Translanguaging pedagogy in multilingual early childhood classes

A video ethnography in Luxembourg

Katja N. Andersen

University of Luxembourg, Research Unit Education, Culture, Cognition & Society (ECCS)

This paper investigates translanguaging practices and pedagogy with very young children in the trilingual country of Luxembourg. Recent research has shown that in early childhood education in Luxembourg there is a focus on Luxembourgish to the exclusion of other languages and that this appears to exclude children with foreign language backgrounds from everyday institutional life. Our research asks how and in which forms can a translanguaging pedagogy offer young multilingual children opportunities to engage in literacy practices. Our empirical qualitative pilot study carried out among children aged 2 to 6 in Luxembourgish early childhood programs clarifies forms of translanguaging when instruction is accompanied by pictures and reading in German. The findings suggest that gesture and body language are part of translanguaging, providing multiple resources that enable the young multilingual learner to make meaning.

Keywords: translanguaging, multilingualism, multimodality, early childhood education, Luxembourg

1. Introduction

In Luxembourgish primary and secondary education there is an interplay of the three languages of instruction: German, Luxembourgish and French. In early childhood education and daycare Luxembourgish is the mainstream language, to some extent, at the cost of the children's home languages (Neumann 2015). The Luxembourgish Ministry of Education promotes Luxembourgish in early childhood education (Majerus 2006) with the goal of enhancing opportunities for the integration of children with migration backgrounds. However, empirical studies

have shown that the use of Luxembourgish as a lingua franca in daily communication at daycare facilities leads to an inequality of opportunities for children with non-Luxembourgish citizenship (Neumann 2012, 2015; Seele 2015). The PISA 2012 results in Luxembourg (Ugen et al. 2013) support this claim of an inequality of opportunities, showing that children who speak French, Portuguese or a Balkan language as a first home language are significantly below the Luxembourgish/German reference group in all tested competences. In the field of reading in German the differences correspond to one to two years of schooling.

This paper asks which forms of a translanguaging pedagogy offer opportunities for young children with foreign language backgrounds in the Luxembourgish early childhood education system to engage in reading in German. We assume, first, in accordance with Ugen et al. (2013), that learning some German in early childhood education should ease the transition to primary school where literacy in German is a goal. Second, following Creese and Blackledge (2010), we assume that permitting translanguaging while reading in a language other than the language of instruction leads to students' engagement. Third, in accordance with Britsch (2009) and Sayakhan and Bradley (2014), we consider that the use of images and rhymes are of particular importance for reading as they facilitate understanding and enhance language development.

In our study we followed multilingual children aged 2 to 6 years in video-recordings of practices with German rhymes and images (Kirsch 2015). We investigated in what ways, in oral discussions, translanguaging enables children to make meaning of such rhymes and images. In reporting on this study, we clarify implicit and explicit forms of translanguaging in the young multilingual children's communication in formal and non-formal educational settings.

2. Background of research: Early childhood education in Luxembourg

This research took place in Luxembourg where translanguaging is part of everyday life (Gilles and Moulin 2009) and where, within a population of 549,700 inhabitants, 45.3% are non-Luxembourgish citizens (STATEC 2014, 9). This means that almost every second inhabitant in Luxembourg has a nationality other than Luxembourgish. Particularly since the 1970s, the number of residents without Luxembourgish citizenship has increased steadily. The highest percentage of non-Luxembourgish citizens living in Luxembourg are Portuguese (16.5%), followed by French (6.7%), Italian (3.4%), Belgian (3.3%) and German (2.3%) citizens (STATEC 2014, 9). In a comparison of all EU countries Luxembourg is the second lowest in population size. Yet, at the same time, the proportion of resident foreigners (by citizenship) is the highest of all EU countries (as of 2014, EUROSTAT 2015).

2.1 Languages in the formal and non-formal Luxembourgish educational system

Early childhood education in Luxembourg consists of Education Précoce and nursery school in the formal sector and the institutions Crèche and Maison Relais pour Enfants in the non-formal sector. The formal educational system starts with the optional Education Précoce (ages 3 to 4, Luxembourgish as the medium of instruction), followed by compulsory nursery school (ages 4 to 5, Luxembourgish as the medium of instruction), which are part of the École Fondamentale (ages 3 to 11). Formal education in Luxembourg has an ongoing competence-based curriculum established in 2011, following the PISA debate, which has shown that language competences influence all school subjects and play a central role in school success (cf. Esser 2006; Ugen et al. 2013). In the curriculum the focus is on language, which is addressed explicitly and implicitly in a plurality of competences in all school subjects. For example, in science education one of the central competences focuses on communication skills: "interact using different forms of communication" (MENFP 2011, 34; my translation from French).

Non-formal education in Luxembourg also underwent reform. In 2005 the Maison Relais pour Enfants – an after-school institution – was established for the care of children aged 0 to 11 years, in addition to the Crèche for 0 to 4 year olds. The Maison Relais pour Enfants is non-compulsory and aims to provide opportunities for children to improve their school success (MFI et al. 2009), in particular, through language development (Majerus 2006). In his government declaration in 2004, the former Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker stated that the Maison Relais pour Enfants has the key goal of introducing Luxembourgish to children with non-Luxembourgish citizenship living in Luxembourg (Majerus 2006). Recent studies have confirmed that the emphasis on Luxembourgish appears throughout the non-formal (Neumann 2012; 2015) and formal (MENJE 2015) early childhood education.

