Translingualand: A Comprehensive Bilingual Education Proposal for Children in Two Colombian Public Schools

Translingualand: una propuesta de educación bilingüe integral para niños en dos colegios públicos de Colombia

Sandro Alfonso Echeverry
Angélica Arcila
Dany Andrés Hoyos
Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, Pereira, Colombia

This paper reports a qualitative case study in two public schools in Colombia. It aimed to establish the potential of a translingual and comprehensive non-formal education proposal called *Translingualand*, based on a heteroglossic and dynamic bilingual education framework that utilizes translanguaging as a pedagogy. Non-participant observations, questionnaires, and artifacts were used, and data were analyzed with qualitative content analysis. Findings revealed that *Translingualand* facilitated translanguaging as a strategy for content assimilation, instruction provision, and linguistic repertoire stimulation. Additionally, it provided opportunities for the acquisition of specialized knowledge and the development of cognitive, motor, and artistic skills. In conclusion, *Translingualand* represents a non-formal education pedagogical proposal for public primary schools needing students' bilingual skills enhancement and a varied offer of comprehensive development environments.

Keywords: bilingual education, learning environments, non-formal education, translanguaging

Este artículo presenta un estudio de caso cualitativo realizado en dos escuelas públicas colombianas que buscó evaluar el potencial de *Translingualand*, una propuesta de educación no formal, translingüe e integral, basada en un enfoque bilingüe dinámico y heteroglósico que emplea el translingüismo como pedagogía. Los datos se recolectaron a través de observaciones no participantes, cuestionarios y artefactos y se analizaron mediante el análisis cualitativo de contenido. Los resultados muestran que *Translingualand* facilitó el uso del translingüismo para asimilar contenidos, dar instrucciones y estimular el repertorio lingüístico. También promovió la adquisición de conocimientos especializados y el desarrollo de habilidades cognitivas, motoras y artísticas, lo que lo convierte en una propuesta pedagógica viable para fortalecer las habilidades bilingües en escuelas primarias públicas.

Palabras clave: translingüismo, educación bilingüe, educación no formal, ambientes de aprendizaje

Sandro Alfonso Echeverry https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4378-4864 • Email: sandro.echeverry@utp.edu.co
Angélica Arcila https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3746-7846 • Email: angiear@utp.edu.co
Dany Andrés Hoyos https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0957-6694 • Email: danny-9003@utp.edu.co

Introduction

The bilingual education process in Colombia, particularly in the primary public sector, follows the policies outlined in the *Pedagogical Principles and Guidelines of the Suggested Curriculum* (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2016b) and *The English Learning Frameworks from Preschool to Grade 5* (MEN, 2016a). Approaches focused on context and action are proposed there, as well as curricular axes based on experiential, playful, meaningful, and cross-disciplinary learning. Even though Colombian elementary school teachers attempt to apply suitable methodologies, a few of these teachers demonstrate a B1 level of English (Council of Europe, 2001), as required in the policies (Sánchez Jabba, 2019). For Aldana Pérez (2018), offering high-quality English education in schools is constrained not only by the instructor's language proficiency but also by the limited number of hours and interaction opportunities. According to De Mejía (2009), implementing bilingual (Spanish–English) policies in Colombia requires allocating resources to the professional development of elementary school teachers, as well as opportunities for collaborative work with secondary English teachers. There is no curricular transition between primary and secondary levels, nor a thorough English syllabus for the elementary grades. Even though some schools benefit from the support of English language teaching (ELT) practitioners, this intervention remains episodic and disjointed from high schools' curricular plans. This situation hinders the enactment of the regional bilingualism policy, raising the need to establish relevant, equitable, and integrative bilingual (Spanish–English) education proposals.

Consequently, the latest results from national and international tests present a concerning picture regarding the English proficiency levels of school students. According to the 2023 English Proficiency Index, published by Education First (2024), Colombia ranks 74th among 116 countries or regions, placing it in the low-performing band. Among the 20 countries in Latin America, it is ranked 17th, only above Ecuador, Mexico, and Haiti.

Similarly, although recent results in the PISA tests demonstrate progress compared to previous tests, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2022) continues to place Colombian students' English language performance below its average. The cause may be that not all public schools have appropriate bilingual environments, teacher staff with certified levels of English proficiency, and cross-cutting, up-to-date bilingual curricula. Additionally, most private bilingual schools, as opposed to public ones, are sponsored by international organizations, such as the British Council or the U.S. Embassy. In contrast, English instruction in the public sector relies on the public budget, which does not include hiring specialized English teachers for the primary level. As Correa et al. (2016, as cited in Bernal, 2020) remind us, the National Bilingualism Plan (PNB) suggests that elementary school instructors should undergo continuous education through short-term projects due to their inexperience in ELT.

