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Translanguaging and its benefits

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Avainsanat: Limittäiskieleily, kaksikielisyys, monikielisyys, kaksikielinen opetus, monikielinen opetus

Luokkahuoneiden monikielisyys on enemmän sääntö kuin poikkeus. Perusopetuksen Opetussuunnitelman Perusteet (Opetushallitus, 2014) velvoittaa opettajia huomioimaan oppilaiden eri kielet opetuksessa mainitsemalla, että kieltenopetuksen lähtökohtana pidetään oppilaiden kielitietoisuuden kehittymistä ja kielten käyttöä rinnakkain. Tarvitaankin siis pedagogisia keinoja, jotka huomioivat oppilaiden kielitaidon kokonaisvaltaisesti. Yhtenä vastauksena tähän tarpeeseen, tämän kandidaatin tutkielman tarkoituksena on tuoda esiin termi ‘translanguaging’, ja esitellä sen hyötyjä erityisesti koulumaailmassa. Koska termille ei ole vielä vakiintunutta suomenkielistä käännöstä, olemme päättäneet käyttää siitä Heini Lehtosen (2019) suomenosta ‘limittäiskieleily’.

Tämä tutkielma on toteutettu kirjallisuuskatsauksena. Limittäiskieleilyn konseptin ymmärtämiseksi, pidimme tarpeellisena ensin määritellä muutamia monikielisyteen liittyviä termejä, jotka toistuvat kirjallisuuskatsauksen edetessä. Tämän jälkeen olemme käsitelleet termin limittäiskieleily syntyä ja kehittymistä. Lopuksi keskityimme limittäiskieleilyn positiivisiin puoliin varsinkin koulumaailmassa, mutta myös sen ulkopuolella. Lähteinä olemme käyttäneet monipuolisesti tutkimuskirjallisuutta.

Pidämme tätä aihetta tärkeänä tulevaa opettajan ammattimme ajatellen ja toivomme, että tutkielmamme herättäisi kiinnostuksen limittäiskieleilyä ja sen mahdollisuuksia kohtaan niin koulumaailmassa kuin sen ulkopuolellakin.

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Keywords: Translanguaging, bilingualism, multilingualism, bilingual education, multilingual education

Having bilingual or multilingual students in a classroom is a rule rather than an exception. The Finnish National Core Curriculum (Opetushallitus, 2014) states that the starting points of language teaching are developing students' language awareness and using languages concurrently and thus obligates teachers to take all the languages of their students into consideration in teaching. Therefore, there is a need for pedagogical means that pay attention to the language skills of the students in a holistic way. As an answer to this demand, the aim of this bachelor's thesis is to introduce the term translanguaging and its benefits especially in education.

This thesis is a literature review. In order to fully understand the concept of translanguaging, we thought it was necessary to first define some terms related to multilingualism which will recur in this thesis. After these definitions, we have discussed how the term translanguaging has emerged and evolved. Lastly, we have concentrated on the positive aspects of translanguaging by discussing its benefits especially in education but also in a broader context. As sources for this literature review, we have used diverse research literature.

We regard this topic very important considering our future professions as teachers. Therefore, we hope that this thesis will raise interest towards translanguaging and its multiple possibilities in education as well as the life of bilinguals and multilinguals in general.

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# 1 Introduction

The term translinguaging was introduced to us during a Second Language Learning course as part of our university studies. As we are both bilingual, use two different languages on a daily basis, and have experienced moving to a foreign country without knowing how to speak the majority language, we could deeply relate to the course content. Suddenly we learned that we engage in translinguaging practices constantly in the company of other bilinguals. We felt almost relieved to be introduced to a new perspective on languaging practices, to a positive viewpoint that emphasizes the benefits of bilingualism and “takes as its starting point the language practices of bilingual people as the norm” (Garcia, 2012 as cited in Garcia & Otheguy, 2014, p. 646).

People easily associate languages with nations and states since language is frequently used to increase political power and marginalize minorities who speak a different language than the country’s majority language (MacSwan, 2017). We would like our readers to challenge this thought in the framework of translinguaging since nowadays in an increasingly globalizing world, detailed empirical ethnographies have proven that it is not easy for teachers and young people to define what counts as a language and what does not (Auer, 2005 cited by Paulsrud et al., 2017). Therefore, we hope that languages would be seen as dynamic, variable, and not be so strongly associated with nations and states or deliberately used to some pupils’ advantage or disadvantage in schools.

Some languages are thought to have an inherently higher value than other languages and therefore ought to be imposed on a whole nation-state to maintain high communication standards (MacSwan, 2017). It is beneficial for pupils to learn the majority language of the country they live in, but not at the expense of their wellbeing. We want this thesis to be a reminder that it is important for students to feel like their cultural heritage and native language or languages are equally as valuable as the majority language and that their native language is not prohibited in classroom settings. The Finnish National Core Curriculum in Basic Education mentions that language education should support pupils building their cultural and linguistic identities in a multicultural media-centred society (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016).

The Finnish National Core Curriculum also seems to support translanguaging practices since it states that the basic principle of language instruction at school is using language diversely in different situations so that it will improve pupils' language awareness and encourage them in the parallel use of languages (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016). From our experience the National Core Curriculum can feel pretty abstract and even though some things are mentioned in it, the implementation might be forgotten, or teachers simply may not have enough knowledge on language awareness and translanguaging. That is why we want to bring more awareness to our important topic and encourage teachers to take actions into their own hands.