2.2 Language backgrounds of children in early childhood education in Luxembourg

The language situation in Luxembourg is often described as 'triglossic', referring to the three official languages – Luxembourgish, German and French – recognized by the 1984 language law (Horner and Weber 2010). All three languages are school languages used for instruction at primary and secondary school (MENJE 2014, 100). Many schoolchildren speak, as their first home language, languages other than Luxembourgish, German or French. In 2015 there were children of 123 different nationalities at the École Fondamentale (ages 3 to 11; MENJE 2015, 8). The

number of children who speak a first home language other than Luxembourgish increased by almost 50% between the school years 2004/05 and 2013/14 (cf. data in MENJE and Université du Luxembourg 2015, 10). At the École Fondamentale 60.2% of all children did not speak Luxembourgish as a first home language in the school year 2012/2013 (MENJE 2014, 102). This percentage is even higher if one looks exclusively at the language situation in early childhood education. Among 3 to 6 year olds 64.9% of the children speak languages other than Luxembourgish as a first home language (MENJE and Université du Luxembourg 2015, 21). Almost one third (27.1%) speak Portuguese as a first language (MENJE 2014, 102) and more than 35% have yet another first language such as Italian, French, Spanish, German, Chinese, Polish, Romanian or Hungarian (MENJE 2014, 102).

3.   Theoretical framing: Translanguaging as pedagogy with young learners

There are two relevant discourses in this research: the discourse on translanguaging pedagogy in early childhood education, which focuses on the role played by translanguaging in young children's learning, and the discourse on language practices with images and rhymes, which asks in what ways languages can be developed.

3.1 Translanguaging pedagogy in early childhood education

Scholarly interest in translanguaging pedagogy has grown in recent years (Creese and Blackledge 2010; García, Sylvan and Witt 2011; Hornberger and Link 2012; Durán and Palmer 2014; García and Li Wei 2014), but empirical research on translanguaging pedagogy in the early childhood educational sphere is more rare. Most studies to date have focused on translanguaging at primary or secondary school. Multiple studies (cf. Hornberger and Link 2012) have shown that educational practices favour monolingual, written and decontextualized language practices. Yet, at the same time, it has been shown that oral, multilingual and contextualized practices are essential for young learners' development (García and Li Wei 2014) and translanguaging practices play an important role in teaching and learning (Creese and Blackledge 2010). In García and Flores' (2012) differentiation between four types of language pedagogy (foreign language, second language, bilingual and multilingual) only multilingual instruction takes learners' different linguistic profiles and practices into account to extend the "plurilingual potentials of students" (235).

   The term translanguaging (García, Sylvan and Witt 2011; Hornberger and Link 2012; García 2013) – unlike the term 'code switching' which is based on the idea of separate linguistic systems (Li Wei 2011) – refers to the fluid language practices of

multilingual speakers (as described, for example, by Creese and Blackledge 2010; García and Li Wei 2014). Translanguaging acknowledges the varied linguistic repertoires that children bring to kindergarten (Garcia and Flores 2012, 233) and allows children to use all these varied features for expression and meaning making "without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named […] languages" (Otheguy, García and Reid 2015, 283). From the outsider's view, we look at language as a cultural object and at entities that are societally allocated to one language or another. However, seen from the speaker's perspective, it is one repertoire of features that belong to the individual speaker's idiolect and are deployed to enable communication (Otheguy, García and Reid 2015). Learning and teaching seen through a translanguaging lens allow children to use their repertoire of features for expression and meaning making. On this basis, Busch (2011, 1) claims that schools must reconceptionalize themselves "as an open space of potentialities, where the polyphony of voices […] is appreciated as resource and asset."

Following García (2014), translanguaging is rooted in the principle that bilinguals use their language practices in ways that fit their communication within a situation. Recent research has demonstrated the benefits of gesture for communication. Kirk, Pine and Ryder (2011) have shown that gesture encourages and supports language-impaired children to communicate effectively. Breckinridge-Church, Ayman-Nolley and Mahootian (2004) have demonstrated that learning increased for students when gesture accompanied speech instruction. Bernardis and Gentilucci (2005) suggest that symbolic gesture and spoken word are coded as single signal by a unique communication system. Pine, Lufkin and Messer (2004) assume that gestures are an integral part of the child's thinking process. This article focuses on how gesture relates to translanguaging, i.e. whether it is part of translanguaging or whether it co-occurs with it.

3.2 Developing languages through rhymes and visual images

Rhymes have been shown to be an effective way to further language development (Brown 2014; Sayakhan and Bradley 2014). Sayakhan and Bradley (2014) have demonstrated the benefits of integrating rhymes into everyday practices. Through rhymes, children become familiarized with themes and story patterns. They are introduced to vocabulary and grammatical structures, and acquire a repertoire of verbal expression through the repetition of rhymes (DRK 2006). Brown (2014) has shown that in early childhood education the reading aloud of rhymes is of particular relevance for developing phonological awareness, which Brown explains by the fact that rhymes are typically connected with repetition, rhythm, singing

and clapping. Overall, rhymes as daily activities are seen as an effective way of stimulating narration and developing vocabulary among young learners.