In addition, the PNB follows a monoglossic perspective with an additive bilingual education framework (García, 2009), meaning that the development of a foreign language (specifically, English) is privileged in Colombia, despite being a multilingual and pluricultural country. This policy focuses on English development as an additional language for learners' enrichment, promoting the adoption of pedagogies that better suit the context of English as a second language. In contrast, our study is framed under a heteroglossic approach (García, 2009), which is inclusive and integrative, as it recognizes the interdependence of all the languages with which speakers interact, in pursuit of their cognitive development.

A heteroglossic perspective regards participants as emerging bilinguals (García & Kleifgen, 2010) rather than language learners, thus valuing their learning potential and not their deficit. It promotes language development within a dynamic framework, through experiential environments, opposite to what a regular school subject offers. It seeks to permanently construct children's com-

municative repertoire, not just reach a target language, in addition to providing democratic access to quality educational spaces, while promoting interculturality. Within this framework, translanguaging as a pedagogy (García & Wei, 2018; Lasagabaster & García, 2014; Lewis et al., 2012) emerges as a suitable mediator. It is understood as the coexistence of two or more language varieties (Arias Castaño, 2017) that scaffolds and leverages cognitive development, promoting the growth and strategic use of the emergent bilinguals' repertoire.

Acknowledging the limitations of elementary school teachers' English proficiency and the difficulties in familiarizing them with translingual pedagogy and practice, the main researchers of this study designed a social extension project called *Translingualand*. It was implemented in 2023 as a non-formal bilingual education program in two public schools in Pereira, Colombia. The project was characterized by the following:

1. It consisted of a set of learning environments designed and conducted by students from a BA in Bilingualism.
2. It involved five 40-hour-long environments focused on teaching a specific art or skill (e.g., theater, crochet, etc.). It was implemented as an extracurricular program (conducted informally on Saturdays).
3. Translanguaging as a pedagogy was used as the main pedagogical approach.
4. It was offered to primary school students in Grades 3 through 5.

Three qualitative and descriptive works were the result of the first version of *Translingualand,* which was conducted virtually in 2021 (Bermúdez López et al., 2021; Patiño Osorio & Mejía Pérez, 2021; Zapata Zapata & Sánchez Morales, 2021). The authors found that the environments contributed to the construction and appropriation of students' linguistic repertoire, providing conditions for its unrestricted use. English and Spanish were used cooperatively, without causing interference or privileging one over the other, which facilitated communication and understanding of content in the weaker language. In addition, these works also provided information about the impact of the proposal on children's comprehensive development, including the aesthetic dimension, emotional intelligence, and interest in history. Such an impact on children's lifelong skills also raised our research interest in how these environments facilitate opportunities for comprehensive development.

Therefore, the purpose of our research was to study the potential of this proposal as a dynamic bilingual education alternative and a comprehensive development space for children in two public schools. First, we intended to determine how translanguaging could be implemented in a non-formal bilingual education proposal from a heteroglossic approach. Secondly, we aimed to identify which non-linguistic knowledge and skills have the potential to be developed in *Translingualand*. As for its significance, this study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (United Nations, 2015), whose pursuit is the assurance of inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. The question that led this research was: What is the potential of the *Translingualand* proposal as a bilingual education alternative and a comprehensive development space for students of two elementary schools in Pereira, Colombia?

Literature Review

Arias Castaño and Sánchez (2019) conducted a qualitative case study with undergraduate students from a bilingual education degree program in Colombia, aiming to systematize experiences of implementing translanguaging and content and language integrated learning as a dynamic bilingual pedagogy with 5th-grade students in two public schools. It was determined that there was both systematic and non-systematic use of the participants' languages to access content, develop their linguistic competence, activate prior knowledge, and facilitate the expression of meanings and knowledge. In the same line, Ortega (2019), in a reflection paper, described a classroom

experience in a Colombian high school where students were encouraged to use their entire linguistic repertoire to create meanings during discussions on institutional issues. He highlighted that there are few studies in this field in educational contexts, such as the Colombian one. The author coined the term "transculturalinguation" (*transculturalinguación* in Spanish) as an opportunity to transform pedagogical practices in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning setting. He draws on the concepts of plurilingualism and translanguaging as key to creating socially just environments for EFL in Colombia. The author advocates for the use of translanguaging as an important pedagogical resource in English learning settings in Colombia, particularly to foster writing.

