. In this case, the use of the dialect not only functions as a communicative practice in interacting but might also be used to make explicit the level of integration of the speaker. In fact, not only did he learn Italian but also the dialect of Cesena, the place where he now resides. Moreover, as suggested by Labov, the adoption of certain linguistic forms by speakers causes the interlocutors to attribute a positive connotation and therefore a sharing of the associated privileges (Labov, 2001), which, in this case, could be the feeling of integration and of belonging. The understanding and evaluation of S4's turn in dialect is evident also from the teacher's reaction as she verbally repeats S4's turn and smiles.

This section has reported examples of the speakers' translanguaging practices, highlighting the flexibility of their communicative practices and portraying how the elements of their multilingual repertoires emerged during their interactions at C IMM. In addition, it has underscored that, on some occasions, the speakers' translanguaging practices make the dynamics of power and status that are embedded in the language more evident. For instance, language can become an element in maintaining the family or community 'identity' (Excerpt 1) or it can work as a tool to show one's affiliation or proximity to a certain community, hence showing a particular status (Excerpt 2). The excerpts presented in this section allow readers to familiarise themselves with the setting and the participants of the study. In addition, they also function as evidence of translanguaging practices that occur in informal interactions. Before moving on to the next

section, where the results of the study on the speakers' perceptions and positions regarding their multilingual practices are presented and where the participants are asked about their translanguaging practices, it was important to confirm the occurrence of translanguaging practices during interactions at CIMM.

Data Analysis: The Monolingual Ideology

The preceding section reported examples of informal interactions among the participants of the study. The excerpts exemplified the flexibility of the speakers' multilingual practices and revealed the way in which, in a heterogenous setting like CIMM, some speakers tend to access the elements of their multilingual repertoires without necessarily limiting their communication to standard Italian. At the same time, the excerpts revealed that some participants intentionally monitor their own speech and produce specific turns according to their interlocutor. In the following section, we will see that, as it emerged in the semi-structured interviews, some speakers aligned with a monolingual ideology that evaluates translanguaging practices negatively, while only a few speakers evaluated translanguaging positively.

Speakers' perceptions of translanguaging in social settings

The negative connotation that speakers assign to 'mixing' languages emerged in the speakers' responses when they were questioned about their perceptions of translanguaging practices. For instance, Speaker S9 from Albania described translanguaging practices negatively:

They are mistakes, it is not good, but it is normal, perhaps. You shouldn't mix them or at least not the way some people mix them. I never liked to mix them. For example, with verbs, with verbs, this happens even more, for example, with relatives who are Albanians who live here. It really bothers me when I hear them saying the words in Italian but 'made' a little bit in Albanian; it really bothers me when I hear it. Yes, I don't like it at all. Luckily, I didn't get to that point, since I don't like it; I try to be careful. With both languages, I don't do this, because they are both beautiful; it is useless to do it like this, that is, it is really, I don't know how to say it, to bastardise one thing, it seems to me. (S9, Albania)

S9's discourse reveals a negative view of translanguaging practices. Although she deems them 'normal' for multilingual speakers, she describes such practices as wrong. She dislikes 'mixing' languages, a practice which seems to her to 'bastardise' the language, making it impure. As García and Li (2014: 12) argue, the interpretation of languages as entities that need to be kept separate has led to the stigmatisation of flexible language practices in which more than one language is used in the same situation. In addition,

S9's discourse reveals her desire to distance herself from translanguaging practices. For instance, the expressions 'the way some people mix them', 'It really bothers me when I hear them saying the words in Italian but made a little bit in Albanian', and 'Luckily, I didn't get to that point, since I don't like it; I try to be careful,' point to the speaker's dissociation from other speakers (including her relatives from Albania) who 'bastardise' the languages by not keeping them separated. Similarly, Speaker S10 describes translanguaging practices as a problem:

I think that is a problem for me. For now, I don't like it. [...] I think they need to be separated. If I speak Russian, that's Russian, for sure. And then in Italian. I think it's better to divide them. I say I don't like it, first of all it confuses me. Oh well, if maybe I talk to someone from Russia, they might think that I speak Italian. Instead, I know that they don't understand, so there's no point in talking, saying a word. And maybe in Italian when I speak, when I say something, a word comes out in Russian and the person doesn't understand me, maybe. It's not good, let's say. I don't think it's such a serious problem that I ... but I don't like it. Because I still don't know Italian well, when I'll be sure that I speak 100 percent, maybe something will change. (S10, Russia/Kazakhstan)

Speaker S10's negative impression of translanguaging practices emerges above, as she describes such practices as a problem. In her discourse, the speaker argues that languages should be kept separated, pointing out that 'If I speak Russian, that's Russian, for sure. And then in Italian'. The speaker's words clarify that she prefers to keep the languages separated because of the interlocutor's lack of understanding of one specific language. Moreover, S10 explains that 'mixing' the two languages of her repertoire (Italian and Russian) confuses her, and she does not like that. She also says this might be related to the fact that she still does not feel completely fluent in Italian. The idea of keeping the languages of the repertoire separated also appears in S10's narrative, where her positioning stands out for being detached from speakers who translanguage. Interestingly, the speaker's perspective aligns with the idea of absolute and full control of a language, and it could be understood as an echo of native speakerism (Holliday, 2006). Nevertheless, the same speaker recognises that her Russian might be seen as not 'fully' Russian by her fellow countryfolk.

Speaker S11 describes her feelings with respect to translanguaging practices negatively, explaining how translanguaging embarrasses her:

For instance, if I'm talking to you and start putting Portuguese in the middle. It embarrasses me a little; it's difficult because I want to speak – if I want to speak Italian, I want to follow Italian. If I speak Portuguese – however, unfortunately I can't always consistently speak Portuguese in conversation or always Italian. It's easier for me to put Portuguese in Italian because I speak a lot of Italian, right? So, it happens to me that if you use it a lot, you use more Italian; it happens to me if I'm talking

to a Brazilian friend. In the sentence I place an Italian word, I'm speaking Portuguese and afterwards I continue to speak Italian, I go on in Italian and after that I haven't realised, I said everything in Italian. (S11, Brazil)

S11's response highlights the speaker's position on translanguaging practices. She considers the practice of using two languages in the same situation as negative and explains that she feels embarrassed ('It embarrasses me a little') and uneasy when translanguaging. The speaker also states that it more often happens that she uses Italian in a Portuguese turn, while she uses Portuguese in an Italian sentence more rarely. S11's narration, particularly the words 'embarrassment' and 'unfortunately', index the speaker's alignment with the monolingual ideology that stigmatises multilingual speakers' translanguaging practices.

Speaker S12 also describes translanguaging practices negatively, as he believes that languages should remain separate:

I think it would be better to speak in one language. Now I am speaking only in Spanish, but not to mix them. I don't know; it is my opinion. But maybe it's me, if I spoke Italian more fluently, it is possible to change my mind because it is not the same to speak the language fluently or when the other language limits you. Well, it's like you have a more structured thought. (S12, Argentina)

Although S12 explains that he does not use the languages of his repertoire at the same time (Italian, Spanish and English), he expresses a negative position on translanguaging practices. The speaker's words indicate the influence of the ideology of monolingualism, since he suggests that languages should be kept separate. S12 also explains that his perception could be influenced by the fact that he does not speak the three languages fluently, which is why it is probably easier and more spontaneous for him to keep them separated.

Despite some of the speakers evaluating translanguaging practices negatively and stressing the importance of keeping the languages in their repertoires separated, a few speakers normalised their hybrid multilingual practices and evaluated them positively. For instance, Speaker S13 explains how 'mixing' languages makes her feel good:

It makes me feel good. Ah, it makes me feel great, look I really like languages; in fact, I also have many Bulgarian colleagues who are there, and I ask them, 'Come on, tell me a word, you will teach something. I want to learn something; come on, a little, just a word'. I'm fine when I mix three languages [...] It's not like I'm embarrassed. [...] I feel good about it, even if I mix the three of them. (S13 Albania)