The benefits of visual images for language development have been extensively researched in secondary education, especially in second language learning (Schnotz and Bannert 2003; Britsch 2009) and in reading (Bishop 1980; Buchholz 2014). Images enhance the understanding of the written text (Arcavi 2003; Schnotz and Bannert 2003; Hiippala 2012) and stimulate the child's imagination (Thiele 2003; Duncker and Lieber 2013). Children realize that a picture is a symbol representing something concrete. However, as Arcavi (2003) shows, the same picture may have different meanings in different contexts. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) and Kress (2013) state that interpretation depends on the linguistic, situational, cultural but also social context, and that interpretation stimulates narration.

Even though it is generally agreed that integrating rhymes and visual images into daily activities is beneficial for language development, there is not much research, to my knowledge, that focuses on this approach in a translanguaging context, neither internationally, nor in Luxembourg (Kirsch 2015). Although Duncum (2004) and Hallet (2008) refer to multiliteracy and multimodality in relation to visual objects, they discuss their results solely through a monolingual language lens; the context of translanguaging is omitted. This paper addresses a gap in the knowledge of the benefits of visual images and rhymes for language development in a translanguaging context.

4.   Research approach and design

Our study, named MultOra (Multilingual Oracies in early childhood education; Kirsch 2015; Andersen 2016), focused on language use in formal and non-formal Luxembourgish early childhood education. The research project monitored scientifically the 10-hour professional development course for educators (non-formal sector) and teachers (formal sector) "Mit Versen in die Welt" (Rhymes as a stepping stone into the world; Günnewig 2015; Kirsch 2015), which was financed by the former Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration and the Ministère de l'Education Nationale.

4.1 Research question

Two aspects of the above described research context are particularly relevant for the research project MultOra. First, given that in early childhood education in Luxembourg the focus is on Luxembourgish and that this appears to exclude children with foreign language backgrounds from everyday institutional life, it

is necessary to clarify how and in which forms translanguaging enables the very young multilingual learner to engage in literacy practices. Secondly, visual images and rhymes activate young children's oral language use, which, in turn, furthers language development. Nevertheless, there exists no research in Luxembourg on forms of translanguaging while using images and rhymes in a language other than the teaching language in groups of young multilingual learners. The research question of the MultOra study is: Which forms of translanguaging occur among very young children in Luxembourgish early childhood programs when instruction is accompanied by visual representations and the reading of rhymes in German?

4.2 Pedagogy of using visual representations and reading of rhymes in German

The pedagogy involving the use of visual representations and reading rhymes in German is based on practices in early childhood education settings with posters, which were specifically designed for the professional development course "Mit Versen in die Welt" in order to stimulate the children's narration (Günnewig 2015). In total 12 language-stimulating posters with different rhymes in German and with hand-drawn pictures were used. In the development of the posters it was taken into consideration, first, that the rhymes represent children's experiences (Günnewig 2015; Kirsch 2015) in order to provide opportunities for talk in early childhood education settings, and, second, that the rhymes introduce vocabulary and grammatical structures that children might not hear in everyday language (e.g. "mit Ringelschwanz", German for ring-tailed).

The rhymes were illustrated on the posters by hand-drawn pictures that visualized objects that young children know well, and see, hear of, or act with in their daily life (e.g. a dog or a cat). The pictures were symbolic representations of some of the concrete experiences young children usually have (e.g. spilling tomato sauce while eating spaghetti). The images used on the posters drew on the experiences of the young children, but also showed a new perspective of a familiar situation (e.g. a school desk with an elephant sitting on it). The underlying pedagogy of using these posters is based on the understanding that young children need opportunities to decode visual representations, relate them to their own experiences and talk about them (Günnewig 2015; Kirsch 2015). In order to stimulate other languages next to Luxembourgish, the instructor read the rhymes in a language (German) other than the teaching language (Luxemburgish). To encourage children`s responses, the instructor introduced pauses while reading the rhyme, and, every time he/she repeated the rhyme, more and longer pauses were introduced. Whenever possible, the instructor acted the scene described and illustrated in the poster. After reading the rhyme, he/she talked to the children in German and Luxembourgish.

4.3 Sample and methods

The sample comprised five groups of children aged 2 to 6 from one Crèche, three Maison Relais pour Enfants, and one nursery school (111 children in total). The children in these groups spoke 17 different first languages, including Luxembourgish, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, French, German, Russian, Bulgarian, English, Hungarian and Polish. The criteria for selecting the children were representation from all four institutions of the Luxembourgish early childhood educational system and contrasting intake, which was ensured by including institutions from different regions of Luxembourg (centre, south and north). Before selecting the groups, we conducted a survey of all practitioners participating in the professional development course "Mit Versen in die Welt", focusing on the children's previous experiences in the use of visual representations and rhymes as part of their language learning practices. Based on these results, we formed the sample of the five groups of children.