At the international level, Pánchez-Jiménez (2021) conducted a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental, and correlational study, in which translanguaging was applied for six weeks during English classes at a private high school to improve the oral reading competence of 22 students. An oral reading test and a survey were used to gather students' experiences and perceptions of the translanguaging approach. It was found that translanguaging improved oral reading ability. Additionally, the experiences and perceptions of its application were positive. Translanguaging proved to be a useful tool, not only for learning content but also for leveraging, valuing, and utilizing students' prior knowledge in learning a new language. This study presents results and conclusions that support the use of translanguaging as an effective pedagogical practice for language learning, validating not only students' linguistic repertoire but also acknowledging the value of their context, cognition, prior knowledge, and culture.

Similarly, Canagarajah (2018) explored the consideration of spatiotemporal context in translanguaging practices to address this construct from a holistic, mobile, expansive, and situated perspective, in contrast to the structuralist paradigm. He based his research on a multiple-case qualitative study, using interviews and classroom recordings with international scholars from China, South Korea, and Türkiye. The researcher concludes that translanguaging accommodates practices that include expanded spatial repertoires and transcend social boundaries and text/context distinctions (in the case of our research, non-formal educational spaces). This article provides information on how translanguaging is approached, with a focus on spatial resources, moving away from pre-established rules and ways of communication toward the consideration of all communicative elements and how they vary depending on the context and its specific needs, the people interacted with, and intentions. Understanding all these components sheds light on how communicative phenomena involving interaction in two languages can be addressed in a translanguaging space, such as the one aimed to be developed with *Translingualand*.

Likewise, Infante and Licona (2018) investigated how translanguaging strategies, aligned with linguistically responsive teaching methods, scaffolded students' access to scientific knowledge in a U.S. English/Spanish middle school classroom. An ethnographic research design was employed, with a focus on classroom discourse analysis, utilizing observation and recordings of classroom interactions for data collection. The authors found that translanguaging served as an effective pedagogical strategy for helping emergent bilingual students engage with and understand complex scientific discourses. That is, the utilization of English and Spanish linguistic resources eased access to complex content. Also, translanguaging created a more equitable and participatory classroom environment.

Conceptual Framework

Our research is founded on a dynamic bilingual education framework, aligned with a heteroglossic ideology for bilingual education. These concepts are explained in this section, as opposed to the monoglossic approach and the additive framework, to establish the basis for what translanguaging is as a transformative pedagogy. Additionally, non-formal education modality

is defined, considering the nature of the proposal under our scrutiny.

Heteroglossic Approach

This research is grounded in a critical view of the reality of language learning in Colombia, considering that linguistic policies are permeated by frameworks of reference and approaches disjointed from the context (Correa & Usma, 2013), namely, the monoglossic ideology and the additive bilingual education framework. The monoglossic approach indicates that there is a prevalence over the development of just one of the two languages (Arias Castaño, 2017). This is reflected in policies and the prevailing notion that bilingualism in Colombia is exclusively associated with English, although the national constitution declares the country is multiethnic and multicultural (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991, art. 1). Consistent with this, an additive bilingual education framework is promoted, which conceives the learning of a second language as additional to the first, aiming for the personal enrichment of the individual. This framework advocates for the separation of languages and views the learner as two monolinguals in one (García, 2011).

In contrast, the heteroglossic approach differs from the diglossic relationship of languages as it takes into account the linguistic diversity of communities and recognizes the ecological and harmonious interaction of languages in the same context (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). From this perspective, a dynamic bilingual education framework is proposed. For García (2011), linguistic interactions occur at different levels and in various modalities, as if driving an off-road vehicle. According to this author, within this framework, "students are considered as a whole, their continued bilingualism is recognized, their bilingualism is seen as a resource, and transcultural identities are promoted" (p. 119). This concept is aligned with Bakhtin's (1981) conception of heteroglossia as the coexistence of multiple voices, registers, and discourses within a language. For him, language is dialogic, facilitating meaning-making through the encounter of various linguistic and ideological voices. From this perspective, language users are seen as emergent bilinguals. Arias Castaño (2017) and García and Kleifgen (2010) posit that this categorization regards the use of both languages as resources, considering their learning potential rather than their deficit. As bilinguals acquire an unknown linguistic system, they climb through levels of proficiency until they reach a certain goal.