We hope that translanguaging will provide a new framework for teachers and schools when planning language practices and classroom activities, and that educators become more aware of the benefits of translanguaging. Learning about translanguaging has made us reflect on our own school memories, previous work and practice experiences, for example working in a language emergence daycare, substituting as teachers and our school practice abroad in a multilingual classroom. Since language policies and practices usually cater to monolinguals, it has been very useful to get acquainted with a theory that was developed specifically for bilinguals and as a result to this, critical language education thinking has become more relevant and easier for us and trustfully our readers too.

We hope that our literature review will be of benefit, even to those who are not in the field of education. Just by learning about the concept *translanguaging* as a bilingual person, you can possibly learn more about yourself, your language practices and embrace a new way of thinking. Translanguaging made us less insecure about our natural way of communication as we do not see mixing different languages and dialects as a sign of bad language proficiency anymore like we previously might have secretly feared.

This Bachelor's Thesis is a literature review that focuses on bringing insight to the phenomenon *translanguaging*. To be able to fully understand the term translanguaging, it is important to have an understanding on other key terms related to the topic. Therefore, our literature review begins by introducing concepts related to translanguaging. After familiarizing our readers with the key concepts, we continue by giving a brief history of translanguaging, moving

on to our main research questions: What is translanguaging? and What are the benefits of translanguaging?

## **2 Concepts related to translanguaging**

Before diving into translanguaging there are some concepts and terms that need definitions. These concepts are related to translanguaging and will recur in the forthcoming chapters.

### **2.1 Bilingual and multilingual**

There are many definitions for multilingualism and bilingualism but some suggest that a bi/multilingual person is someone who uses both/all of their languages on a daily basis (Aronin & Singleton, 2012), so in other words bi/multilingual is a cover term for a person who knows and uses two or more languages (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Bilingualism has numerous different definitions, some definitions are remarkably narrower or broader than others, and a good example of a narrow definition would be Bloomfield's (1933) 1933 definition on bilingualism as "native-like control of two or more languages" (p.56, as cited in Aronin & Singleton, 2012, p.2). Current perspectives on bilingualism and multilingualism tend to be very complex and broad, but between these two extremes there is a huge selection of definitions (Aronin & Singleton, 2012).

There are various types of bilingualism: simultaneous bilingualism, consecutive or successive bilingualism and receptive bilingualism (Halsband, 2006). Simultaneous bilingualism means learning two languages at the same time from the very beginning of an individual's life so that they will have two first languages (Halsband, 2006). Consecutive or successive bilingualism means first learning a first language and then afterwards learning a second language (Halsband, 2006). Lastly, receptive bilingualism means understanding two languages but only being able to speak one of them (Halsband, 2006). Baker (2001) adds another type of bilingualism to this list, circumstantial bilingualism which means having to learn a new language in order to effectively function in the society (Baker, 2001). This is for example the case for immigrants and there is a risk that the new language will replace the old one (Baker, 2001).

Multilingual means knowing and using more than two languages (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Another term for multilingual is plurilingual (Garcia & Wei, 2013). The Council of Europe has suggested that plurilingual should be used to describe an individual's language skills and multilingual to describe the languages of a societal group (2000, p.168, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). Besides people, countries can also be bilingual or multilingual (Halsband, 2006). This



is the case in for example Finland, Canada and India and in those countries, most people are bilingual (Halsband, 2006).

## **2.2 Foreign/ second language education**

Historically, the custom in foreign or second language education has been the separation of students into level groups and also of languages in teaching so that the focus is always on the target language (Howatt, 1984; Yu, 2001, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). Using one's mother tongue and the foreign language simultaneously was seen as linguistic or cognitive deficiency (Garcia & Wei, 2013). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the trend in second language education was the direct method meaning that the teaching was done entirely in the target language and grammar was taught in the same order as in which students learn their mother tongue (Garcia & Wei, 2013). This trend was followed by the audio-lingual method which meant practice through repetition and the communicative method that focused on interaction in the target language (Garcia & Wei, 2013).

## **2.3 Multilingual vs monolingual speaker**

The differences between monolingual and multilingual speakers can be identified on at least three levels: multilingual trajectories, multilingual discourses and multilingual competence (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

Firstly, the trajectories of monolingual and multilingual speakers are different (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). As multilingual speakers have experienced various linguistic situations, their trajectories are richer and more dynamic than those of a monolingual speaker (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). These then influence how multilinguals learn and use new languages (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Multilingual speakers also use different languages for different purposes, in different situations, and with different people (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

Besides using entirely different languages, multilingual speakers can also use resources from different languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Mauranen (2018) called this unique composition of language resources 'composite language resource' and it is something that every multilingual speaker possesses (p.113, as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Thirdly, multilinguals'

‘‘communicative competence cannot be compared to that of a monolingual speaker because bilingual speakers have a unique linguistic profile’’ (Grosjean, 2010, p.20, as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2020, 3.1. Section, para.5). It would not be fair to set the competence of a native speaker as a goal for a multilingual speaker (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). It is unfair because that goal is unreachable and also because a multilingual speaker’s competence is qualitatively different than that of a monolingual speaker (Cook, 1992, as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

## **2.4 Monolingual and bilingual education**

Monolingual education means that only the dominant language of a society or a school is used in education (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Bilingual education means that content and language learning are integrated which means that at least two languages are used in instruction (Baker, 2011; Cenoz, 2009; García 2009a, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). Bilingual education has been divided into various types and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, bilingual education was divided into two types according to Wallace Lambert’s definitions from 1974 (Garcia & Wei, 2013). These were subtractive bilingualism and additive bilingualism (Garcia & Wei, 2013).