The methods used in this research are qualitative. They draw on grounded theory (Charmaz 2006) and are based on video-recordings of language practices during the use of posters with hand-drawn pictures and German rhymes. In the five children's groups, the practitioners video-recorded their own pedagogical practices while using the posters, which had been introduced in the professional development course. Each practitioner chose one video-recorded language practice based on the posters. This was later discussed by means of the repertory grid technique within the group of practitioners (cf. for mathematics: Bruder, Lengnink and Prediger 2003). The video-recordings are the data analysed in this article.

5. Findings: Forms of translanguaging in groups of young multilingual children

The data of the complete MultOra study – comprising video-recordings of the children's group activities, video-recordings of the follow-up mentoring sessions with the practitioners and a survey – has been analysed from various points of view (Kirsch 2015; Andersen 2016). This article presents the findings of the data analysis of the video-recordings of the children's groups, which was carried out through the lens of translanguaging practices and pedagogy. The main finding was that gesture and body language were an integral part of translanguaging, thus providing multiple resources that enabled the young multilingual learner to make meaning. The findings generated by the data are presented and discussed according to seven aspects.

First, it appeared that the young multilingual children used multiple resources (i.e. fluid language practices and body language) to make meaning of the hand-drawn picture sequences on the posters. In the data it was evident that the children, when they communicated in small groups about the visualized items, flexibly used their resources to *fulfil the communicative situation*. Their multiple resources were employed especially with posters that visualized objects children were familiar with (e.g. a dog and a cat drawn as hand puppets). In one of the examples of particular interest (Crèche, four children, ages 3 to 4) the children used two synonyms for the word 'dog': <u>Hond</u> and <u>*Mupp*</u> (single underlining indicates what is considered to be Luxembourgish; italic script indicates what is considered to be German; double underlining indicates what is considered to be French). In this case, three children (Luxembourgish as home language, ages 3 to 4) used both synonyms alternately, whereas one child (Spanish as home language, age 4), while enthusiastically touching the dog pictured on the poster, insisted on the correctness of using <u>Hond</u> and the incorrectness of <u>*Mupp*</u>. While touching the image of the dog, another child from this group (Italian and Luxembourgish as home languages, age 3) added: <u>*Mupp ass wéi Hond*</u> (*Mupp* is like dog). In this example, the communication about the hand-drawn pictures within a group of young multilingual children appeared to be multimodal as the children connected physical contact (tactile stimulation through touching the images) and language use (cf. also Kirsch 2015; Andersen 2016). Body language seems to be significant. It can be considered one of the multiple resources that help the very young learner fulfil the communicative situation.

Second, the language practices among the children showed that *acting and translanguaging co-occurred and enriched each other* when the practitioners and the young children read a rhyme in a language (German) other than the language of instruction (Luxembourgish) and play-acted in short sequences. This was clear in several cases in which the practitioners and the children acted the scenes of a German rhyme using their linguistic repertoire freely. For example, in one case (Maison Relais pour Enfants, six children, ages 4 to 5) the educator introduced the rhyme *Affe – was juckt mich da* (monkey – what itches me there) to which the children and the educator acted and "soft-assembled" (García 2014, 3) their language features in ways that fitted their communication as in: <u>*Dat ass am Flottsten*</u>. *Dann am … Popo … Po. Und? Irgendwo.* <u>*Da komm*</u>. *Ein?* <u>*Wat war et?*</u> *Ein? Ein Floh* (This is the best. Then at the … buttocks … butt. And? Somewhere. There comes. A? What was it? A? A flea). Of particular interest in this case is that the educator not only permitted the children to use their multiple resources, but she herself used body language and selected language features without regard for the boundaries of named languages. Based on this case, it seems that play-acting enabled the group of young learners to illustrate the German rhyme and stimulated the children to

formulate the continuations of the rhyme. It appears that moments of play, in combination with the flexible use of linguistic features, enabled the children to make meaning of text.

Third, the flexible use of language features appeared to be important for *moments of linguistic creativity*. In one example (Maison Relais pour Enfants, three children, ages 3 to 5) flexible reference to the images on the poster stimulated linguistic imagination. The children communicated about a poster with a picture sequence of a crocodile and, while describing the crocodile's actions, they said: *ann* dann *nach* *pfffff ahhhahhhahhh* (and then even *pfffff ahhhahhhahhh*); *dat ass, pssstt. […] Vorsicht, Krokodil* (this is, *pssstt*. […] Look out, crocodile). The example indicates that moments of linguistic creativity occurred in the young children's conversation in forms of different kinds of sounds. The linguistic creativity enabled by translanguaging allowed the children to illustrate the actions of the animal portrayed in the pictures.