Translanguaging as a Transformative Pedagogy

The heteroglossic approach is enacted through translanguaging, defined by Williams (2012, as cited in García & Wei, 2014) as "a distinct pedagogical theory and practice that varies the language of input and output, but with 'dual language' processing for deeper understanding" (p. 91). Baker (2011) notes that it involves the systematic, strategic, and conscious use of two languages in the classroom to stimulate students' cognitive development. For García and Wei (2018), "translanguaging refers to the human capacity of speakers to add and select different linguistic and semiotic characteristics to their communicative repertoire" (p. 3). Finally, Arias Castaño and Sánchez (2019) conceive it as "a bilingual pedagogy to foster students' processing of the content and understanding" (p. 364). As for this study, we regard translanguaging as a pedagogical practice that integrates the use of emergent bilinguals' communicative repertoire through scaffolding events. We also employ the concept as a didactic resource that mediates knowledge, used by instructors in a systematic, planned, conscious, strategic, and intentional manner, as Baker (2011) proposes.

The translingual environments are also framed within Cummins's (2000) conception of a transformative pedagogy, characterized by being critical, social, liberating, and collaborative. It seeks to "develop students' awareness of democratic ideals and give them the academic and critical literacy tools they will need for full participation" (p. 261). Those tools are provided

to develop students' linguistic repertoire, as conceived by García and Wei (2018), which is the dynamic use of all linguistic resources and multimodal expressions. Language is viewed as a semiotic system, which is the human capacity to "select and deploy" all linguistic and multimodal resources to communicate with others, beyond the limits imposed by dictionaries or defined language grammars by political and social norms.

As a non-formal initiative, the proposal breaks away from the constraints of the regular educational system, making it liberating, social, and collaborative—key characteristics of transformative pedagogy. The Colombian General Education Act of 1994 defines non-formal education as that which is offered to complement, update, supply knowledge, and provide instruction in academic or labor aspects without subjection to the system (Ley General de Educación, art. 36). Article 37 also declares that non-formal education promotes the personal development of individuals, the acquisition and reinforcement of national values, formation for artisanal, artistic, recreational, occupational, and technical activities, the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, and citizen and community participation.

Translingualand is also aligned with several specific objectives of primary basic education: (a) the development of basic communication skills, (b) the development of a critical spirit, (c) knowledge and exercise of the body, (d) the appropriate use of free time, (e) artistic formation, and (f) the acquisition of elements of conversation and reading at least in one foreign language, among others (Ley General de Educación, art. 21). Accordingly, *Translingualand* can be described as a non-formal learning proposal, mediated by translingual practices, grounded on a heteroglossic, dynamic education framework, for public primary schools' emergent bilinguals.

Method

The study was framed within a qualitative approach, which, based on Hernández Sampieri et al. (2010), aims to explore the perceptions and comprehension of social actors regarding their worldviews, which results in a definition of reality through the participants' and researchers' interpretations of their own experiences. Thus, Merriam (2009) proposes that qualitative researchers attempt to comprehend how people make sense of their experiences and build their viewpoints of the phenomena under study. Concerning this study, we intended to establish the potential opportunities of a proposal consisting of translingual learning environments offered as non-formal education in two public elementary schools. The focus is on developing specific disciplinary knowledge and skills while using the participants' linguistic repertoire.

We conducted a case study (Merriam, 2009) to deeply describe and analyze the object under study, which may include "a single person, a program, a group, an institution, a community" (p. 40). As the subjects share the same features, the case can be considered as a unit. Thus, *Translingualand* was set as a program to be studied as a case.

Participants and Context

This study took place in two public schools in Pereira, Colombia, located in low socioeconomic zones. The participants were, on the one hand, 63 elementary school students who belonged to Grades 3, 4, or 5, and on the other hand, nine preservice teachers from a BA in Bilingualism who had been previously prepared in the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy, and who took the role of instructors. The implementation of each proposed translingual environment was conducted as extracurricular activities, taking place on Saturday mornings for a total of 40 hours, divided into 20 sessions of two hours each.

Research Process

Table 1 provides a description of the different phases completed in the development of this study. Table 2 presents the various phases and stages that comprise the methodological procedure for implementing translingual environments in the two public schools.

Table 1. Description of the Research Phases

Phase	Description
Needs analysis	It was conducted based on the previous piloting of translingual environments created as graduation projects by Bermúdez López et al. (2021), Patiño Osorio and Mejía Pérez (2021), and Zapata Zapata and Sánchez Morales (2021). Those projects served as the basis for the identification and the decision-making of the gaps to be tackled through the *Translingualand* proposal.
Design	It comprised both the consolidation of the translingual environments intended for implementation in the two schools and the preparation of the instructors in charge of each environment, following their signing of an informed consent letter to participate in the project. Based on their abilities, instructors proposed a branch of knowledge or discipline to establish each translingual environment. They also received instruction from the main researcher on how to implement translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy for developing content tailored to each environment.
Implementation of the *Translingualand* proposal	The implementation of each translingual environment in the schools required a series of methodological stages (see Table 2).
Data collection	The methods used for collecting the data were observations, questionnaires, and artifacts.
Data analysis	The analysis was conducted using the software QDA Miner Lite Free™, following the procedures of qualitative content analysis.
Final report	Findings and conclusions were drawn based on the analysis of the data collected in light of the research questions.