Subtractive bilingualism means that the school takes away the student’s home language if it is a minoritized language and replaces it with the majority language (Garcia & Wei, 2013). This has been the case for many indigenous people and people who are minoritized due to low income, race or language (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). On the contrary, additive bilingualism is when a new language is added to the student’s first language (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Additive bilingualism was for the privileged members of society and also happened during times when there was an atmosphere of linguistic tolerance (Vogel & Garcia, 2017).

It is important to keep in mind that bilingualism has mostly been studied from an external monoglossic perspective and therefore assumptions have been made that bilinguals have two separate language systems (Garcia & Otheguy, 2014). As a result of this conception, the terms *additive* and *subtractive* bilingualism generated, followed by Lambert’s (1974) discussion on bilingual education and the assumption that a second language is either added or replaces a first language (Garcia & Otheguy, 2014). It is questionable if bilingualism can actually be additive or subtractive, since nowadays there are many views that support the idea that bilinguals do not have two separate language systems; bilinguals are not two monolinguals in one (Garcia, 2009 as cited in Garcia & Otheguy, 2014).

Today these types of bilingual education are seen as insufficient because bilingual learners are not a homogenous group who all possess the same language practices (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) have come up with two new types of bilingualism for schools: recursive dynamic bilingualism and dynamic bilingualism (as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). ‘‘Recursive dynamic bilingualism refers to the complex nature of the bilingualism of ethnolinguistic groups who have undergone substantial language shift as they attempt language revitalization’’ (Garcia & Wei, 2013, p.50). Recursive dynamic bilingualism includes immersion revitalization bilingual education programs and developmental bilingual education programs depending on the amount of language loss and change that the groups have experienced (Garcia & Wei, 2013). The common theme in these programs is that they take into consideration the various different language practices and identities found in these groups (Garcia & Wei, 2013). ‘‘Dynamic bilingualism refers to the multiple language interactions and other linguistic interrelationships that take place on different scales and spaces among multilingual speakers’’ (Garcia & Wei, 2013, p.51). These days many bilingual education programs have students from various backgrounds regarding languages and social status (Garcia & Wei, 2013). There are also language-majority students attending programs that were originally aimed at ethnic students only (Garcia & Wei, 2013).

Despite all this, bilingual education programs still insist on separating languages meaning that each language should be used in its own time and space (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Cummins (2005) states that there is a paradox in bilingual education because even though there is no empirical evidence to support this, most bilingual programs in the US still insist that languages should strictly be separated (as cited in Hopewell, 2017). Hopewell (2017) continues by stating that if languages are separated by subject or time, some students who speak a minority language might be silenced or incapable of showing their skills and understanding as they might be scolded for using the wrong language.

Students and teachers though continually ignore the principle of keeping languages separate (Menken & García, 2010, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). They use translanguaging which means that they use complex language practices and resources in order to make meaning of what they hear, learn and teach (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Garcia and Wei (2013) argue that a translanguaging approach transforms bilingual education by extending its definition.

Translanguaging is not only about the acquisition of a new language but it is more about the linguistic practices of bilingual students (Garcia & Wei, 2013).

### **3 What is translanguaging?**

#### **3.1 How the term translanguaging has emerged and evolved**

The term translanguaging originates from Welsh and its original name was ‘‘trawsieithu’’ (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). In 1980’s a Welsh educationalist Cen Williams created an idea of using two languages within the same lesson in a planned and systematic way (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). The force behind this implementation was a protest against the historic separation of Welsh and English (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). These two languages had different prestige with English being seen as the dominant one (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). When the revitalization of the Welsh language happened during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it became possible for those two languages to coexist and allowed them to be seen as mutually advantageous in education (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b).

In a more international context, the increasing popularity of translanguaging in education happened due to changing opinions on bilingualism (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). In the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was believed that bilingualism causes mental confusion, but in the latter decades of the century, many thought of bilingualism as an advantage instead of a disadvantage (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Also, in education, the trend had been to separate languages by teacher, subject or time (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Bilingual education has traditionally kept the pupil’s first and second language separate as it ‘‘helps’’ the pupil (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Instructions should only be given in the pupils’ weaker language and pupils should not translate between their two languages (Cummins, 2005, as cited in Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Globalization has also made translanguaging more popular in education as an increasing number of bilingual or multilingual students are present in schools (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Thus, translanguaging can be seen as being part of classrooms with immigrant students, but also in traditional classrooms where students wish to acquire an additional language (Vogel & Garcia, 2017).

