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Translanguaging as an official support measure for newly arrived students in Sweden

Carles Fuster ^a, Sofia Antera ^b and Brendan Munhall^c

^aSchool of Education, Culture and Communication, Mälardalen University, Vasteras, Sweden; ^bDepartment of Medical Sciences, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden; ^cDepartment of Education, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses interviews to explore translanguaging practices and views in *Study Tutoring in the Mother Tongue* (ST). ST is an internationally rare and under-researched support measure typically offered to newly arrived students in Swedish education. It is often referred to as 'a space for translanguaging' because in ST students meet a tutor proficient in their L1 to discuss subject matter using the L1 in alternation with L2 Swedish. 'Translanguaging' originally referred to a specific pedagogical strategy of language alternation but can now refer to either the framework of *spontaneous translanguaging* or that of *pedagogical translanguaging*. Spontaneous translanguaging is about encouraging in the classroom multilingual speech used in everyday communication. Pedagogical translanguaging, on the other hand, refers to various types of planned instructional strategies that alternate or compare languages to teach content and language more efficiently. This study indicates that, in ST, spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging take place next to each other and cannot be seen as complete dichotomies. The tutors, however, view spontaneous translanguaging as a scaffolding means that should decrease over time. The tutors also use some crosslinguistic instructional strategies, but would benefit from receiving training so as to implement pedagogical translanguaging in a more planned and varied manner.

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Swedish as a second language; multilingual education; minority-language students; immigrant students; study tutoring in the mother tongue; pedagogical translanguaging

Introduction

Multilingualism has become more widespread socially and geographically in recent decades due to the increased globalisation and mobility of people. Within education, schools in many parts of the world are more linguistically diverse than in the past because students often have a range of different languages as their home language (L1). In many cases, the number of languages in the curriculum has also increased and now includes not only the majority language and a foreign language (typically English) but also an additional foreign language (e.g. Spanish, German, French) and/or minority languages that have gained recognition (e.g. Māori, isiXhosa, Catalan). In education, there is therefore a rapidly growing interest in moving away from what Cummins (2007) has called 'the monolingual solitudes' and in developing multilingual approaches that harness the knowledge students possess in all their languages when teaching content and languages (e.g. Gartziarena and Villabona 2022; Paulsrud, Juvonen, and Schalley 2023).

One the most frequently used concepts today in the discussion of how to soften the boundaries between languages in education is 'translanguaging'. 'Translanguaging' originally referred to a

CONTACT Carles Fuster  carles.fuster@mdu.se

specific pedagogical strategy of language alternation in Welsh schools (Williams 1994) but can nowadays refer to either of two influential frameworks that have developed the concept into different directions over the past decade. Following Cenoz and Gorter's (2017) terminology, we refer to García and colleagues' framework from the United States (US) (e.g. García and Sánchez 2022) as 'spontaneous translanguaging' and to Cenoz and Gorter's (e.g. 2022a) from the Basque Country as 'pedagogical translanguaging'.

The framework of *spontaneous translanguaging* is about encouraging multilingual forms of speech often used informally in everyday communication within the classroom. This type of multilingual speech, called 'code-switching' by many scholars, has traditionally been viewed negatively and discouraged in school. In spontaneous translanguaging, the idea is that multilingual speech in the classroom will give visibility to all students' languages as well as increase student participation. *Pedagogical translanguaging*, on the other hand, expands Williams (1994) original conceptualisation of translanguaging as a planned pedagogical strategy by proposing more types of strategies that alternate or compare languages at certain moments in the lesson to teach content and language (see also Cummins 2021, 313–367, for a review of crosslinguistic instructional initiatives implemented over the last 30 years).

This paper explores translanguaging in the context of *Study Tutoring in the Mother Tongue* (ST), an internationally rare and under-researched support measure in Swedish education that scholars usually refer to as a 'space for translanguaging' (e.g. Dávila and Bunar 2020; Reath Warren 2021). ST is offered to students who risk failing one or several subjects due to a low level of proficiency in L2 Swedish, typically newly arrived students,¹ for whom ST was made mandatory in 2018. According to the Compulsory School Ordinance [2011, 184], where ST is regulated, in ST students should meet a tutor proficient in their L1 to discuss subject matter using the L1 in alternation with L2 Swedish. The goal of such a translanguaging approach is to enhance subject learning and L2 Swedish acquisition (ibid.), but the policy does not specify how the languages should be alternated or how alternating them will enhance learning.

To explore translanguaging practices and views in ST, we analyse interviews with ten tutors working in different schools. Unlike previous studies that usually choose either spontaneous or pedagogical translanguaging as their theoretical framework, we take both frameworks into account and consider whether tutors' practices and views may align more with either one. The results are particularly relevant for developing pedagogical practices and guidelines in ST but can also be of relevance to studies of translanguaging in other contexts.

Before the analyses, the next section provide an overview of language education and ST in Sweden. After this overview, we present the frameworks of spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging (see also Fuster and Bardel 2024, for a comprehensive review).