Table 2. Methodological Elements That Intervened in the Development of the *Translingualand* Proposal

Phase	Stage	Description
Preparation	Promotion	It involved the design and distribution of promotional material and the publicity of the environments in the educational institutions.
	Registration	It required the student's registration in the environment of their interest and the parent's signature on consent forms.
Implementation	Planning and execution	These stages had to do with the instructional design of the sessions and the design and adaptation of physical and digital materials, as well as activities for reaching the learning objectives proposed for each environment in terms of rap, crochet, clay-modeling, reading, and theater, along with the participants' linguistic development (see Appendix).
	Closure	This stage involved organizing a closing event to socialize with the academic community, showcasing the products and exhibitions created by participants as a result of their participation in the formative environment.

Data Collection and Analysis

For data collection, non-participant observations, questionnaires, and artifacts were used. Each translingual environment was observed twice by a researcher to gather insights into the use of both languages (Spanish and English) in the context of the sessions, the linguistic and social interactions among participants, and the potential enactment of translanguaging within the pedagogical practices employed during the process. For such purposes, researchers used an observation form with some predefined points.

Questionnaires were used to collect the instructors' information about the children's linguistic samples, content appraisal, and skills developed throughout the sessions. The questionnaires were administered via Google Forms during the implementation phase, and they included open-ended questions that addressed the aforementioned elements.

Some artifacts, from both instructors and students, were also collected for validation purposes. These artifacts included worksheets, didactic materials, oral (through videos and audio recordings), and written productions of students.

The data were analyzed utilizing the software QDA Miner Lite Free™, following the procedures of qualitative content analysis (QCA) as proposed by Kuckartz (2019), in which the data were first prepared to form main categories corresponding to the questions and units of observation contained in the instruments. Then, those categories were used to code the data and identify any subcategories; finally, a category-based analysis was conducted. The categories defined for this study were aligned with the core themes of the specific objectives: translingual practices, linguistic repertoire, and a set of knowledge and skills. A prior QCA was made by each researcher for further comparison to validate the analysis and triangulate the data.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent letters were signed by the instructors and by the parents or tutors of the underage participants. The documents authorized us to collect their data, including photos and videos, audio recordings, and their transcription, as well as any artifacts resulting from the interactions within the context.

Researchers' Role

This study included three researchers (the authors of this paper). One of us was the main researcher, in charge of the needs analysis process, the design of the extension project that later derived into the current study, and the preparation of the instructors. The other two co-researchers were responsible for collecting data through non-participant observations. The three researchers collected and analyzed data from questionnaires and artifacts, narrowing down the categories for reporting the findings.

Findings

After the final QCA, two main categories emerged: (a) Translanguaging as an Instructional and Communicative Strategy and (b) Knowledge and Skills Developed Within the *Translingualand* Proposal.

Translanguaging as an Instructional and Communicative Strategy

The data give an account of the coexistence of Spanish and English in translingual environments. For this, the phenomenon of code-meshing was identified. This is understood as the integration of codes in bilingual spaces through the blending of different linguistic varieties, dialects, or languages within the same text or utterance for communicative or learning purposes (Canagarajah, 2011; Young & Martinez, 2011). In *Translingualand*, code-meshing was observed for scaffolding linguistic comprehension and production, as well as to establish fluent interactions among participants.

The excerpt below shows how participants of one of the translingual environments, whose focus was crochet, purposefully integrated both languages to communicate the intended message:

One child asks the instructor questions about the process to continue what they are knitting, and for this, she uses English purposefully to express crochet-related vocabulary, saying, for example: "Teacher, one triple crochet?", "Teacher, *¿hago* loops? [should I make loops?]", "Teacher, *¿aquí hago* three chains? [do I make three chains here?]", "Teacher, the magic ring." The teacher replied by making emphasis on these expressions, for example, "Yes, one triple crochet." (Observation, *Tejeland*[1] Translingual Environment)

It is evident that both the child and the instructor strategically employed Spanish and crochet-specific vocabulary in English as part of their linguistic repertoire to scaffold the language functions of following and verifying instructions, as well as for fluently maintaining the interaction with the interlocutor. It is important to highlight how the participants used Spanish and English for keeping communication while displaying appropriation of the content and skills relevant to the *Tejeland* environment, including specific vocabulary related to the discipline. In this regard, Ortega (2019) states that there must be space for students in Colombian contexts to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire to create meaning within the classroom. The author also suggests that the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy provides students in public Colombian schools with equitable opportunities to use their L1 as a tool to scaffold learning processes in a friendlier atmosphere.

