

Emerging Issues of Translanguaging and Speaking English: A study of
Bangladeshi students from Indian curriculum schools

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

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Brac University
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Declaration

I hereby declare that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis titled “Emerging Issues of Translanguaging and Speaking English: A study of Bangladeshi students from Indian curriculum schools” submitted by Farah Kabir (ID:17203008) of Spring, 2020 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English.

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Abstract

Translanguaging in speech is practiced by almost all non-native speakers of English and especially by students studying in a multilingual school environment. Despite its many advantages in classroom learning, translanguaging has been inadequately researched as an emerging source of issues in English speaking and creating psychosocial problems in students. This research is based on five Bangladeshi students who had studied in multilingual schools and high schools in India. A qualitative research study has been conducted by collecting data from the participants through a questionnaire and two semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal the everyday problems that the participants experience in English speaking as a result of translanguaging. The participants have also shared the psychological and social issues such as culture gap, culture clashes, identity crisis, etcetera that they have faced or are facing in their educational institutions. Each case has been thoroughly discussed under three themes. Finally, basic recommendations on practicing translanguaging in classrooms, limitations of this research and suggestions on further research have been stated.

Keywords: translanguaging, multilingual, speaking English, psychosocial problems

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Language is not a genetic gift, it is a social gift. Learning a new language is becoming a member of the club- the community of speakers of that language.

- Frank Smith, Canadian psycholinguist

We live in a world where learning more than one language has become a necessity, not only for the sake of climbing up the rungs of social privilege but also for becoming more competent learners by acquiring cultural knowledge. It is indeed a common factor in the non-native English-speaking countries and their diaspora in native English-speaking countries. Acquisition of one's mother tongue is usually accompanied by the learning of English and sometimes, a third language, depending on his/her situational context, which may be a classroom, other areas of the campus, place of work, transport, recreation, etcetera.

Nonetheless, our area of interest is the educational institution where students as speakers of various languages meet. Verbal communications between them involve using more than one language, which ultimately leads to creating more meaningful conversations as speakers use words from different languages. Such a process can be defined as language shifting, which involves translating or using a word in L2 taken from an equivalent word in L1, code-mixing/switching, and using two or more languages in spoken discourse (Kartika-Ningsih & Rose, 2018). Making this shift from language to language also saves time thinking of a word or an idiom in the target language. A speaker may also use vocabularies, quotes, and idioms from one's native tongue or a third language to explain a particular concept better than use their English counterparts.

1.1. Problem Statement

If students become dependent on the aforementioned language shifting practices, it can prove detrimental to their speaking English. They may be tempted to use words from their native or any other language in place of their equivalent words in English. As prescriptive as it may sound, it disrupts fluency and can frequently cause errors, especially in spoken academic discourses. Additionally, many students from multilingual and multicultural school settings are prone to social and psychological impacts due to the power dynamics created among the various language/cultural groups. Through this study, the researcher does not wish to oppose translanguaging and multilingualism but only address the few critical issues that arise in the speech of multilingual, non-native English-speaking students and the possible psychosocial problems faced by them.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to address the issues with speaking English due to dependence on translanguaging, such as the inability to only speak in English without the aid of other languages, inaccurate or inappropriate use of the language and the psychosocial impacts on students studying in multilingual schools.

1.3. Central Research Question

This research has been guided by the following question: What issues do multilingual students face in speaking English due to dependence on translanguaging practices?

1.4. Significance of the Study

This paper will discuss the practice of translanguaging among multilingual students and their attitude towards it. It will signify the need for proper measures to be taken by education

boards and schools to determine the need, amount and appropriateness (context) of translanguaging in classrooms, which will not only help students to successfully master speaking English but also learn to translanguage in required situations to facilitate communication. Furthermore, the researcher urges teachers and schools to make their educational institutions more inclusive. She also demands further research on the appropriate use of translanguaging and ways to create a more student-friendly and tolerant school environment.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

Due to the pandemic, the researcher could not hold focus group discussions among participants to record casual conversations and, in the process, procure authentic samples of translingual speech. However, it could not have been possible under normal circumstances too, as two of the participants live abroad. She was also unable to conduct more online interviews and a focus group discussion due to time constraints. Furthermore, this research could also be expanded by studying a broader population of multilingual students through observation of their use of translanguaging and their attitudes towards other languages/language groups in the classroom. Teachers' and policy makers' opinions on the use of translanguaging in classrooms could also be collected.