Multilingual education and study tutoring in Sweden

Sweden has been considered one of the international role models of minority L1 education since its Home Language Reform in 1977 (Cummins and Lainio 2023). Traditionally a relatively homogeneous country, over the past 50 years Sweden has witnessed a rapid surge of immigration, particularly between 2010 and 2020, and become one of the most heterogeneous Western countries linguistically (Fuster and Bardel 2024). From 13% in 1995, the percentage of people with a 'foreign background' (i.e. born abroad or with two parents born abroad) has increased to 27% (Sweden Statistics 2024). Besides 'the principal language' Swedish, Finnish, Meänkieli, Sami, Romani Chib and Yiddish are recognised as 'national minority languages' since 2000 (Language Act [2009:600]). A special status is also given to Swedish Sign Language (see Salö and Milani 2023). The endangered Elfdalian is considered a Swedish dialect by the Swedish authorities despite encouragements from the Council of Europe and linguists to recognise it as a language. Alongside these languages, about 200 immigrant languages are spoken in the country (Swedish Institute for Languages and Folklore

2024). English plays an extremely important role, omnipresent in the society and in practice a second rather than foreign language (see Bardel, Falk, and Lindqvist 2013).

While until the 1970s minorities were approached from an assimilationist perspective, since the 1970s there has been a shift towards pluralism in ideology and policy (Ganuza and Hyltenstam 2020). In 1977, the Home Language Reform established the right for all schoolchildren to study their L1, introducing the optional subject of Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) and the support measure of ST (Avery 2017). In MTI, students study any national or immigrant minority language that they speak at home (see Alisaari et al. 2023). A weakness, however, is that if a student speaks several L1s, they can only choose one of them. As presented above, moreover, ST was introduced for students with an insufficient level of proficiency in Swedish as a support measure in which they meet a tutor who speaks their L1 to discuss subject matter alternating between the L1 and Swedish. Yet, in practice not all students who need ST receive it, since this is decided at the local, school level. Probably, since 2018, when ST was made mandatory for newly arrived students (Chapter 3, Section 12 i, Education Act [2010, 800]), most students who receive ST are newly arrived students. Internationally, ST is extremely rare, but it may be compared to ‘bilingual teaching assistants’ in the UK or ‘bilingual paraeducators’ in the US, who also help students with subject matter drawing on their L1s but who, unlike tutors in Sweden, work outside the school planning (Kakos 2022). In addition to MTI and ST, Swedish as a Second Language has existed in different forms² since 1980 as an alternative subject to Swedish (see Hedman and Magnusson 2021). When it comes to foreign languages, English is mandatory, while Modern Languages (a foreign language after English) is optional (see Bardel, Gyllstad, and Tholin 2023). As Fuster and Bardel (2024) highlight, a central goal of the Swedish education system today is thus to support and promote all students’ multilingualism.

Most research related to students who speak Swedish as an L2 has focused on the subjects of either MTI or Swedish as a Second Language and only mentioned ST incidentally (Munhall, Antera, and Fuster *forthcoming*). Research on ST exists mainly since 2018 and is still in its initial phases. Taken together, studies on ST have focused on the working conditions of tutors and shown that while they play a crucial role for newly arrived students, being described as ‘language bridges’ between the students and their learning, ST also suffers from several problems related to a low status and vague guidelines (e.g. Munhall 2024; Rosén, Straszer, and Wedin 2019; Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2017).

Not being a subject, ST is not mentioned in the curriculum, but only regulated briefly in the Compulsory School Ordinance [2011, 184]. Tutors therefore have much freedom in defining their own pedagogical role, but this freedom also means that they often feel they work with poorly defined responsibilities and a lack of resources to collaborate with teachers (e.g. Dávila 2018; Munhall, Antera, and Fuster *forthcoming*; Reath Warren 2017; Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2017). Most studies indeed emphasise that teachers and tutors usually do not collaborate enough for ST to be as efficient as it could (e.g. Dávila and Bunar 2020; Sheikhi 2019; Wedin, Rosén, and Straszer 2017). Collaboration between teachers and tutors is fundamental because it provides tutors with information about the specific needs the student has. Roux Sparreskog (2023) finds that tutor-teachers collaborations are often hierarchical ones in which teachers mostly give tutors simple tasks such as translating texts. Antera and colleagues (*forthcoming*) highlight the paradoxical discrepancy between tutors’ peripheral position in school and the high complexity of ST, which requires tutors to possess a large combination of competencies, from knowledge across subjects, to a high level of linguistic awareness in both Swedish and the student’s L1. Tutors, however, have often not lived in Sweden for long, and around 80% lack a university degree in a pedagogical subject (Swedish National Agency for Education 2024).