Fourth, a more flexible use of language features without regard for the boundaries of named languages seemed to be present if the children *used gestures or other bodily acts* while sharing their ideas about the visual images on the posters and/or about the rhymes. This was seen in situations where the children underlined different contexts by illustrating them with movements of their hands or with facial expressions. For example, in one case (Maison Relais pour Enfants, nine children, ages 4 to 5) one child, while saying *Sou hoch, bis bei den* Dach (This high, to the roof), showed with his hands the height of a lawn that grows to the roof. Particularly striking is that such combinations of body language and translanguaging occurred especially on the children's side when the practitioners also used gestures and/or when the children enthusiastically touched the illustrated elements right in front of the poster, accentuating their statements with gestures. In some instances the children's gesture had a different meaning from their speech, e.g. when the above-mentioned child showed with his hand how something was moving through the lawn, while describing the height. This type of evidence gives rise to the assumption that the nature of the relationship between gesture and translanguaging is more than co-occurrence. Being a meaning-making resource by itself, gesture seems to be part of translanguaging. In many cases, these multimodal moments happened in connection with the flexible use of linguistic features. One could almost say that the flexible use of language features without regards for boundaries occurs particularly if the communication involves the children's body language. This tells us that multimodalities, gestures and acting are significant, and that translanguaging refers not only to the free deployment of one's linguistic repertoire, but also to 'acting'. On this basis, it can be assumed that body language is another resource *in* translanguaging.

Fifth, the flexible use of linguistic resources allowed the children to *participate in oral discussions* and to *make meaning* of the visual images and rhymes. The children appeared to use their linguistic repertoire for meaning-making particularly when the practitioners themselves used their language features freely to communicate. While the children fluidly used features of all three languages of schooling (Luxembourgish, German and French), none of them used their varied home languages. To make meaning of the pictures and rhymes, the children mostly used – next to gestures/body language – single words of a language other than the teaching language, Luxembourgish (e.g. *si maachen se net rop, dann pistolet an pfff*; they don't put it on, then pistol and *pfff*). They sometimes used more than one consecutive word of the other language (e.g. *wéi een Pompjee, mee il va … il get méi sou krrkrr*"; as a fireman, he goes … he goes more as *krrkrr*), but no child spoke several sentences in another language than Luxembourgish. In contrast, in almost all cases the practitioners used several consecutive words when they spoke in a language other than the language of instruction. The fact that the children used only single words has to be considered against the fact that the sample consists of very young children whose language output is generally limited.

Sixth, translanguaging, comprising body language and the flexible use of language features, enabled the very young children to connect the given rhyme and/or images to their personal experiences, thus *contributing their own experiences*. This seemed to occur especially when the practitioners also used translanguaging in their questions. This can be seen in one case of particular interest (Maison Relais pour Enfants, nine children, ages 4 to 5), in which the educator asked: *An, fertig?* (And, ready?). This appeared to encourage the group of children to subsequently use moments of translanguaging, which enabled the young children to relate their own experiences, as in *Ech ganz schnell schwammen* (I am very fast swimming). This example, among similar ones, leads us to the assumption that the children's sentences are rich and unfettered when they translanguage, and that the free deployment of individual linguistic resources enables the young multilingual children to express their associations.

Seventh, in the video-recordings of the poster- and rhyme-activities, it seems that translanguaging enabled the children to *illustrate their thoughts in a vivid manner*, and that sentence constructions were more complex when the young children translanguaged. In the above-mentioned example (Maison Relais pour Enfants, nine children, ages 4 to 5) a child formulated the sentence *Sou hoch, bis bei den Dach* (This high, to the roof) using his language features freely to illustrate his thoughts. What is interesting about this case is that the child's picture (a lawn grows to the roof) resulted from the wordplay and play-acting of the children's group: *Eine Wiese. Ja, so groß. Nee, sou grouss. Sou hoch, bis bei den Dach* (A lawn. Yes, this big. No, this big. This high, to the roof). The educator explicitly showed

appreciation of the child's flexible use of linguistic resources as she adapted to the child's wordplay by saying: *Bis bei den, oh, bis zum Dach, oh* (to the roof, oh, to the roof, oh). This educator's first language is German (in all other cases, the practitioners' L1 is Luxembourgish).

6.   Discussion: Connection to the current state of research

In line with the discourse on translanguaging competence within the multilingual classroom (García and Li Wei 2014; Garrity, Aquino-Sterling and Day 2015; Probyn 2015), this research supports the use of multimodal and multilingual communication in early childhood education. The findings suggest that the different languages stay in the "game", as García (2013, 3) expressed it, when young multilingual children communicate in groups about posters. In contrast to García's description, which outlines translanguaging as a dynamic interplay of *all* speakers' languages, the findings of this research suggest that there is only a small selection from the children's first languages occurring when the children exchange ideas about the hand-drawn pictures and/or rhymes. This may be because the children have, to some extent, learnt to exclude their various home languages in group. In this context, it should be underlined that Luxembourgish is, linguistically, a German dialect and that in our study translanguaging occurs in the context of variations between Luxembourgish and German, while first languages are being almost entirely excluded. This raises the question whether translanguaging as dialect variation is being celebrated over first language use and whether children's home languages occur more frequently when rhymes in languages without dialect variation are used.