Translanguaging can be seen as a new viewpoint to multilingualism. Traditionally, bilingual speakers have been thought of as two monolingual speakers in one (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). Translanguaging offers a new perspective by suggesting that it is not about two separate languages, but a whole new language practice (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Translanguaging goes beyond code-switching as it is not about just shuttling between two or more languages, but

about ‘‘the speaker’s construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of a language’’ (Garcia & Wei, 2013, p. 22). The idea that when speaking different languages, individuals switch between two different linguistic systems in the brain is outdated (Garcia & Li, 2014, as cited in Mazak, 2017). So, switching between languages does not mean switching between separate codes in the brain but rather choosing parts of one’s linguistic repertoire that fit the situation (Mazak, 2017).

MacSwan (2017) argues that even though the term translinguaging originated in the 1980’s it is still classified as a relevantly new term, used especially within bilingual education, that supports a heteroglossic language ideology. In other words, bilingualism is seen as an advantage, richness, and a community resource in the light of translinguaging rather than a hardly acceptable shift to majority language monolingualism (MacSwan, 2017). MacSwan (2017) brings into awareness that as the terms’ popularity grows, more and more translinguaging scholars even question the existence of discrete languages and claim that multilingualism itself does not exist (for example Makoni & Pennycook, 2007).

Translinguaging is not constrained by the societal norms regarding language but allows the speaker to use all of their semiotic repertoire (Garcia & Wei, 2013). ‘‘Translinguaging transgresses and destabilizes language hierarchies, and at the same time expands and extends practices that are typically valued in school and in the everyday world of communities and homes’’ (Garcia & Wei, 2013, p.68). The starting point and norm of translinguaging is the linguistic properties of bilingual people instead of monolingual people which has traditionally been the case (Garcia, 2012, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). In education for example, the development of second language learners have been compared to those of a native speaker and that has been the goal for language acquisition (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017).

### **3.2 Different perspectives on translinguaging**

As translinguaging as a concept has developed, a growing number of scholars have formulated their own definition of it.

Baker’s (2011) definition of translinguaging is ‘‘the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages (p.288, as

cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013, p.20). For Garcia and Wei (2013) the concept of translanguageing goes even beyond that description. According to them, the trans- prefix implies that it is the creation of something new and not just the mixing of two languages (Garcia & Wei, 2013). ‘‘Translanguageing refers to new language practices that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories, and releases histories and understandings that had been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation states’’ (Garcia & Wei, 2013, p.21). Also, Paulsrud et al. (2017) have noted that it is useful to deconstruct the term trans+languageing to get a better understanding of it as the combination of the two parts that make up the concept. The second part, languageing, was first used and defined by Mignolo in the 1970s as ‘thinking and writing between languages’ (Mignolo, 2000, p. 226) but the term is developing further on and includes other ways of communication such as oracy and signacy, making people realize that languageing includes more than just language (as cited in Paulsrud et al., 2017, p.14). Languageing differs from language as it offers a more holistic approach on communication and enables individuals to be in a language in addition to using it (Garcia & Wei, 2013).

Mazak’s (2017) definition of translanguageing is multilayered. First of all, she sees it as a language ideology where bilingualism is the norm (Mazak, 2017). Secondly, translanguageing is a theory that is based on lived bilingual experiences and assumes that bilingual individuals have one linguistic repertoire from which they choose useful practices for their everyday lives (Mazak, 2017). Thirdly, translanguageing is also a pedagogical standpoint that enables both students and teachers to use their full linguistic repertoire when learning and teaching (Mazak, 2017). Fourthly, Mazak (2017) agrees that the term translanguageing is still being researched and developed. It includes all different practices that let individuals use their whole linguistic repertoire (Mazak, 2017). And lastly, translanguageing is world changing as it changes and invents new language practices (Mazak, 2017).

Makoni and Pennycook (2007) state that languages do not emerge from or represent real environments; on the contrary: ‘‘- they are, by contrast, the inventions of social, cultural and political movements’’ (p. 2). Makoni and Pennycook (2007) claim that languages are rather social and political inventions than discoveries and continue to state that if it is believed that discrete languages do not exist, neither should ‘‘many of the treasured icons of liberal-linguistic thought... such as language rights, mother tongues, multilingualism or code-switching’’ (p. 22, as cited in MacSwan, 2017, p.2). Garcia and colleagues (Garcia & Otheguy, 2014;

Otheguy, Garcia, & Reid, 2015) have similar ideas and offer an explanation of translanguaging theory in which they state that bilinguals have a unique linguistic system that can be specified as an idiolect, or individual language, and therefore they do not believe in individual multilingualism (as cited in MacSwan, 2017). “Bilinguals have one linguistic repertoire from which they select features strategically to communicate effectively. That is, translanguaging takes as its starting point the language practices of bilingual people as the norm, and not the language of monolinguals, as described as traditional usage books and grammars” (Garcia, 2012 as cited in Garcia & Otheguy, 2014, p. 646.).

“Translanguaging opens up a space that allows multilingual individuals to integrate social spaces (and thus ‘language codes’) that have been formally practiced separately in different places” (Garcia & Otheguy, 2014, pp. 646-647). Building on this thought Li Wei (2011) shares her view on translanguaging as creating social spaces by allowing people to bring together various dimensions of their personal life, history, memories, experiences, emotions, environment, ideologies, attitudes, beliefs and much more into a harmonized and significant performance (as cited in Garcia & Otheguy, 2014).