Finally, while most scholars refer to ST as a space for translanguaging, it is surprising that only a few studies have focused on how the student’s L1 and Swedish are alternated in ST. Describing potential ways of working in ST, Gareis, Oxley, and Reath Warren (2020) emphasise the importance of giving students a metalanguage to talk about languages, since in ST there will ideally be many

conversations about the L1 and Swedish. Yet, from Wedin, Rosén and Straszer's (2017) analysis in one of the only studies discussing tutors' language practices, it seems that tutors may not engage in such metalinguistic conversations to any great extent. Rather, their translanguaging practices might consist mainly in providing translations. When working in the subject classroom, the tutors in Wedin, Rosén, and Straszer (2017) would often sit next to the student and whisper translations of the teacher's explanations (see also Rosén, Straszer, and Wedin 2020). Similarly, when outside the subject classroom, they would often go through a text and translate it into the L1. A challenge, Wedin, Rosén, and Straszer (2017) note, is that tutors often lack subject-specific concepts in either Swedish or the student's L1.

Before exploring the translanguaging practices and views of the tutors in this study, the following section presents an overview of the frameworks of spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging.

Translanguaging, spontaneous or pedagogical

'Translanguaging' is nowadays used in varying ways by different scholars. As explained by Fuster and Bardel (2024), the varied uses of the term can generally be understood as related to the language situation in different societies and education systems. In monolingual education systems that only include the majority language in the curriculum, translanguaging typically has a more social character and aims to empower minority students by encouraging the use of communicative practices that contain elements from minority languages (e.g. García and Sánchez 2022). At the same time, in multilingual education systems that also include a regional minority language such as Welsh, normalising multilingual speech in school may pose a threat to the vitality of the minority language (Jones and Lewis 2014). Therefore, in multilingual education systems translanguaging may instead focus on crosslinguistic instructional strategies to enhance language and content learning (e.g. Cenoz and Gorter 2022a; Williams 2002).

Original use of 'translanguaging'

The Welsh term *trawsieithu* – translated as 'translanguaging' by Colin Baker (2000) – was first used by Cen Williams (1994) in his doctoral thesis to refer to a planned pedagogical strategy of language alternation in English-Welsh schools that were aimed at revitalising Welsh. In these schools, L1 English and L1 Welsh students were in the same class and the goal was to promote a high level of proficiency in both English (the dominant language) and Welsh (the minority language). Williams (2002) explains that one of the major challenges in these schools in their early days was the shortage of Welsh textbooks. To tackle this problem, a few teachers used English material and then dealt with the topic in Welsh. For example, the information could be presented to students using an English-medium television programme and the ensuing discussion was entirely in Welsh. Williams (1994) labelled this strategy 'translanguaging' and defined it as 'receiving information using our passive language skills (listening and reading)' in one of the languages and then 'us[ing] the information using our active language skills (talking and writing)' in the other language (2002, p. 42). The idea was that students would learn the equivalent terminology in both languages and thus develop a more balanced bilingualism. Additionally, translanguaging would enhance subject learning because discussing a topic in one language and then expressing it in another requires that the subject matter is thoroughly understood or 'digested' (Baker 2000, 105).

Spontaneous translanguaging

Later, 'translanguaging' became widely known internationally as García (2009), focusing on English-Spanish bilingual Latino³ students in the US, redefined it to refer to *spontaneous multilingual speech* often used in everyday communication (45). An example of these multilingual forms of speech is the so-called 'Spanglish' in the US (45), which can refer to English-Spanish code-switching

or to the locally spoken non-standard varieties of English with many features of Spanish or vice versa. In this new definition, ‘translanguaging’ refers to the same practice that many scholars call ‘code-switching’ but implies a different perspective. While code-switching assumes partly separate languages that are systematically alternated or combined, translanguaging wants to take the speaker’s internal point of view and considers ‘languages’ as part of one single unitary linguistic repertoire (but see Auer 2022; Bhatt and Bolonyai 2022, for criticisms of translanguaging as a counter-notion of code-switching). García (2009) says that translanguaging refers to ‘the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features [...] of what are described as autonomous languages in order to maximise communicative potential’ (140).

García (2009) discusses how bilingual education in the US has faced criticism in recent decades, often accused of ‘ghettoizing’ bilingual Latino students, and how most minority-language students now attend English-only education programmes. To make space for minority languages, García and colleagues adopt a postcolonial perspective and consider the notion of ‘languages’ as socio-political ‘inventions’ that marginalise speakers of non-standard language forms like ‘Spanglish’ (Wei and García 2022). They argue that multilingual people ‘do not speak *languages*’ (García and Kleyn 2016, 19, emphasis added), but engage in ‘discursive practices that cannot easily be assigned to one or another [...] language’ (García and Wei 2014, 22), to ‘make sense of their bilingual worlds’ (García 2009, 45).

With this perspective, García and colleagues acknowledge the need for students to develop competence in standard languages but argue that education would be *more socially just* if teachers ‘put [students’ translanguaging – and not languages –] at the center of their schooling experience’ (García and Sánchez 2022, 1). Spontaneous translanguaging is primarily an ideological framework, but in practice the idea is to *encourage multilingual speech in the classroom*. García and Kleyn (2016) propose that students could often be grouped according to their speech practices at home so they can use a greater number of features from their linguistic repertoire. García and colleagues see spontaneous translanguaging in education not only as the way towards a more socially just education, but also expect it to increase student participation in class and consequently enhance content learning (García and Lin 2017).