Similarly, in another translingual environment whose focus was clay modeling, the participants utilized both languages to explain to the instructor how they made their craft:

When the instructor asked the participants about how they made the clay figurines, they answered using vocabulary related to geometric figures and colors in English:

Child 1: *Primero hice el* [first, I made the] circle and the square *para la cabeza y el cuerpo del futbolista* [for the soccer player's head and body].
Child 2: *Usé* [I used] green clay *para el bosque* [for the forest] of the bear. (Observation, Clay-Motion Translingual Environment)

Based on the data previously presented, it can be seen that the participants added to their linguistic repertoire vocabulary in English that is commonly used in the clay-modeling translingual environment. This helped them explain the process of creating the clay sculptures using Spanish and English in the same sentence. Along the same line, both instructors and children utilized utterances for addressing content development and interaction through the use of English and Spanish, while stimulating the use of the entire linguistic repertoire of the participants as follows:

The instructor uses words in English and Spanish in the same sentence: "*vamos a poner colbón al* [let's apply glue to the] support in this way *para pegarlo* [to paste it]." (Observation, Clay-Motion Translingual Environment)
After watching the video in English, one child expresses in Spanish what he understood from those instructions: "*Yo entendí que hay que hacer la forma de cocodrilo con la mano derecha para iniciar el nudo*" [I understood that you have to make the crocodile shape with your right hand to start the knot]. (Observation, Tejeland Translingual Environment)
The questions are in English. The participants read them and account for their understanding in Spanish. For example, Question 3 says, "What happened when Tommy touched the giant rainbow?" and a child repeats it in Spanish: "*¿Qué ocurrió cuando Tommy tocó el arcoiris?*" Also, the participants answer the questions in Spanish, including some words in English; for example, Question 4 says, "How did Tommy feel about his magical garden?" The children answer "*no dice, pero creemos que* [it is not mentioned, but we think] happy." (Observation, Active Readers Translingual Environment)

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1   The labels given to some of the environments, where Spanish and English are mixed, intentionally reflect the translingual aspect of the project. For instance, *Tejeland* comes from the Spanish word for "to knit" (*tejer*), mixed with the English word "land."

Data suggest that English and Spanish were used to help participants understand the content of the workshops planned for each translingual environment, by providing them with input in one language and allowing them to confirm or discuss their understanding in the other language. Thus, Arias Castaño and Sánchez (2019) argue that allowing for the use of languages in contact in the classroom might be beneficial for both content and language acquisition. The authors also suggest that translanguaging should be fostered to integrally develop processes in which languages and content are assembled to make sense of the knowledge presented. In our study, participants used translanguaging for the appropriation of content, for giving, verifying, and following instructions, and for the use of routine expressions during the sessions.

In this matter, for routine expressions that are more frequently used, instructors and participants activated their linguistic repertoire by selecting English for the enactment of speech acts, including praising, using commands, and expressing politeness, as presented in the following excerpts:

> Every time the children receive materials from the instructors, or they borrow them from their partners, they answer "thank you" or "thank you, teacher." One of the kids arrived late, hugged the instructor, said "sorry," and started explaining why he was late. (Observation, *Tejeland* Translingual Environment)
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> The instructor constantly expresses commands in English such as "be quiet," "pay attention," "silence," "ready?" as well as praising expressions such as "good job," "well done," "perfect," "very good," "fantastic." (Observation, Clay-Motion Translingual Environment)

The data confirm that the use of translanguaging is a significant factor in the instructional and interactional dynamics of the *Translingualand* proposal. It facilitates the scaffolding required for giving, verifying, and following instructions, for content development, and for expressing commands of politeness and praise. The use of translanguaging permits the fluent interaction of emergent bilinguals by accessing their entire linguistic repertoire to express intended ideas in determined communicative situations, while potentiating their linguistic development in both languages and the knowledge presented (Arias Castaño & Sánchez, 2019; Ortega, 2019).

Knowledge and Skills Developed Within the *Translingualand* Proposal

The *Translingualand* proposal enabled participants to acquire new knowledge in diverse areas and develop different skills. The acquired knowledge encompasses both generic and specific aspects of the discipline developed in each translingual environment. The skills range from cognitive, motor, and artistic elements.