The findings, however, suggest that translanguaging in groups of young multilingual children comprises the flexible use of language features combined with gesture, other acts, and images as a repertoire of multiple resources. Our results give rise to the assumption that gesture/body language and translanguaging do not just co-occur, rather, that gesture is part of translanguaging as one resource of meaning-making which helps the very young children to provide information additional to their spoken words. Translanguaging in this sense seems to enable the children to articulate their thoughts and to make meaning of text (cf. Blackledge, Creese and Hu 2015). In particular, the use of different meaning-making resources seems to enable the young multilingual children to achieve various goals, i.e. fulfil the communicative situation, contribute their own experiences, illustrate thoughts in a vivid manner, participate in oral discussions and make meaning of pictures and rhymes. These positive impacts of translanguaging have to be considered against the fact that in our study not all children actively participated in

the conversation about the pictures and rhymes, and, as mentioned earlier, the children's home languages were excluded. In other words, the benefits gained by translanguaging applied to some children, whereas others were not involved in the communication.

These results strengthen the discourse on the challenge for practitioners to bridge the gap between the children's understanding in their home language and the language of learning and teaching (as discussed by Probyn 2015). In addition, the findings strengthen the discourse on translanguaging practices and pedagogy insofar as translanguaging practices are in accordance with the everyday practices "used by bilinguals to make sense of their bilingual worlds" (Garrity, Aquino-Sterling and Day 2015, 178). The findings suggest that within groups of young and very young learners in diverse multilingual contexts translanguaging occurs as insertions of single words of another language into sentences in the mainstream language. However, when looking at *all* meaning-making resources, we find more than the linguistic features of German, Luxembourgish and French, and can add gesture, play-acting and pointing at images as part of a repertoire of multiple resources.

The findings also indicate that the following aspects seem to be of importance for meaning-making enabled by translanguaging:

–   young children work in small groups of multilingual learners;
–   practitioners themselves use translanguaging;
–   rhymes in a language other than the language of learning and teaching are combined with visual images;
–   spaces are created in which children can communicate freely following stimulation by the practitioner;
–   a culture of oracy practices is established, which allows the use of the children's full language repertoire and includes all semiotic resources of the children, including their body language and gestures.

Our research provides several directions for further studies. One possibility would be to evaluate in what forms the implementation in early childhood education of the factors described above leads to the enhancement of the young multilingual children's engagement in literacy practices, in terms of frequency of participation, complexity of the contributions and degree of active input of ideas. It would also be of interest to know in what way translanguaging helps the young learner to co-construct meaning and build bridges between their home language and the language of teaching. Another question is whether the children's ages influence the forms of translanguaging, that is whether translanguaging and body language merge with children of older ages to the same degree, as seen in this study.

Moreover, research could be carried out on whether groupings of children according to same or different (home) languages encourage or discourage translanguaging and whether the educators' L1 influences the complexity of the children's translanguaging. Finally, the sample needs to be enlarged to guarantee representative status. Of interest would be to explore whether, in a bigger sample comprising more classes of early childhood education, the use of translanguaging in connection with images and German rhymes would enable the young learners' communication in similar forms and with what complexity and involvement the children's home languages occur. Even though the sample of the project MultOra is not representative, it is evident that there is great potential for increased reflection on the development of translanguaging practices in early childhood education.

References

Andersen, Katja N. 2016. "Multilingualism and Multimodality in Luxembourgish Early Childhood Education." In *Advances in Understanding Multilingualism: A Global Perspective*, ed. by Sambor Grucza, Magdalena Olpińska-Szkielko, and Piotr Romanowski, 11–21. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition.

Arcavi, Abraham. 2003. "The Role of Visual Representations in the Learning of Mathematics." *Educational Studies in Mathematics* 52 (3): 215–241. doi: 10.1023/A:1024312321077

Bernardis, Paolo, and Maurizio Gentilucci. 2005. "Speech and Gesture Share the Same Communication System." *Neuropsychologia* 44 (2006): 178–190.

Bishop, Alan J. 1980. "Spatial Abilities and Mathematics Education: A Review." In *Critical Issues in Mathematics Education*, ed. by Philip Clarkson, and Norma Presmeg, 71–81. New York: Springer.

Blackledge, Adrian, Angela Creese, and Rachel Hu. 2015. Investigating Voice in a City Market. *Working Papers in Translanguaging and Translation* (WP. 9). (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/index.aspx)

Breckinridge-Church, Ruth, Saba Ayman-Nolley, and Shahrzad Mahootian. 2004. "The Role of Gesture in Bilingual Education: Does Gesture Enhance Learning?" *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 7 (4): 303–319. doi: 10.1080/13670050408667815

Britsch, Susan. 2009. "ESOL Educators and the Experience of Visual Literacy." *TESOL Quarterly* 43 (4): 710–721. doi: 10.1002/j.1545-7249.2009.tb00197.x

Bruder, Regina, Katja Lengnink, and Susanne Prediger. 2003. *Ein Instrumentarium zur Erfassung subjektiver Theorien über Mathematikaufgaben*. Darmstadt: TU Darmstadt.

Brown, Carmen S. 2014. "Language and Literacy Development in the Early Years: Foundational Skills that Support Emergent Readers." *Language and Literacy Spectrum* 24: 35–49.