Pedagogical translanguaging

While García and colleagues’ spontaneous translanguaging is inspiring many scholars worldwide, Cenoz and Gorter (2017) in the Basque Country (BC) have called for caution because encouraging multilingual speech in school could have a negative effect on the vitality of minority languages in some contexts (see Fuster and Bardel 2024, for a summary of other concerns about spontaneous translanguaging). Cenoz and Gorter propose a type of translanguaging that is *intentionally planned by the teacher* and has a pedagogical aim.

The BC refers to the territory where Basque is spoken and straddles the border between Spain and France in the western Pyrenees. Basque is a language of unknown origin, historically oppressed, classified as ‘potentially vulnerable’ by the UNESCO (2024) and always spoken as a minority language, alongside either Spanish or French. In the Spanish side of the BC, where the education system includes both the majority language and Basque, teachers are worried that encouraging spontaneous translanguaging in class could damage Basque (Arocena, Cenoz, and Gorter 2015). Cenoz and Gorter (2017) explain that due to the historical oppression of Basque, in informal communication, Bascophones often insert many Spanish/French features in Basque but very few Basque features in Spanish/French. Therefore, encouraging spontaneous translanguaging could be a stepping-stone for students to use Spanish even more, weakening Basque in the long run.

Against this background, in their framework of pedagogical translanguaging, Cenoz and Gorter (e.g. 2017, 2022) propose a multilingual perspective on education that is compatible with efforts to sustain and strengthen vulnerable minority languages like Basque. They argue that a condition to implement sustainable translanguaging is to *allocate ‘breathing spaces’* (Fishman 1991) (e.g. a

classroom) for the minority language, where it can be the only language spoken and ‘breathe’ from the majority language. Even when only one language is used for communication in the classroom, a multilingual perspective can be adopted by alternating or comparing languages at certain moments of the lesson (Cenoz and Gorter 2017). Cenoz and Gorter maintain Williams’ definition of translanguaging as a *planned, crosslinguistic, pedagogical strategy* but expand it by proposing more types of strategies.

Besides *alternating languages for input and output* as proposed by Williams (1994), Cenoz and Gorter (e.g. 2017, 2022) propose that teachers design pedagogical activities to raise students’ linguistic awareness and language awareness. *Raising linguistic awareness* refers to activities that highlight similarities and differences between ‘elements of [students’] different languages [...] at different levels (phonetic, lexical, morphosyntactic, pragmatic, discursive)’ (Cenoz and Gorter 2023a, 191) (see Cenoz and Gorter 2014, 248, for an example with Basque and French). As Fuster (2022) explains, the idea of ‘activat[ing] [...] the pre-existing knowledge that students have in their multilingual repertoire’ (Cenoz and Gorter 2022, 43) is to help students find opportunities to use strategic transfer across languages, as well as to help them avoid instances of unintentional transfer (Fuster and Neuser 2021). *Raising language awareness*, meanwhile, refers to designing activities to make students aware of language issues in society, such as power differentials between languages. As an example, Cenoz and Gorter (2023b) propose that students could be asked to reflect on the linguistic landscape of their city and why some languages take more space than others.

Research questions

As seen in the previous sections, ‘translanguaging’ can refer to different ways of softening the boundaries between languages in education. Spontaneous translanguaging proposes to normalise multilingual speech in class, while pedagogical translanguaging proposes teachers design various types of instructional activities in which languages are alternated or compared. Study Tutoring in the Mother Tongue (ST) in Sweden is often referred to as a ‘space for translanguaging’ because in ST students meet a tutor proficient in their L1 to work on subject matter alternating between the L1 and L2 Swedish. However, while ST has become more common as the percentage of newly arrived students has increased, language practices in ST remain little understood. To explore how translanguaging is being implemented in ST, we analyse interviews with ten tutors on their use of languages with newly arrived students. To guide the analysis, we formulated the following research questions:

- (1) What do tutors’ translanguaging practices look like in ST?
- (2) What do their practices reveal about their translanguaging views?
- (3) Are tutors’ translanguaging practices and views more in line with spontaneous translanguaging or with pedagogical translanguaging?

Methodology

Informants

The ten tutors worked in different regions of Sweden and were reached through an open call posted on social media. Table 1 presents an overview including (1) their fictive names, (2) the languages, besides Swedish, that they tutored through, (3) the years they had been working at schools and (4) the subjects they taught in (if any). The tutors had lived in Sweden for two to 15 years and they all spoke the minority language that they tutored through as their L1. As shown in the table, there is wide variation in the number of years they had been working at schools. Eight tutors had a university degree, while the other two had an upper-secondary education degree. Apart from Swedish courses for adult immigrants that they might have taken, Mateo and Zara were the only two tutors who had studies from Sweden. They followed a complementary teacher education programme at a Swedish university and were the only two tutors who had a teacher qualification. Besides working in

Table 1. Overview of tutors.