Williams’ (2002) emphasis on translanguaging was that it is something that happens automatically for bilingual learners (as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Translanguaging is a skill that these learners naturally possess (Williams, 2002, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). When bilingual children learn a new concept, they internalize it, add their own meaning to it and simultaneously utilize it in their other language. (Williams, 2002, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Garcia (2009a) also argues that translanguaging will happen in bilingual classrooms even when the teacher tries to separate languages and plan how and when the languages should be used (as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Children will flexibly use their whole linguistic repertoires even though it may not be “appropriate” in that lesson (Garcia, 2009a, p.304, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). This is called “pupil-directed translanguaging” (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012a, teacher-led section, para.3). Pupils use it to improve their understanding, show their knowledge, and construct meaning (Garcia, 2011, as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Grosjean (1989) states that intentionally compartmentalizing languages is unnatural, and it results in gaining only a fractional view of a bilingual student’s knowledge and skills (as cited in Hopewell, 2017). The total knowledge of a person can be distributed between languages (Hopewell, 2017). Canagarajah (2011) also agrees that translanguaging happens naturally for multilingual students without the need of



pedagogical planning from the teacher. That does though not mean that it should not be actively taught by teachers (Canagarajah, 2011). Practice is needed for the development of competence and proficiency (Canagarajah, 2011). It is always possible to develop reading, writing and oral communication skills (Canagarajah, 2011). Outside the educational context, translanguaging can also be seen as a natural phenomenon. It is the normal form of discussion for bilingual families (Garcia & Wei, 2013).

Williams argues that the process of translanguaging requires more than just translation skills (Williams, 1996, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Translanguaging requires multiple cognitive processes such as listening and reading, choosing and selecting information and accommodating or assimilating information (Williams, 1996, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Williams states that using translanguaging would be most efficient when the child has good skills in both languages (2002, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Using translanguaging in a classroom where the children are just learning their second language might not be fruitful (Williams, 2002, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Thus, translanguaging should be seen as a way for bilinguals to retain or develop their skills instead of as a way to teach a new language (Williams, 2002, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b).

Even though teachers may not call it translanguaging, they effectively use strategies that can be tied to the idea of translanguaging. Fu (2003) has described how she lets Chinese students express themselves and their ideas in their primary language so that they can be better writers also in their second language once they acquire the skills for it (as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). Cummins (2007) argues for bilingual instructional strategies as they develop students' identities of competence and makes them more confident users of academic work in their second language. Cummins (2005) also names bilingual pedagogical strategies that go against the separation of languages. The strategies include projects where students that have different language backgrounds can collaborate using multiple languages and the making of dual language books by translating from one language to the other (Cummins, 2005). The understanding of bilingualism as a diverse communication method rather than straightforwardly one language plus the other, has begun to shape old and rooted beliefs in education that languages should be taught and learnt separately (Bahktin, 1981; Blackledge & Creese, 2014, cited by Paulsrud et al., 2017).

Garcia and Wei (2013) argue that today, the emphasis on language education is to develop critical thinking skills and deep comprehension. It is not enough for schools to first teach communicative skills and later concentrate on how these skills can be used to learn and think (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Language and knowing are constitutive and therefore schools have to make sure that their students are learning to use all of their language practices to think critically and act on global issues (Garcia & Wei, 2013). This cannot happen without the use of translanguaging because students need to use all of their language and semiotic practices if they are to have meaningful discussions and make meaning of different issues (Garcia & Wei, 2013). There is no need to separate languages because the language practices of a bilingual or multilingual speaker do not compete with each other (Garcia & Wei, 2013). This being said, Garcia and Wei (2013) also agree that it is necessary to also build spaces in schools where certain language practices are expected as it is needed for students to prepare for the assessment mechanism of society and schools. Besides these spaces, schools also have to build translanguaging spaces (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Paulsrud et al. (2017) have similar ideas and state that an extremely important socializing feature in primary schools would be to conceptualize multilingualism as a normal and natural practice and communication method.

### **3.3 Translanguaging as a pedagogy**

The translanguaging concept has continued to gain more significance in educational settings across the globe and has developed into a concept that offers new theoretical perspectives on languages, language use and language pedagogy as it focuses on students' entire linguistic repertoires instead of viewing languages as separate structures (Paulsrud et al., 2017).

Garcia and Wei (2013) define teacher-directed translanguaging as being a transformative pedagogy that is planned and structured by the teacher. Garcia and Wei (2014) continue by stating that teacher-directed translanguaging practices "aim to build on students' diverse linguistic practices in order to support them in expanding their linguistic repertoires to include features needed to develop different kinds of literacies and subject-matter knowledge, and to perform in academic environments" (as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017, p.10). According to Garcia, Johnson and Seltzer (2017) there are three basic components of teacher-directed translanguaging pedagogy: stance, design and shifts (as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Stance stands for the belief that all students' languages are valuable as learning resources and they should be developed and strengthened during their education (Garcia, Johnson & Seltzer,

2017, as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Design means that teachers should plan their teaching carefully so that students' home languages are also taken into consideration and integrated into the teaching (Garcia, Johnson & Seltzer, 2017, as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Shifts refers to the teacher's ability to change plans quickly due to student feedback (Garcia, Johnson & Seltzer, 2017, as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017).