Each translingual environment focused on a specific area, allowing participants to deepen their knowledge of this discipline. In the environment called "*Rapzonízate*,"[2] it was observed that most children were able to read and recognize the patterns they had written, demonstrating an understanding of structure and rhyme. In rap, there is a pattern of four lines, and at the end of each line, there is a word that leads the rhyme, corresponding to the structure "AAAA." In addition, there are patterns in which the lines do not rhyme consecutively, but alternately, thus obtaining the structure "ABAB." This knowledge is very specific to rap, and participants were able to identify both structures in their own rhymes, those of their peers, and those of the instructor. The following excerpts, from observation field notes and instructors' answers to the survey, give an account of this:

> One student reads his pattern, and his partners react by saying (in English) that it has a structure ABAB. The same situation occurs when the instructor reads his rhyme, the children say: "*el del profe es una* [the one from the teacher is a] pattern AAAA." (Observation, *Rapzonízate* Translingual Environment)

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2   The label *Rapzonízate* also comes from the merging of the two languages, using English for the word "rap" with a verb ending form from Spanish.

The children were able to understand the different types of rhymes and how to create them with different words and endings. They were also able to understand the concept of "tempo" and follow the tempo of any song. They understand and know how to use the concept of "patterns" within the discipline. (Survey, *Rapzonízate* Translingual Environment. Translated from Spanish)

The data show that the children demonstrated a development of knowledge proper to the rap discipline, which was evident in their ability to identify various rhyme types, create rhymes with diverse word choices and endings, and effectively recognize and utilize concepts such as tempo, patterns, and structures.

Similarly, and as a result of their participation in the *Translingualand* proposal, it was found that the children developed a wide range of creative, motor, technical, physical, cognitive, and artistic skills. The following excerpts, taken from the answers provided by the instructors in the survey, exemplify this:

The children developed skills regarding stop-motion film creation, story writing, role assignment, and fine motor skills enhancement through the creation of clay motion products for their films. (Survey, Clay-Motion Translingual Environment)

The enhancement of motor skills, breathing techniques, and body coordination was evident in the development of the sessions of this environment. (Survey, TheArtRoom Translingual Environment)

There is evidence of the development of manual skills, motor skills, fine motor skills, hand–eye coordination, manual coordination, and pattern following. (Survey, *Tejeland* Translingual Environment)

The participants improved their handwriting throughout the course, as their writing in general was more legible by the end of the course compared to the beginning. (Survey, Active Readers Translingual Environment)

It was revealed that this program had a significant impact on the comprehensive development of the partici-pants, particularly in areas such as fine and gross motor skills, hand–eye coordination, concentration, audiovisual creation, calligraphy, body awareness, and knowledge of various disciplines. In this fashion, translanguaging is demonstrated to be a transformative pedagogy for constructing students' holistic progress in which what is "built in L1 leverages the L2 development through the integration of content, thus learners are empowered in not only linguistic but also general knowledge repertoire" (Arias Castaño & Sánchez, 2019, p. 365). This aligns with the conceptions proposed by the Colombian General Education Act of 1994, which declares that non-formal education spaces should complement the knowledge and improvement of individuals while enhancing their capacity to display skills in areas such as crafts, arts, and recreation, among others. This way, this project contributes to the pursuit of quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities proposed by Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the research findings, which were intended to establish the potential of the *Translingualand* proposal as a bilingual education alternative and a comprehensive development space for students of two elementary schools in Pereira (Colombia), we conclude that it represents an opportunity in terms of translanguaging enactment and the appraisal of discipline-specific knowledge and some lifelong skills.

This study demonstrates how translanguaging is implemented, either through code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2011; Young & Martinez, 2011) or by using one language to present content and another language to comprehend the input or to produce oral or written texts. Additionally, the safe environment provided by the translingual spaces encourages children to use their linguistic repertoire for classroom routines or speech acts of politeness, thanking, or apologizing. This evidences a natural appropriation of new linguistic resources in English, freely selected by the speakers as a

manifestation of an emergent bilingualism process, in line with Arias Castaño (2017) and García and Kleifgen (2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of translanguaging can be an effective strategy for content assimilation, instruction dynamization, and stimulation of participants' linguistic repertoire, both in English and Spanish. In this matter, Pánchez-Jiménez (2021) found that, after the implementation of translanguaging in English lessons to improve students' reading comprehension, both teachers and students expressed positive perceptions towards translanguaging, suggesting that it creates a more favorable and meaningful learning environment. Furthermore, our findings agree with those of Infante and Licona (2018) in that the use of English and Spanish linguistic resources facilitated students' access to specialized content while providing a democratic classroom environment.