Fictive name	Years as tutor	Total N students in ST	Educational level	Tutoring language besides Swedish	Other teaching roles (if any)
Mateo	4	6	Master's degree in Spanish and English (+ Swedish teacher qualification in Spanish)	Spanish	MTI, Modern Languages
Antoni	15	4	Master's degree Polish	Polish	MTI
Emilia	1	17	Upper secondary education	German	
Ahmed	<1	5	Upper secondary education	Somali	
Laura	4	5	Bachelor's degree Journalism	Spanish	MTI
Zara	9	5	Bachelor's degree Mathematics (+ Swedish teacher qualification in Mathematics)	Arabic	MTI
Paula	8	7	Bachelor's level (different courses)	Spanish	MTI
Aaliyah	4	4	Master's degree Chemistry	Arabic	MTI, Maths
Hanna	4	10	Master's degree English	Polish	MTI
Mary	<1	15	Master's level (different courses)	English	

ST, seven tutors also taught in MTI and two of them in Mathematics or Modern Languages. As they stated in the interviews, none of them had received specific training on ST.

Data collection and analysis

The data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews online. The interview guide was designed for a project focused on working conditions and professional competencies in ST (Antera, Fuster, and Munhall [forthcoming](#); Munhall, Antera, and Fuster [forthcoming](#)). However, during these interviews, the tutors also provided valuable insights regarding the use of multiple languages in ST, which we focus on in this paper.

The data were analysed through thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke (2021). Through a review of the interview transcripts, codes were created relating to aspects such as 'time management', 'professional training' and 'language use', which were then organised into themes. For the present paper on translanguaging, we focus on excerpts connected to the 'language use' code. In these excerpts, we sought to identify key ideas from the frameworks of spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging, such as whether multilingual speech was a common practice and the crosslinguistic instructional strategies the tutors employed.

Results

Two major themes can be identified in connection to translanguaging practices and views in the interviews. One of the themes is that spontaneous translanguaging is seen as a necessary practice with newly arrived students to enhance communication and content learning, but that it should decrease over time in favour of using Swedish-only. The other theme is that newly arrived students' L1s should ideally be used as an instructional strategy to enhance L2 Swedish and content learning, rather than as the language for communication. Before reporting on these themes, it should be noted that although tutors in Sweden sometimes work within subject classes sitting next to a student who needs support, the tutors in this study all worked with small groups of students in a designated classroom, before or after the subject classes. Additionally, all of their students were newly arrived students.

The tutors engage in spontaneous translanguaging but view it as a temporary scaffolding tool

All of the tutors reported engaging in a form of spontaneous translanguaging while at the same time trying to increase the use of Swedish. Given that their newly arrived students do not always speak

much Swedish, the tutors perceive it as inevitable to use the L1, together with elements from Swedish, as a scaffolding tool to maximise communication and enhance content learning. This form of speech can be aligned with the communicative practices that contain features of what are described as autonomous languages which García and colleagues call ‘translanguaging’. However, while the tutors view it as necessary to engage in spontaneous translanguaging, they also conceptualise ST as fundamentally aimed at helping students speak standard Swedish. Therefore, most of them report intentionally trying to increase the use of Swedish and gradually decrease that of spontaneous translanguaging as students’ proficiency in L2 Swedish increases.

For example, reflecting on the difference between her professional role in Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) and ST, Zara explains that while in MTI the language of instruction should be the L1 (i.e. the target language), in ST it should be Swedish, or a form of ‘easy Swedish’. According to Zara, in ST the L1 should ideally be used not as a language of instruction, but judiciously, as a scaffolding tool to teach subject-specific Swedish concepts.

Zara: In MTI the language that applies is the mother tongue – Arabic, English or whatever. But in ST the mother tongue should be a *tool* to help the student reach the grading criteria in each subject [...] I believe that ST should be a support [measure] mostly in Swedish or, let’s say, easy Swedish. The mother tongue can come up as a *tool* to help students understand more concepts, specific words for each subject.

Similarly, Mary explains that it is useful to provide translations of new concepts into L1 English, but emphasises that she tries to use Swedish, rather than L1 English, as the language of instruction. As she explains, she tries not to get ‘carried away’ speaking English because the ultimate goal of ST is to help students speak Swedish. Like Zara, Mary says that L1 English should be used as a ‘tool’ to mediate understanding rather than as a language of instruction.

Mary: I often have to really remind myself: the aim is Swedish; the aim is Swedish. Because I start talking about a concept in English and then I can get carried away giving them a lesson in English, which is not the goal [of ST]. The goal [of ST] is to give them the tool – the word [in the L1] – to understand a text in Swedish and to start speaking Swedish.

With regards to using the L1 as a scaffolding tool to mediate understanding of new Swedish concepts, an important point highlighted by several tutors is that speaking a language as an L1 does not in and of itself imply familiarity with advanced subject-specific concepts in that language. Ahmed, for example, pinpoints this in the following extract.

Ahmed: Just because it is your mother tongue doesn’t mean you know mathematical concepts in it or that you can write a formal text.