Translanguaging allows teachers to involve each student holistically in teaching and also allows them to give out different types of instruction depending on each student's skills and their social and educational profile (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Translanguaging as a pedagogy is about flexibly developing and building on students' language practices aiming at creating new understandings and language practices (Garcia & Wei, 2013). As well as developing their linguistics, translanguaging is especially important for students that speak a minority language because it incorporates the students' language and culture into the teaching which then lowers the risk of alienation at school (Garcia & Wei, 2013).

Garcia and Linn (2016) have divided translanguaging in education into a weak and strong version (as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017). The first version aims at maintaining the majority language of the nation, but uses bilingual instruction methods (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). The standpoint of the latter version is that bilinguals or multilinguals only have one linguistic repertoire and they learn to choose suitable features from it (Otherguy, Garcia & Reid, 2015, as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017). The strong version acknowledges the significance of schools in allowing only certain languages to be used and thus creating language categories (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). This version can help educators in realizing the power they have in enabling students to use their full linguistic repertoire and helping them to learn to use it appropriately (Garcia & Kleyn, 2016, as cited in Vogel & Garcia, 2017).

Interestingly, it is also possible to use translanguaging as a pedagogy when the teacher is monolingual or does not speak the language of his or her students (Garcia & Wei, 2013). The schools of International Network for Public High Schools in New York City educate recently arrived immigrants and thus the student body is very linguistically diverse, and teachers do not speak all of the languages spoken by the students (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Even though this is the case, teachers still use translanguaging by grouping the students into homogeneous home language groups which enables the students to help each other in understanding and grasping the content of the lessons (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Rosiers (2017) agrees with this by

stating that teachers who do not speak all of the languages spoken in their classroom can create an environment that is learner-centered and allows for interaction with peers for help and assistance. In their research done in schools in New York City with a big number of Latino emergent bilinguals, Garcia, Flores and Woodley (2012) identified three pedagogical meta-functions that teachers used to translanguage (as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). These were: contextualising key concepts, developing metalinguistic awareness and creating caring bonds with students (Garcia, Flores and Woodley, 2012, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). A teacher who did not speak Spanish, still used Spanish words when interacting with her Spanish-speaking students (Garcia, Flores and Woodley, 2012, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). She acquired those words by listening to her students, asking them to translate and using Google Translate and could then translate the key concepts of the lesson into Spanish and as the teacher risked saying words in Spanish, the students also got the courage to talk more in English (Garcia, Flores and Woodley, 2012, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013).

## 4 What are the benefits of translanguaging?

### 4.1 Benefits for students' learning

Based on Williams thoughts on translanguaging, Baker has come up with four advantages to translanguaging as seen from an educational perspective (2001,2006,2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). These will be discussed next with elaborations from other scholars.

Firstly, translanguaging can help students acquire a deeper and more holistic understanding of the subject matter (Baker, 2001,2006,2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). It is easy to read and write without fully understanding what the topic is about, but when one reads something in one language and then writes about it in another language, the information has to be thoroughly processed (Baker, 2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Research on translanguaging on the neural level shows that “semantic relatedness is greater for objects learnt in translanguaging encoding-retrieval than in monolingual encoding-retrieval” (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b, a threefold distinction section, para. 3). These results suggest that “translanguaging allows more effective learning due to cross-language semantic remapping that occurs when encoded information in one language is retrieved to enable production in the other language” (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b, a threefold distinction section, para. 3). Hornberger (2005) argues that the learning of bilingual or multilingual students maximizes when they are allowed and enabled to use all of their language skills instead of being constrained to monolingual practices (as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). Also, Auerbach (1993) and Hopewell (2011,2013) agree that if students are allowed to use all their linguistic resources and strengths it can potentially accelerate their academic achievements (as cited in Hopewell, 2017).

Secondly, Baker argues that translanguaging can help students become better in their weaker language (2011, p. 290, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). The goal of translanguaging is to develop communication and literacy skills in both languages, not just the stronger one (Baker, 2011, p. 290, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Cenoz and Gorter (2017) also argue that multilingual pupils can learn the target language and use it in a more efficient way if they are allowed to use resources from their whole linguistic repertoire. The repertoire of a multilingual speaker is rich and besides linguistic elements, it also includes their prior knowledge about language learning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). When multilingual speakers

learn a new language, they use all their prior knowledge and naturally link it with the new knowledge (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). But if there is a monolingual focus on the target language, it can hinder pupils from using their linguistic resources (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). According to Nation (2011) when learning a second language, teachers can make the learning burden smaller for students if they point out connections between that language and the students' first language (as cited in Hopewell, 2017). This makes the learning of new vocabulary quicker and faster (Nation, 2011, as cited in Hopewell, 2017). Teachers should encourage students to systematically analyze language so that they will notice the shared features and differences between them (Hopewell, 2017).

Thirdly, translanguaging can increase cooperation between the school and the child's parents, notably when the parents do not understand the main language of the school (Baker, 2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). By discussing with their parents about subjects in school, the children can further deepen their understanding of them (Baker, 2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Another positive feature in translanguaging is that it brings together school-based practices with home-based practices by giving students a space where they can bring all their practices and knowledge from school and home (Garcia & Wei, 2013). Garcia and Wei (2013) state that translanguaging enables "students to move simultaneously along the continuum of two socially constructed languages according to standards of the community and the home, as well as those of school" (p.69). MacSwan (2017) states that translanguaging encourages children to act naturally while using language as they do at home and in their communities, and this for one is extremely important in the light of culturally sustaining pedagogy.