1.6. Context of the Study

This study does not have a physical setting but is one woven out of the lived experiences of multilingual speakers who have a varied set of cultural identities. Except one, all the participants are Bangladeshi by birth. Bengali and English are their first and second languages, respectively. They had stayed in a boarding school in India for a considerable amount of time to receive their primary or secondary education or both. Students were prohibited from speaking in any language other than English, be it in the classroom, the dormitory, or at the playground,

which made it the only medium of discourse and the most dominant language. According to Braj B. Kachru (1997), “in South Asian language policies and planning, English has a special place today because of its widespread functions in significant domains of social life, education and cross-cultural communication” (as cited in Gargesh, 2006, p. 90). Their native language was taught as the second language. In addition, they were taught Hindi as the third language for four years. Gargesh (2006) writes about the *Three Language Formula* which was proposed in India in 1957 and later formalized by an Education Commission (1964-6; Aggarwal, 1993: 175-93). It specifies the following: (i) one must study his/her native language or the language primarily used in the region he lives as the first language, (ii) as a second language, students from Hindi-speaking states can study English or a modern Indian language (MIL), whereas, Hindi or English will be studied in non-Hindi-speaking states and (iii) as a third language, English or a MIL not studied as the second language will be studied in Hindi-speaking states while in case of non-Hindi-speaking states, it will be English or Hindi, whichever is not studied as the second language. However, with time, a lot of policies in education had been implemented. Gargesh also claims that there was a growing trend to teach English as a subject in grade one. Delhi, Haryana and Bihar had already implemented it in 2000, 2002 and 2003, respectively. Although West Bengal had expunged the policy of teaching English as a second language in 1977 (p. 94-95), it was reintroduced in as early as standard five in 1993 (Sarkar, 2013).

Despite conversing solely in English, the students also made occasional use of Hindi (mostly), Bengali and Nepali, depending upon the linguistic background of the person or the group they interacted with. Sometimes, particular words, phrases and even exclamations in these language(s) were consciously or subconsciously internalized. As mentioned in Gargesh (p.103), South Asian English has a rich lexicon with words gaining fresh local meanings through the

processes of innovation, compounding, blending, semantic shift and reduplication (Hawkins, 1986; Kachru 1965, 1983 & Nihalani et al., 1979). Most of the participants have admitted to code-mix and code-switch in their high schools and universities. Ameer et al. (2005) and Dussias & Sagarra (2007) explain how influences from two languages can be observed in the way a speaker perceives speech and speaks, use of grammar, and the words s/he chooses to describe the perceptual experience (as cited in Kroll and Dussias, 2018). In light of the above discussion, this paper aims to study the same influences on spoken English.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will briefly summarize the existing literature on the concept of ‘translanguaging’ and its benefits in language learning. This chapter will briefly summarize the existing literature on the concept of ‘translanguaging’ and its benefits in language learning. It will also identify gaps in the literature, posit the issues students face in speaking English as a consequence of becoming dependent on translanguaging and discuss the psychosocial problems multilingual students are likely to encounter. Finally, classroom strategies that ensure effective use of the process and its practice in Bangladesh will be described.

2.1. What is Translanguaging?

The term translanguaging can be divided into two words- ‘trans’ and ‘languaging’. The general meaning of ‘trans’ is to go beyond whereas, ‘languaging’ is a more complex term. It first came into being when two Chilean biologists, Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1973) defined it as an act of knowing. They also said that we are all “constituted in language” to interact and make meaning of ourselves and the world. Therefore, translanguaging would mean going beyond one language or using more than one language to construct meaning. Maturana and Verela’s research was pivotal as it later helped Becker shed more light on the term by explaining how languaging both shapes and is shaped by the context (1988). In Java, ‘languaging’ is called *jarwa dhosok*, *i.e.*, “taking old language (jarwa) and pushing (dhosok) it into new contexts” (1995) (as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 8), which shows how language and its speakers are both subjected to the influences of new contexts and especially where other languages are spoken. This ultimately births translanguaging.