Moreover, it can be concluded that the *Translingualand* proposal provided opportunities for the participants' acquisition of specific knowledge about the proposed disciplines, and the development of cognitive, motor, and artistic skills. In this regard, Pánchez-Jiménez (2021) suggests that translanguaging can offer valuable classroom strategies since it transcends a simple focus on content acquisition by incorporating students' prior knowledge, leveraging it as a foundation for acquiring a new language. This also aligns with the characteristics of non-formal education spaces (as defined in Article 36 of the Colombian General Law of Education), which involve the development of practical skills and supplementing knowledge in spaces aside from the formal system of grades.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the project requires in-depth preparation in the didactic strategies for the instructors. Additionally, from a methodological standpoint, challenges were identified, including a decrease in children's attendance and a lack of consistent support from educational institutions during some phases of the intervention. It is concluded that logistical aspects require the involvement of different stakeholders to ensure continuous and consistent support throughout all phases of the project, thus maximizing the development of knowledge and skills in the participants. We also identified a need to complement the design of the study with a quantitative approach to corroborate language achievement with figures that consolidate the impact of the proposal.

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About the Authors

Sandro Alfonso Echeverry holds an MA in Linguistics from Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, Colombia. He is currently a full-time professor at the BA in Bilingualism with an Emphasis on the English Language at the same university. His research interests are translanguaging, teacher education, and bilingual education.

Angélica Arcila holds an MA in Education from Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, Colombia. She is currently a full-time professor at the BA in Bilingualism with an Emphasis on the English Language at the same university. Her research interests include bilingual education, language didactics, and pedagogical practices.

Dany Andrés Hoyos holds an MA in Bilingual Education from Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, Colombia. He is currently a full-time professor at the BA in Bilingualism with an Emphasis on the English Language at the same university. His research interests include bilingual education, translanguaging, and pedagogical practices.

Appendix: *Translingualand* Formative Environments Planning Sheet

Section	Description
Heading	**Name of the environment:** *Tejeland* **Name of the instructors:**
Introduction	Through *Tejeland*, children participating in the activities will develop new motor skills related to crochet. Through this workshop, learners, in addition to learning crochet techniques, will also acquire an additional language, in this case English, without abandoning their native language. The project consists of 16 weeks of ongoing practice. The methodology is 15% theoretical and 85% practical.
Specific objectives	**Linguistic objective:** At the end of this workshop, learners will have a broader linguistic repertoire related to the discipline of crochet, for instance: • Magic ring • Stitch • Chain • Single crochet • Double crochet • Slip stitch • Yarn • Crochet hook • Scissors • Yarn needle • Make the magic ring • Make six single crochets • Put two single crochets in each stitch • Make one double crochet in the same stitch **Formative objective on the specific discipline:** Learners will get familiar with the techniques required for crocheting to create figures and/or items such as hats, gloves, animals, among others. **Attitudinal and/or personal objective(s):** Learners will learn to positively manage their anxiety and frustration levels, as well as overcome their fear of speaking in front of others, gaining high levels of confidence in their personalities.
Methodology	**Total implementation in hours and weeks:** The workshop will last 16 weeks, two hours per week. **Dynamics of using English and Spanish in the sessions:** Both Spanish and English will be used in a flexible and natural manner, prioritizing Spanish as the children's native language to ensure comprehension and confidence. Meanwhile, the integration of English will be done through keywords or simple phrases related to crochet and everyday classroom routines. This will encourage the exposure to English in a meaningful context. This allows for inclusive learning, where both languages are valued as communicative resources without forcing the use of English, but rather leveraging its functional use during practical activities. **Schedule:** Saturday mornings. **Required materials:** Crochet yarn, crochet hooks, a yarn needle, a crochet marker, a notebook, and a pencil. **Conditions for parents:** Parents must agree to drop off and pick up their children at the school. They must also attend the initial meeting with the workshop members. They must also provide food for the children during the workshop (if needed) and the necessary workshop materials. **Registration procedures:** A survey must be completed to register for the crochet workshop and then confirm attendance a few days before the workshop begins.

Work plan	**Week 1:** Introduction to crochet, presentation of the tools (yarn, crochet hooks, tapestry needle)
	Week 2: Basic crochet exercises (magic ring, chain stitch, double crochet, half crochet, single crochet, slip stitch)
	Weeks 3–9: Making crochet figures (hearts, flowers, animals)
	Weeks 10–11: Choosing the final product for the final exhibition (25% progress)
	Weeks 12–13: 50% progress on the final product
	Weeks 14–15: Having the final product ready and rehearsing the presentation
	Week 16: Final presentation to the educational community and closing of the project
Follow up and control	At the end of each session, photographic evidence of the products the apprentices create during each workshop will be collected. The instructors will also evaluate the children's progress in English and their satisfaction with the classes through surveys they will complete each month.