The speaker describes the idea of using the languages in her communicative repertoire in the same situation positively. In addition, she describes wanting to learn other languages, for example, by asking her Bulgarian

colleagues to teach her a few words of Bulgarian. The speaker claims not to be embarrassed about mixing languages and points out that she evaluates translanguaging positively. Likewise, S14 describes her feelings with respect to her multilingual practices positively:

It [mixing languages] is beautiful to me, but it is also important because in life, you always have to find, always find something new, come on. For me, it is beautiful, but I do not know how to say it; for me, it is something extra because I might not even speak Italian, I might not even understand French. Maybe someday I can also understand English more or Arabic or some other language, come on. (S14, Senegal)

S14's response shows her positive attitude to translanguaging practices. She describes these practices as something beautiful and important for a speaker, giving a certain value to learning other languages. Often speakers attribute a certain value to a language, considering it an additional resource at an economic and working level, such as S14 who explains that Italian for her is 'something extra because I might not even speak Italian'.

Speakers' perceptions of translanguaging in family settings

So far, the data collected from the interviews has reported two speakers' (S13 and S14) positive evaluation of mixing languages while communicating. On the other hand, four speakers' (S9, S10, S11 and S12) narratives underscored their tendency to align with the monolingual ideology and evaluate translanguaging practices negatively, which caused feelings of embarrassment, confusion, etc. These speakers' narratives have in common the idea of keeping the languages of a multilingual repertoire separated.

However, when questioned in relation to the linguistic practices in the family environment, the speakers pointed out that inside multilingual families, translanguaging practices are the norm. Translanguaging practices inside the family are not stigmatised in the same way as such communicative practices outside the home. For instance, Speaker S15 from Germany, who is married to an Italian, explains that at home they speak 'a bit of a mix' (S15, Germany). Similarly, Speaker S13 says that, despite needing to speak mainly Albanian in her daily life, she tries to speak both Italian and Albanian to her nephews (with whom she lives): 'I try to speak a little in Italian, a little bit in Albanian and they tell me, "Auntie, you are in Italy you have to speak in Italian not Albanian", and I say "Oh well, then let's do fifty-fifty, so we make everyone happy"' (S13, Albania). The words of S13 underline the desire to find a balance between the languages spoken in the family and maintaining the multilingual identity of the family (De Fina, 2012). At the same time, her answer points out her nephews' perspective, which underscores the need to limit their communicative practices to Italian, since they live in Italy. These words not only reveal the influence of the monolingual ideology but also

highlight the different levels and connotations assigned to the languages: some languages are valued and others are stigmatised. With regard to translanguaging practices at home, S16 from Bangladesh also describes the linguistic practices in her home as involving the use of two languages, Italian and Bengali, explaining that ‘We speak Italian and Bengali mixed every now and then’ (S16, Bangladesh). The same seems to happen in the family environment of S17, where the Wenzhounese dialect, Mandarin Chinese and Italian are used flexibly:

Yes, with us it is really like that, with the family, isn’t it? There, among us we also occasionally speak all three languages together. For us it is natural. Without thinking, because we are now used to it. (S17, China)

S17 emphasises the spontaneity of translanguaging practices, describing them as a shared habit within the family. The same spontaneity of translanguaging practices is highlighted by Speaker S4, who explains that in her family, it is normal to ‘mix’ languages. Similarly, S4 from Senegal says that, in the family context, there is no conversation entirely in Wolof: ‘It’s a mixture. [...] Every time we speak, we throw in a word in French. It is always mixed’ (S4, Senegal). Finally, S18 mentions the linguistic practices that take place in the family context, describing the flexibility with which family members ‘play’ with the languages in their repertoire:

So, we often play this game, for us it is a game, we like very much; we start in Portuguese. To see how long it lasts. But it comes halfway and starts in Italian. It is very beautiful, it is beautiful, because then, since we use Italian more, we also try to use Portuguese, also for the kids, do not forget. [...] Italian comes immediately, automatically. (S18, Brazil)

S18 describes the linguistic practices that take place in her home as flexible, since the members of the family ‘play’ with languages. S18’s description of the game also highlights that inside the family environment, translanguaging practices are normalised and legitimised. Moreover, her narrative underscores her willingness to keep using Portuguese at home and not to lose it, again describing the mother tongue as an element related to the speaker’s identity. Furthermore, the speaker emphasises the spontaneity of using Italian.