Wei says that translanguaging was not initially considered a theoretical concept but was used to describe a specific language practice (2017). According to Baker's translation of the Welsh term *trawsieithu* by Cen Williams (1994), translanguaging is the pedagogical practices he observed in Welsh revitalization programmes, where the teacher and his/her students used English and Welsh interchangeably, with the students using English for most parts (as cited in Wei, 2017). To carry out this practice, one needs to use smaller practices or strategies, which Tse noted as code-switching, translating, language brokering, interpreting between people belonging to different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (1996). However, Wei informs that there is an ongoing debate on using 'translanguaging' as an umbrella term for "multilingual and multimodal practices like code-switching, code-mixing, code-meshing, crossing, polylinguaging, polylingual languaging, multilinguaging, heteroglossia, hybrid language practices, translingual practice, flexible bilingualism, and metrolingualism" (2017, p. 9).

2.2. Translanguaging and Its Benefits

Otheguy, Garcia and Reid claim that translanguaging is the overall use of a speaker's linguistic knowledge without regard to maintaining the socio-politically defined boundaries of named languages (2015). Therefore, this process is very beneficial for facilitating effective communication among learners in both pedagogic settings and real-life situations. Paulsrud, et al. opine that research has shown the advantages of translanguaging in classrooms like, a better comprehension of the content taught, strengthening of home-school bonds, and motivating stronger and weaker learners to participate as a team in mixed ability classes (2017). Furthermore, Neault states that if students' L1 is used by teachers, any other aide in school, or students themselves to translate a certain content, it can facilitate English language learning and help them understand grammar and task instructions. Teachers can also help families by allowing

students to use their native languages in the classroom so that they can continue using them at home (2020).

2.3. Research Gap

The merits of translanguaging are reported to be limitless as they have transcended from classrooms to homes and the world outside. Nonetheless, there is an existing gap in identifying the learning issues that have emerged due to it. Most studies discuss the effects of translanguaging on the participation of students and teaching in EFL classrooms, leaving out the social context which can certainly influence their English speaking in the academic context. Only a handful of studies have discussed the process's effect on speaking English and the influence of psychosocial factors. Although most Bangladeshi students, teachers and professionals engage in the practices of translanguaging in everyday communication, very little research has been done on the process and its impacts on English language learning.

2.4. Emerging Issues in Speaking English due to Dependency on Practices of Translanguaging

2.4.1. Inability of using English only

According to Brown (2006), code-switching is a sign of lack of competency (as cited in Nurhamidah, Fauziati & Supriyadi, 2018). Students tend to switch from one language to the other because they believe that their language ability may not be equal to their classmates, peers or teachers (Üstunel, 2016). This causes them to use their native or a third language to fill the void in communication. Sert (2005) also highlights their inability of using the target language for explaining certain words in their first language. He gives an example of students' interview conducted by a teacher of the English Department of a university in Surakarta, Indonesia. The teacher reported that students chose to use the Indonesian synonym of an English word, which

they forgot, in the middle of their presentation. This indicates their lack of vocabulary knowledge in English (as cited in Nurhamidah, Fauziati & Supriyadi, 2018) and dependence on their native language to produce language forms in English, which Mede et al. (2014) call as the mother tongue interference. Due to such high cross-linguistic influence in second language acquisition, there may be negative transfers which can lead to the construction of errors, with the most common ones being grammatical errors and mispronunciation of words (as cited in Subandowo, 2017). Moreover, translations do not help fulfil the primary objectives of foreign language teaching, such as, “fluency in spoken language, the controlled introduction of selected and graded structures, lexical items and communicative strategies” (Newson 1998, p.64). This is because translations are “unnatural, prevent students from thinking in the foreign language and are a bad test for language skills” (Malmkjaer, 1998, p. 5 as cited in Vermes, 2010).

2.4.2. Inaccurate use of the language

As already discussed, translanguaging can take place in multiple ways. The two most common ones are code-switching or the constant switching of languages from one utterance to the other, and code-mixing, which is the switching of languages in a single utterance. Zhu (2008) notes that such practices of shifting from one language to the other for an extended period can cause learners to make errors and even internalize them as standard forms (as cited in Nurhamidah, et al., 2018). Next, Rowe claims that translation allows students to use their translanguaging skills to switch between languages (2018), but there also exists a considerable amount of opposition to school translation. Translation into the native language will mislead the learner as different languages have varying semantic units. Moreover, students tend to forget the foreign or target form due to constant responding in the native form (Bloomfield, 1993). To further explain this, Lado (1964, p.53-4, cited in Malmkjaer, 1998, p.5) says that there are very

few words with fully equivalent meanings in two different languages. If a learner comes across two such words from different languages, he/she can mistakenly use the translations in the same situational context as the originals. This may cause “inference phenomena in language acquisition” as word-for-word translations can construct incorrect language forms (as cited in Vermes, 2010).