Zara elaborates on this point, saying that when students do not know concepts in either the L1 or Swedish, a more detailed explanation of the concept, and not only a translation or cross-linguistic comparison, is needed, in the L1 and L2 Swedish.

Zara: Sometimes of course we get words that they don’t know in the mother tongue either. Then you need to give a longer explanation. You give an explanation in Arabic, but also in Swedish, in the two languages. What is *photosynthesis*? What is a *chemical reaction* of something?

As Antera and colleagues ([forthcoming](#)) highlight in an article about professional competencies for tutors, tutors thus need not only to speak the student’s L1 and Swedish but also to have at least a basic subject knowledge across all school subjects.

Yet, while all the tutors express this perception that Swedish, rather than the L1, should *ideally* be the language of instruction in ST, they also explain that engaging in spontaneous translanguaging with elements from the L1 and Swedish is necessary because many students cannot yet speak much Swedish. The tutors appear to consider that using both languages in an integrated manner maximises communication and enhances content learning, as also envisioned by García and colleagues in their framework of spontaneous translanguaging. The tutors explain that they initially talk to the

students mostly in the L1, but ‘filling in Swedish [words] here and there’, and gradually decrease the use of the L1 and increase that of Swedish. Two examples in which this is expressed are the following quotations by Zara and Aaliyah.

- Zara: In this case [of a student who has arrived very recently and cannot yet speak much Swedish] I start with Arabic, and fill in Swedish here and there, until I feel that the student understands me more. In the beginning you need to combine [the L1 and Swedish] so that they can understand [the content] and at the same time learn more and more Swedish. Then I can start switching more and more to Swedish.
- Aaliyah: Those who start with us as newly arrived and, we can say, have only spent one week in Sweden, they know nothing in Swedish. In this case ST must be done in their mother tongue at the beginning. But I also explain things in Swedish, slowly, more and more, so that they will also hear Swedish. [...] Mostly mother tongue in the beginning, and then more and more Swedish and less Arabic.

The ultimate goal of ST, as Mateo expresses in the following example by referring to how students will or will not ‘progress’, is to help students learn to speak standard Swedish, or ‘Swedish only’.

- Mateo: With newly arrived students it is of course Spanish in principle, but I also try so that we speak more Swedish every time, because otherwise they won’t progress [...] So I try to make them speak more and more Swedish only, as they learn to speak more in Swedish.

In sum, the tutors engage in spontaneous translanguaging as a scaffolding tool that they consider particularly beneficial to maximise communication and enhance content learning when students’ level of proficiency in L2 Swedish is still low. They emphasise, however, viewing spontaneous translanguaging as a *temporary* form of support that should decrease over time in favour of using more Swedish. They emphasise that ideally the L1 should be used judiciously, at certain moments, as a tool to teach and learn Swedish more quickly. As discussed next, this view of using the L1 as an instructional resource is clearly in line with the perspective in pedagogical translanguaging.

The tutors use pedagogical translanguaging but in a rather unplanned and limited manner

Taking the interviews together, the tutors report making use of several languages as an instructional strategy in their study sessions in the following ways: (1) creating multilingual glossaries for students, (2) providing explanations of Swedish morphosyntactic functions and vocabulary in the L1, (3) making lexical and morphosyntactic crosslinguistic comparisons and (4) providing translations of Swedish words and sentences into the L1.

Emilia and Zara were the only tutors who reported using multilingual glossaries for students to fill in. As illustrated in the following extract from Zara’s interview, they use this strategy especially when students have started working on a new subject area with many subject-specific concepts in Swedish that teachers may not necessarily have discussed in depth.

- Emilia: When it’s a completely new area, I work a little more intensively with it and first explain it in German and then I give them a glossary with the new concepts in Swedish where they can write the German translations next to them. I think that getting the concepts is really important and I try to prioritise this. They fill in the glossary and then they can use it as a help when reading and writing texts.

One of the most frequent crosslinguistic strategy was to switch to the L1 to provide explanations of morphosyntactic functions in Swedish and compare them with the equivalent L1 functions. Laura, for instance, often provides an explanation of difficult morphosyntactic functions in Swedish using L1 Spanish to ‘make it clearer’. For example, in Swedish the main verb is placed in the second position of the sentence. When there is, for instance, an adverb in the first position, the main verb is placed directly after it, preceding the subject. It is interesting to note that Laura mentions

contrasting this Swedish morphosyntactic function not only with her student's L1 Spanish but also with L2 English, which her students can also speak.

Laura: A common difficulty in Swedish that I often explain is that the verb moves in front [of the subject] if there is something in the beginning of the sentence – *Idag PLUGGAR vi svenska* ['Today STUDY we Swedish]. This doesn't happen in Spanish or English and it's easy to forget. I often compare this and I explain it in Spanish, to make it clearer.

Zara gives a similar example with L1 Arabic and Swedish, explaining that in Swedish placing the main verb in the first position has the function of forming a question. Zara engages in this type of crosslinguistic explanations or comparisons especially when students have a very low level of proficiency in Swedish, but less often as their proficiency increases.