Fourthly, translanguaging allows for the integration of second language learners and first language speakers (Maillat & Serra, 2009, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Also, as well as increasing their language skills, second language learners learn subject content simultaneously (Maillat & Serra, 2009, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b).

Translanguaging can help students become more independent regarding acquiring information and self-improvement (Paris & Paris, 2001, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). Using translanguaging strategies develops students' sense of self-efficiency as they self-regulate their learning (Velasco & García, 2013, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). Furthermore, translanguaging can also extend students' zone of proximal development (Lantolf, 2000, as

cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013). The enacted support in the zone of proximal development is called scaffolding (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000, as cited in Rosiers, 2017) and the use of home languages and translanguaging in school can work as scaffolds (Lantolf, 2000, as cited in Rosiers, 2017). Thus, supporting the use of the students' home language can 'enhance the empowerment of students in interactions and create collaborative relations which challenge societal inequalities' (Cummins, 2012; García & Sylvan, 2011, as cited in Rosiers, 2017, p.150).

#### **4.2 Translanguaging supporting identity construction**

Identity is partly formed through linguistic interactions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Reyes & Vallone, 2007, as cited in Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017) and identity and school success are intertwined (Lee, Hill-Bonnet, & Raley, 2011; Norton, 2000; Palmer, 2008; Sayer, 2013, as cited in Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). It seems that translanguaging enables pupils to co-construct their identity. A research done for the Ghent Home Language in Education project showed that allowing the students to use their home language in school increased their self-confidence and changed teacher perception without having a negative effect on the learning of the dominant language (Slembrouck et al., 2017, as cited in Rosiers, 2017).

In translanguaging, the teacher can use their whole linguistic repertoire while also allowing the pupils to do so too (Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). They are allowed to use translation, code-switching and vernacular language (Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). This allows pupils whose language practices are not traditionally valued in school to feel centered and valued (Durán & Palmer, 2014; Gort & Sembante, 2015; Palmer et al., 2014, as cited in Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). Besides learning to appreciate their own language skills, the pupils will also learn to value those of their classmates (Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). Garcia's research has proven how effective it can be if pupils are allowed to use their whole linguistic repertoire in schools (2011, as cited in Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). This resulted in academic success as well as the construction of a positive bilingual identity (Garcia, 2011, as cited in Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). In other words, disapproving of pupils' use of their whole linguistic repertoire not only affects their academic success in a negative way but also tells them that their way of being bilingual is not accepted in school (Garcia-Mateus & Palmer, 2017).

Hopewell (2017) states that if a student is not allowed to use some of his or her languages and they are not seen as important sources for learning the student's fundamental humanity is negated. On the contrary, translanguaging pedagogies that actively value all languages are fundamentally humanizing (Hopewell, 2017). This creates spaces that welcome important parts of students' identities and thus supports their emotional and social wellbeing (Hopewell, 2017). Through translanguaging it is possible to make a space where students' experiences of bilingualism and multiculturalism are valued as important parts of their development as human beings (Bartolomé, 1994; Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004; Salazar, 2013, as cited in Hopewell, 2017). Having these spaces enables the sustainment and cultivation of students' languages and the humanity and dignity that they express through those (Hopewell, 2017). Paulsrud et al. (2017) continue on this theme and state that new educational structures have started and continue to develop, and more focus is being put on empowerment, social justice and linguistic human rights questions. It is crucial to examine this topic beyond disciplinary boundaries in order to gain better understanding of the complicated processes of language and learning that are intertwined and transformative with social structures (Paulsrud et al., 2017).

### **4.3 Non-educational benefits**

García has identified advantages to translanguaging that go beyond education and schools (2009a, 2009b, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Her approach to translanguaging is that it is a method that bilinguals use in their everyday life to understand, shape and make meaning of the world (García, 2009a, 2009b, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). García states that "translanguaging is indeed a powerful mechanism to construct understandings, to include others, and to mediate understandings across language groups" (2009a, pp.307-308, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b, Extending the word beyond education section, para.2).

Translanguaging can also help empower speakers of minority languages (Otheguy et al., 2015; Li Wei, 2018, as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). This is because translanguaging can be seen as a way of liberation from strict language ideologies and be closer to the way people actually communicate in real life (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). "Translanguaging as a concept is now clearly a part of the ongoing multilingual turn toward an understanding of language with a focus on how individuals use and live with and in languages, rather than of language as separate structures" (e.g. Conteh & Meier, 2014; García, 2009; May, 2014; Torpsten et al., 2016 as



cited in Paulsrud et al., 2017, p.13). Translanguaging is a communication strategy that is used by people in contexts of linguistic, social and cultural diversity who use their multilingual resources to their advantage (Paulsrud et al., 2017).

## 5 Discussion

In this literature review, we have explored the concept of translanguaging. Our two research questions were “what is translanguaging?” and “what are the benefits of translanguaging?”.