Buchholz, Laura D. 2014. "Illustrations and Text: Storyworld Space and the Multimodality of Serialized Narrative." *Style* 48 (4): 593–611. doi: 10.5325/style.48.4.593

Busch, Brigitta. 2011. *Building on Heteroglossia and Heterogeneity: The Experience of a Multilingual Classroom*. Presentation held at the 3rd International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity (LED) 22–25 November 2011, Colloquium: Language, Education, and Superdiversity, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.

Creese, Angela, and Adrian Blackledge. 2010. "Translanguaging in the Bilingual Classroom: A Pedagogy for Learning and Teaching?" *The Modern Language Journal* 94 (1): 103–115. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2009.00986.x

DRK (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Landesverband Saarland e.V.). 2006. *Integration junger Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund*. Saarbrücken: Emminghaus.

Duncker, Ludwig, and Gabriele Lieber. 2013. "Dimensionen der Bildliteralität. Überlegungen zu einer Grammatik des Sehens." In *Bildliteralität und ästhetische Alphabetisierung*, ed. by Ludwig Duncker, and Gabriele Lieber, 37–75. München: kopaed.

Duncum, Paul. 2004. "Visual Culture Isn't Just Visual: Multiliteracy, Multimodality and Meaning." *Studies in Art Education* 45 (3): 252–264.

Durán, Leah, and Deborah Palmer. 2014. "Pluralist Discourse of Bilingualism and Translanguaging Talk in Classrooms." *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 14 (3): 367–388. doi: 10.1177/1468798413497386

Esser, Hartmut. 2006. *Migration, Sprache und Integration. AKI-Forschungsbilanz 4*. Berlin: AKI.

EUROSTAT (European Social Statistics). 2015. *Population on 1 January by Five Year Age Group, Sex and Citizenship*. http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_pop1ctz&lang=en.

García, Ofelia. 2014. "TESOL Translanguaged in NYS: Alternative Perspectives." *NYS TESOL Journal* 1 (1): 2–10.

García, Ofelia 2013. "Language Education and Language Diversity in the 21st Century." Introduction to the speech of Ofelia García. FÖRMIG-Conference, University of Hambourg. https://www.foermig.uni-hamburg.de/pdf-dokumente/garcia-vortag-kurzfassung.pdf.

García, Ofelia, and Nelson Flores. 2012. "Multilingual Pedagogies." In *The Rouledge Handbook of Multilingualism*, ed. by Marilyn Martin-Jones, Adrian Blackledge, and Angela Creese, 232–246. New York: Routledge.

García, Ofelia, Claire Sylvan, and Daria Witt. 2011. "Pedagogies and Practices in Multilingual Classrooms: Singularities in Pluralities." *The Modern Language Journal* 95 (3): 385–400. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01208.x

García, Ofelia, and Li Wei. 2014. *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Garrity, Sarah, Cristian R. Aquino-Sterling, and Ashley Day. 2015. "Translanguaging in an Infant Classroom: Using Multiple Languages to Make Meaning." *International Multilingual Journal* 9 (3): 177–196. doi: 10.1080/19313152.2015.1048542

Gilles, Peter, and Claudine Moulin. 2009. "Die soziale Praxis der Mehrsprachigkeit in Luxemburg." In *Handbuch der sozialen und erzieherischen Arbeit in Luxembourg, 1*, ed. by Helmut Willems, Georges Rotink, Dieter Ferring, Jean Schoos, Mill Majerus, Norbert Ewen, Marie A. Rodesch-Hengesch, and Charel Schmit, 183–195. Luxembourg: Saint-Paul.

Günnewig, Heinz. 2015. "Mit Versen in die Welt." In *Beiträge zur plurilingualen Bildung. Non-formale Bildung und Betreuung in früher Kindheit und im Schulalter*. Bd. 3, ed. by MENJE (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse), 103–112. Dudelange: 1Plus.

Hallet, Wolfgang. 2008. "Die Visualisierung des Fremdsprachenlernens." In *Lehren und Lernen mit Bildern: Ein Handbuch zur Bilddidaktik*, ed. by Gabriele Lieber, 212–222. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren.

Hiippala, Tuomo. 2012. "Reading Paths and Visual Perception in Multimodal Research, Psychology and Brain Sciences." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 315–327.
doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2011.12.008

Hornberger, Nancy H., and Holly Link. 2012. "Translanguaging in Today's Classrooms: A Biliteracy Lens." *Theory into Practice* 51: 239–247. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2012.726051

Horner, Kristine, and Jean-Jacques Weber. 2010. "The Luxembourgish System of Education between Inclusion and Exclusion." In *30 ans de migrations, 30 ans de recherches, 30 ans d'engagements*, ed. by ASTI (Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés), 304–310. Luxembourg: Lito Terrazzi.

Kirk, Elizabeth, Karen J. Pine, and Nuala Ryder. 2011. "I hear what you say but I see what you mean: The role of gestures in children's pragmatic comprehension." *Language and Cognitive Processes* 26 (2): 149–170. doi: 10.1080/01690961003752348

Kirsch, Claudine. 2015. "Multilingual Oracies: Ein Bericht einer Weiterbildung zur Förderung der Mündlichkeit anhand von Versen und Bilderbüchern." In *Beiträge zur plurilingualen Bildung. Non-formale Bildung und Betreuung in früher Kindheit und im Schulalter*. Bd. 3, ed. by MENJE (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse), 75–96. Dudelange: 1Plus.