The discourse that emerged from the speakers in the interviews pointed out various issues. On the one hand, the narratives of some of the participants highlighted their negative evaluation of translanguaging practices. The speakers underscored the importance of keeping the languages in their multilingual repertoire as separate entities and, most importantly, they characterised themselves as distanced and detached from those speakers who tend to mix languages. Translanguaging practices are described as mistakes, problems and sources of embarrassment and confusion. On the other hand, the speakers’ stigmatisation of hybrid multilingual practices does not affect family

language practices which, according to the data presented, can include the flexible use of repertoires. The family environment appears to be a ‘safe’ place where speakers are free to translanguage and where multilingual practices are not stigmatised.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated multilingual speakers’ perceptions and positioning regarding their translanguaging practices. In order to do so, speakers’ perspectives on their use of multilingual practices in both public and private settings were investigated by analysing the semi-structured interviews in which they took part. Moreover, since one cannot assume that translanguaging practices take place in a heterogenous setting just because of their characteristics, the chapter also presented examples of interactions that take place at CIMM, including translanguaging practices.

The analysis of what emerged during the interviews shows that speakers evaluate their translanguaging practices in different ways and this seems to be related to the context in which they are interacting. For instance, four speakers stigmatised translanguaging practices in social settings, conveying the belief that multilingual speakers should keep the languages in their repertoires separate, thus aligning with a monolingual ideology. Moreover, the trend of distancing themselves from speakers who translanguage also emerged in the participants’ narratives. In contrast, two speakers positioned themselves positively in relation to their translanguaging practices in public environments. Interestingly, five more speakers evaluated translanguaging positively, but only when it occurs in the family environment. In fact, the participants describe interactions at home as free from monolingual restraints. The family environment is described as a place where one is allowed to express oneself flexibly, since it is an environment with its own rules that are decided by the family members themselves (Braun, 2012; Canagarajah, 2011; De Fina, 2012). The speakers’ narratives that emerged from the interviews also shed light on the positioning (Bamberg, 1997) that surfaces while speaking. For instance, speakers pointed out the different levels and connotations of the languages: some are valued and others are stigmatised. Similarly, some speakers’ narratives indicate translanguaging practices as positive in certain contexts (particularly in the family environment) whereas, according to other speakers’ narratives, translanguaging should be avoided.

The findings described in this chapter highlight two critical considerations for future research. Firstly, researchers should examine the educational impact of oppressive language ideologies on migrant speakers and their learning communities. These ideologies often silence parts of migrant students’ linguistic repertoires; for instance, traditional Italian language learning settings typically adhere to a monolingual perspective, ignoring or even explicitly banning languages other than the target

language. This approach not only stigmatises migrant students' communicative practices but also limits their ability to fully engage with the learning process. Secondly, a translanguaging pedagogy offers a promising method to counteract the silencing of speakers' diverse linguistic repertoires. Previous studies in school settings (Carbonara & Scibetta, 2020; City University of New York-New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals, 2021; Kirwan, 2020) have demonstrated that incorporating students' languages into instructional practices can support learning and create a more inclusive educational environment. By embracing translanguaging, educators can foster an environment that values linguistic diversity and enhances the educational experience for all students.

The present investigation is limited and makes no claim to be providing statistically significant generalisations. Rather, the data may not reflect all migrant speakers' perspectives on translanguaging practices, since several variables should be considered, such as their educational background and their L1. However, given the limited research on the topic, the present findings may represent a starting point for future research, especially attempts to explore and understand how the evaluation of translanguaging influences the translanguaging practices of participants.

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Appendix

Symbols used in the data transcription:

(.)	Micro-pause
(7)	A timed pause measured in seconds
=	Contiguous turns
[]	Speech overlaps
:	A stretched sound
(())	Comments and observations of the transcriber
Text	Emphasis
?	Ascending pitch
↑	Intonation upwards
↓	Intonation downwards