Zara: Of course I compare Swedish with Arabic, for example that we in Arabic, we often put verbs at the beginning. But in Swedish it becomes a question if you put it at the beginning. In Swedish if we say *ÄTER du* ['Eat you'] it becomes a question, which you can answer – *Ja, jag äter* ['Yes, I eat'] – but it's not a claim [i.e. an affirmative sentence]. But it depends on the level; if the student has passed a good level, then I don't need to make comparisons constantly.

Hanna, too, often compares morphosyntactic functions trying to raise students' awareness of differences between L1 Polish and Swedish. In the following extract, she tells how she also tries to pinpoint crosslinguistic differences even when students are writing a text and using the correct form in Swedish, as a way of praising them.

Hanna: Also when they write a sentence and it's correct but it's still new for the students, for example I can say 'Check here! Do you see the difference? [between the Swedish form and the equivalent in L1 Polish]', for example in the word order or whatever.

While most tutors focus on morphosyntax when making crosslinguistic comparisons, Paula additionally reports trying to raise students' awareness of cognates across L1 Spanish, L2 English and L2 Swedish, especially when it comes to academic concepts with a Latin or Greek origin. Again, it is worth noting that not only the students' L1 is used, but also L2 English. As Paula explains in the following extract, students will learn the new Swedish concept more quickly if the concept is 'put next to' English or Spanish words with a similar form than if only an explanation of its meaning is provided.

Paula: The problem is often the terms. It's a quicker way to help them say the word in Spanish – because if you only explain what this term is, that's often when they're really falling. There's a bunch of terms that can also be the same in English, like eh in physics, things like 'gravitation' and 'centre of gravity' and this sort of things. As soon as I say the word in Spanish or English, then he catches on. And then we can expand on that. I can put the English or the Spanish word next to the Swedish word and I give them the tool to understand what it is that the text is saying.

Finally, another common strategy was to provide translations of words and sentences into the L1. In the following example, Antoni says that he even provides translations of entire fragments of a text into L1 Polish.

Antoni: I must read the exercise that is in the book, or the entire chapter, in Swedish, because the teacher often tells me to read it for them. And after I've read it in Swedish, I translate words, sentences, and sometimes also longer parts of the chapter, if it's necessary, into Polish.

As can be seen, these strategies can clearly be aligned with the idea in pedagogical translanguaging of designing activities that raise students' awareness of similarities and differences between the target language and their other languages. As reported by the tutors, these crosslinguistic strategies can enhance the learning of subject-specific terms, grammar and content comprehension in Swedish. The tutors did not report, however, using any of the other types of strategies proposed in pedagogical translanguaging – that is, alternating the languages for input and output as originally proposed by Williams and raising students' awareness of language issues in society. Moreover, their

crosslinguistic awareness-raising activities seemed to be focused mostly on morphosyntax and sometimes on vocabulary, but not on other areas of language knowledge such as pragmatic, phonetic or discursive areas. This limited focus may be related to the fact that only two tutors had a teacher qualification (Table 1). As we noted in chapter 2, a general problem in ST is that around 80% of tutors lack a university degree in a pedagogical subject (Swedish National Agency for Education 2024). Furthermore, the limited focus of the tutors may also be connected to the fact that most of them did not appear to have a very high level of proficiency in Swedish. As Antera, Fuster, and Munhall (forthcoming) underscore, however, in ST it is crucial that tutors possess a high level of linguistic awareness in both the students' L1s and Swedish, as well as a metalanguage with which to discuss the languages (Gareis, Oxley, and Reath Warren 2020).

Discussion

The results of this exploratory study provide insights into spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging in the context of Study Tutoring in the Mother Tongue (ST) in Sweden, an under-researched support measure typically offered to newly arrived students. Based on the analysis of the interviews, two major aspects appear to characterise the tutors' practices and views of translanguaging in ST.

First, the tutors view it as necessary to engage in spontaneous translanguaging with newly arrived students as a temporary form of support that maximises communication and enhances comprehension of content in Swedish at the initial stages of L2 Swedish acquisition. When students have limited proficiency in Swedish, the tutors primarily use the L1 but incorporate many Swedish sentences when discussing content in Swedish. This result aligns with findings reported in previous studies where tutors articulated support for spontaneous translanguaging as a practice that maximises communication (Dávila and Bunar 2020; Reath Warren 2021; Rosén, Straszer, and Wedin 2020). At the same time, the tutors in this study emphasise that they see spontaneous translanguaging as a *temporary* scaffolding tool that should decrease over time as students gain proficiency in Swedish. They consider it important to gradually increase the use of Swedish because Swedish is the main language of instruction in school and it is needed for academic success (see also Munhall, Antera, and Fuster forthcoming). This view of spontaneous translanguaging as a temporary tool to scaffold immigrant students' learning of the majority language has also been observed in other contexts (e.g. in two studies in the Netherlands and Luxembourg reported in Duarte 2020). However, while reducing the use of students' L1 in ST may support the acquisition of L2 Swedish by increasing the amount of Swedish input, the symbolic value of using minority L1s should not be underestimated. Using a minority L1 for communication in class can powerfully acknowledge this language as a valuable educational resource as well as affirm students' identity as L1 speakers of the language (see, e.g. Cummins 2021). Additionally, as highlighted in Williams' (1994, 2002) original concept of translanguaging, using a language to discuss content written in another language can deepen subject knowledge because alternating two languages for input and output requires that the subject is thoroughly comprehended. Considering this, and given that in Sweden immigrant minority languages can only be used as official languages of instruction in the optional subject of MTI and in ST, we argue that while the use of Swedish in ST can increase over time, students' L1s should not cease to be used.