Kress, Gunther. 2013. "Recognizing Learning: A Perspective from a Social Semiotic Theory of Multimodality." In *Multilingualism and Multimodality: Current Challenges for Educational Studies*, ed. by Ingrid De Saint-Georges, and Jean-Jacques Weber, 119–140. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. doi: 10.1007/978-94-6209-266-2_7

Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuwen. 2001. *Multimodal Discourse. The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. New York: Oxford.

Li Wei. 2011. "Multilinguality, Multimodality, and Multicompetence: Code- and Modeswitching by Minority Ethnic Children in Complementary Schools." *The Modern Language Journal* 95 (3): 370–383. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01209.x

Majerus, Mill. 2006. *Die Maison Relais pour Enfants. Instrument der Kinder- und Familienpolitik in Luxemburg*. Luxembourg: arc.

MENFP (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Formation professionnelle). 2011. *Plan d'Études. École Fondamentale*. Luxembourg: Service de l'Enseignement fondamental.

MENJE (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse). 2014. *Les Chiffres Clés de l'Éducation Nationale. Statistiques et Indicateurs*. Luxembourg: Service des Statistiques et Analyses.

MENJE (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse). 2015. *Enseignement Fondamental: Cycles 1 à 4. Éducation Différenciée. Année Scolaire 2013/2014*. Luxembourg: Service des Statistiques et Analyses.

MENJE (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse), and Université du Luxembourg. 2015. *Bildungsbericht Luxemburg 2015. Bd 1: Sonderausgabe der Chiffres Clés de l'Éducation Nationale 2013/2014*. Luxembourg: Service des Statistiques et Analyses.

MFI (Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration), Entente des Foyers de Jours, Syndicat des Villes et Communes Luxembourgeoises, and Université du Luxembourg. 2009. *Maison Relais Pour Enfants: Le Manuel. Das Handbuch*. Luxembourg: Le Phare.

Neumann, Sascha. 2012. "Some Children Are More Different Than Others. Language Practices in Luxembourgian Nurseries." *Qualitative Research Journal* 12 (2): 183–192.
doi: 10.1108/14439881211248338

Neumann, Sascha. 2015. "Lost in Translanguaging? Practices of Language Promotion in Luxembourgish Early Childhood Education." *Global Education Review* 2 (1): 23–39.

Otheguy, Ricardo, Ofelia García, and Wallis Reid. 2015. "Clarifying Translanguaging and Deconstructing Named Languages: A Perspective from Linguistics." *Applied Liguistics Review* 6 (3): 281–307.

Pine, Karen J., Nicola Lufkin, and David Messer. 2004. "More Gestures Than Answers: Children Learning About Balance." *Developmental Psychology* 40 (6): 1059–1067.
doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.40.6.1059

Probyn, Margie. 2015. "Pedagogical Translanguaging: Bridging Discourses in South African Science Classrooms." *Language and Education* 29 (3): 218–234.
doi: 10.1080/09500782.2014.994525

Sayakhan, Najat I., and Darcy H. Bradley. 2014. "Nursery Rhymes as a Vehicle for Teaching English as a Foreign Language." *International Journal of Literature and Arts* 2 (3): 84–87.
doi: 10.11648/j.ijla.20140203.15

Schnotz, Wolfgang, and Maria Bannert. 2003. "Construction and Interference in Learning from Multiple Representation." *Learning and Instruction* 13 (2): 141–156.
doi: 10.1016/S0959-4752(02)00017-8

Seele, Claudia. 2015. "Differenzproduktion durch sprachliche Praktiken. Ethnographische Beobachtungen zur Mehrsprachigkeit in luxemburgischen Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen." In *Mehrsprachigkeit und (Un-)Gesagtes: Sprache als soziale Praxis in der Migrationsgesellschaft*, ed. by Anna Schnitzer, and Rebecca Mörgen, 153–174. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa.

STATEC (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques). 2014. *Luxemburg in Zahlen: 2014*. Luxembourg: Imprimerie exe s.a., Troisvierges.

Thiele, Jens. 2003. *Das Bilderbuch. Ästhetik – Theorie – Analyse – Didaktik – Rezeption*. Bremen: Universitätsverlag Aschenbeck & Isensee.

Ugen, Sonja, Romain Martin, Bettina Böhm, Monique Reichert, Dalta Lorphelin, and Antoine Fischbach. 2013. "Einfluss des Sprachhintergrundes auf Schülerkompetenzen." In *PISA 2012: Nationaler Bericht Luxemburg*, ed. by MENFP (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Formation professionnelle), and Université du Luxembourg, 100–113. Luxembourg: MENFP.

Author's address

Katja N. Andersen
University of Luxembourg
Faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Education
Maison des Sciences Humaines, 11, Porte des Sciences
L-4366 Esch-sur-Alzette

Katja.andersen@uni.lu