Regarding the first question, we found out that translanguaging is a term that has in the hands of various scholars undergone some change from its original meaning given by Williams in the 1980’s. His use of translanguaging was that it meant using different languages, Welsh and English in this case, as input and output (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Williams thought that translanguaging would be most beneficial for students who are already bilingual or monolingual and it should not be used as a method of learning a second language (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Scholars like Garcia & Wei, Baker and Mazak have built upon Williams’ thoughts and added their own perception on what translanguaging means for them. Due to this, the concept of translanguaging has become broader as it now involves more than using different languages for input and output in learning situations.

Translanguaging erases ideas about strict language categorization and has the experiences of bilingual or multilingual people as its standpoint and norm (Garcia & Wei, 2013, García, 2012, as cited in Garcia & Weil, 2013, Mazak, 2017, Garcia, 2012 as cited in Garcia & Otheguy, 2014). An important part of translanguaging is the linguistic repertoire of bilingual or multilingual people. Even if an individual knows more than one language, they only have one linguistic repertoire that composes all the language knowledge that they have and when needed, the individual will select parts from it that are appropriate for the situation at hand (Mazak & Carroll, 2017, Mazak, 2017, Garcia, 2012 as cited in Garcia & Otheguy, 2014). Williams stated that translanguaging happens automatically for multilingual learners and various scholars agree on this statement (2002, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Translanguaging is a natural way of communicating for people that experience multiple languages in their daily lives and it is what enables them to fully express themselves (García, 2009a, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b; Grosjean, 1989, as cited in Hopewell, 2017; Hopewell, 2017).

Translanguaging has become more important in education and it has been developed into a pedagogy that takes the students’ whole linguistic repertoire into account. Teacher-directed translanguaging means that the teaching is carefully planned by the teacher and the aim is to

develop the students' linguistic repertoires and to involve students in the teaching in a holistic way as that reduces their risk of alienation from school (Garcia & Wei, 2013; García and Li Wei, 2014, as cited in Vogel & García, 2017). Practicing teacher-directed translanguaging does not mean that the teacher has to know all the languages spoken in the classroom (Garcia & Wei, 2013). It means that the teacher will have to create a space that enables cooperation between the students and is learner-centered (Rosiers, 2017).

In the second research question, we wanted to concentrate on the positive aspects of translanguaging. As translanguaging is strongly tied to education, many of the benefits are linked to the school world but we were also able to draw up some non-educational benefits. Baker had formulated four benefits for students' learning based on Williams thoughts on translanguaging.

Firstly, if students have different languages for input and output, their understanding of the learned content will be more holistic and deeper (Baker, 2001,2006,2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b; Baker, 2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Secondly, students can become better in their weaker language if they use translanguaging (Baker, 2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b; Cenoz and Gorter, 2017). Thirdly, translanguaging can help to strengthen the connection between school and home and students' learning can deepen when they discuss topics learned in school in their home language (Baker, 2011, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Lastly, translanguaging allows for cooperation between second language learners and first language speakers (Maillat & Serra, 2009, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012b). Other benefits from the viewpoint of a student are that translanguaging can make students more independent, they can learn to self-regulate their learning and translanguaging can broaden their zone of proximal development (Paris & Paris, 2001, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013; Velasco & García, 2013, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013; Lantolf, 2000, as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2013).

We also found out that translanguaging can have a positive impact on identity construction. Allowing students to make use of all of their languages shows them that the school values their whole identity and that their languages can be useful tools for learning (Durán & Palmer, 2014; Gort & Sembiente, 2015; Palmer et al., 2014, as cited in García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). This supports their emotional and social wellbeing, makes students more confident and

also teaches them to value the languages of each other (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Hopewell, 2017).

The benefits of translanguaging outside education are that it is a way of communicating and constructing meaning between different language groups, it can empower speakers of a minority language as it can free them from strict language ideas and it makes visible the way many bilingual people communicate in their everyday lives (García, 2009a, 2009b, as cited in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012; Otheguy et al., 2015; Li Wei, 2018, as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

From these results, we can conclude that translanguaging would be beneficial in education as the presence of bilingual and multilingual students in classrooms is a presumption and the number of them will most likely only grow in the future. As future educators, we are interested in the holistic growth of students and we think that translanguaging makes visible the importance of language in that process.

In order for teachers to become more comfortable with the idea of translanguaging, more knowledge about the practicalities of translanguaging would be beneficial. Also, as we mentioned in the introduction, the Finnish National Core Curriculum requires teachers to use translanguaging practices in their teaching (Opetushallitus, 2016). It is thus necessary for teachers to know about translanguaging and this knowledge could be acquired by adding translanguaging as a topic to teacher training. Teachers who are already working could be offered in-service training about translanguaging. In what ways can it be practiced and are there different practices for different age groups? We only concentrated on the positive aspects of translanguaging by researching its benefits as we wanted to concentrate on the positive possibilities of it. To get a full picture of translanguaging it would though be beneficial to also research the other side, the possible disadvantages of it. Besides that, it would also be interesting to know what students and teachers think about translanguaging.

The process of making this thesis was interesting. We were able to research a topic that was quite new to us meaning that we did not have much knowledge about it beforehand. It was interesting to see how a concept can alter its meaning and become more profound in the hands of different scholars. This process was also interesting on a personal level as we also talked

about in the introduction. Reading about translanguaging has made us better understand ourselves and given us more tools to use when talking about the complex nature of languages.

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