Second, the tutors strongly articulate a view of translanguaging that is in line with Cenoz and Gorter's pedagogical translanguaging. They consider it highly beneficial to utilise students' non-target languages judiciously, at certain moments in the lesson, as an instructional strategy to teach content and L2 Swedish. The tutors report making use of four crosslinguistic instructional strategies, namely (1) providing multilingual glossaries, (2) providing explanations of Swedish grammar and vocabulary using the L1, (3) making crosslinguistic comparisons and (4) providing translations of Swedish words and sentences into the L1. These crosslinguistic instructional strategies are also the strategies that have been observed in different studies of translanguaging across school subjects

in Sweden (see Fuster and Bardel 2024, for a review). In line with pedagogical translanguaging, the tutors in this study underline that there are many similarities across languages and that recognising them makes it easier to learn a new language. However, it is important to note that the tutors' implementation of pedagogical translanguaging appears limited in various ways. Their crosslinguistic awareness-raising activities are focused on morphosyntax and, to some extent, vocabulary, but not on other areas of language knowledge such as pragmatic, phonetic or discursive areas. Additionally, the tutors appear to engage in these crosslinguistic instructional strategies spontaneously rather than in a planned manner that has specific pedagogical objectives. This has also been noted in other studies of translanguaging in Sweden (Falk and Lindqvist 2022; Gynne 2019; Norlund Shaswar 2022). As discussed in the previous section, the tutors' somewhat limited and unplanned implementation of crosslinguistic instructional strategies may be related to the fact that most of them are not trained teachers or have not studied Swedish linguistics. Finally, an interesting point is that a few tutors report comparing linguistic aspects of Swedish not only to students' L1s but also to English. In Sweden, all students study English and English is omnipresent in the Swedish society. This makes English a greatly valuable resource that could be used to a greater extent alongside students' L1s to learn L2 Swedish more efficiently.

In conclusion, in ST, it could be said that spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging take place next to each other and cannot be seen as complete dichotomies. While the tutors emphasise the importance of gradually increasing the use of Swedish in ST because Swedish is needed for academic success, they also recognise the benefits of spontaneous translanguaging with students' L1 and Swedish for enhancing communication and content learning. The tutors underscore the value of crosslinguistic instructional strategies to teach Swedish grammar and vocabulary more efficiently. However, their implementation of pedagogical translanguaging appears to be limited to a small number of crosslinguistic awareness-raising strategies. Additionally, their implementation of pedagogical translanguaging seems to occur spontaneously as students encounter difficulties rather than in a systematically planned manner. Given these results, we suggest that there is a need for providing tutors with training on multilingual approaches to teaching L2 Swedish, enabling them to implement pedagogical translanguaging in a more planned manner and through a broader variety of crosslinguistic instructional strategies.

This study has some limitations because of its small sample size, which does not allow us to make generalisations to the whole population of tutors in ST. Despite these limitations, the insights discussed contribute to the emerging body of research on ST and translanguaging. The study highlights the great potential of ST as a space to implement both spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging and thereby give value to immigrant minority L1s as educational resources as well as enhance newly arrived students' subject learning and L2 Swedish acquisition. The findings can help tutors, but also mainstream teachers, to reflect on their attitudes towards the use of multiple languages in the classroom and to advance their crosslinguistic pedagogical practices so as to make the most of their students' multilingualism. Research on translanguaging is still in an early phase and many more studies remain to be conducted. In future research, one interesting direction would be to conduct more controlled studies implementing and assessing the effects of spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging across educational contexts with different student populations.

Notes

1. The term 'newly arrived student' was introduced in the Education Act in 2015 to refer to a student who has moved from abroad and begun their education in Sweden after already having turned seven years of age and without having attended school in the country for four years (Chapter 3, Section 12 a, Education Act [2010:800]).
2. 'Swedish as a Foreign Language' was implemented in 1980 and renamed as 'Swedish as a Second Language' in 1985. The syllabus for Swedish as a Second Language was introduced in the curriculum in 1995.
3. 'US Latinos' is a common term to refer to individuals in the US who have an origin in Spanish-speaking countries, whether in terms of ancestry, nationality or country of birth of the person or the person's parents

or ancestors. The term ‘Hispanic’ is often also used in the US, but we use ‘Latino’ as this is the word that García (e.g. 2009, 2022) prefers.

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ORCID

Carles Fuster  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4322-121X>

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