2.4.3. Possibility of suffering psychosocial problems

Students often want to show their identity in a classroom or with others sharing the same cultural background through code-switching. For instance- students who may not fluently speak the language of those they want to befriend may try to learn and use the latter’s native language to show that they belong (Gu & Benson, 2014). Palmer reasons that this choice of using a particular language is not only motivated by the need for effective communication but also by the prestige and value attached to it in the respective environment (2014). However, making attempts to speak in various languages and integrating into so many cultures at the same time can get very exhausting. It also may lead them to ponder upon their true identity. Wright’s study of Cambodian refugees and their schooling (2004) shows how bilingualism can affect how one views their identity as a student and as a participant in society. One of its participants admitted to struggling with her self-identity. She said that she was fed up with being who she was and felt like ‘a nobody’ (as cited in Champlin, 2016). Furthermore, some sociolinguistic evidence suggests that translanguaging can significantly affect one’s well-being as students may not find it liberating at any cost. Charalambous et al. described a classroom situation in Cyprus, Greece where the teacher introduced Turkish, the home variety of her Bulgarian students, with an intention to “promote mutual understanding, linguistic hybridity” and to help them rediscover their “hidden linguistic identities” (2016, p. 327). Unfortunately, the students resisted and stayed

silent as they feared that speaking in Turkish would make them Turkish, which is still a problematic identity in Greek despite efforts being made to establish peace (as cited in Jaspers, 2017).

2.5. Methods to Guide Proper Use of Translanguaging

The process of translanguaging can work wonders if teachers use proper methods and techniques to use it in classrooms. Jacobson (1983) suggested a few guidelines for structured code-switching in classrooms: (a) maintenance of an equal distribution between the languages, (b) shifting between languages must be unconscious, and (c) language shifting must be done by keeping the purpose of learning in mind (as cited in Nurhamidah, Fauziati & Supriyadi, 2018). Furthermore, certain translation exercises can be used to develop students' spoken language fluency. Newson (1998) offers two such classroom activities. In the first one, the teacher will read out sentences from the source language, which learners will translate. This will help them to identify particular target language patterns. In the second activity, students will translate a text containing a few expressions in the form of sentences, which will help them to learn certain language features (as cited in Vermes, 2010). Finally, teachers and students must work together to analyze texts by authors who use translanguaging for stylistic purposes, which will help the latter explore how bilingual writers can use translanguaging to create identities that reflect on the language shifting practices of bilingual communities (Flores and Schissel, 2014).

2.6. Translanguaging in Bangladesh

The ordinary people of Bangladesh receive education through Bengali, the elite through English and the bearers of fundamental values of Islam through a mix of Urdu and Arabic in *madradas*. Only a small number of those educated in the English or Urdu/Arabic media can gain a good command of these languages because students often tend to code-switch in other

educational settings (Faquire, 2020). Sultana reports that the major reason for using English in oral communications is to show how smart, confident and communicative one can be. The Bangladeshi youths are using translanguaging proficiently, and she believes that it will lead to the creation of a new linguistic practice. (2014). Young adults in Asian countries engage in transglossic practices by using their linguistic and cultural repertoire along with that of the popular culture (Sultana, Dovchin & Pennycook, 2013). Nevertheless, Erling et al. (2012) note that there are people who are emotionally attached to Bengali and regret that it is not used in all domains of life in Bangladesh. They believe in preserving the authenticity of language and strictly oppose the mingling of English and Bengali, which they call a kind of ‘pollution’

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter presents the nature of the research, research design and instruments used in conducting it. The researcher will also discuss the participants and ethical considerations made before, during and after their participation. Finally, the process of data collection and analysis followed by the obstacles encountered will be described.

3.1. Nature of the Research

The qualitative research method was used to conduct this study. Creswell describes qualitative research as a holistic approach that involves exploration. It occurs in a natural setting which enables the researcher to collect in-depth information from being very involved in the original experiences (1994). This paper aims to inspect, describe and analyze the emerging issues of translanguaging through the participants' experiences in their school, high school and university, psychosocial problems faced and their opinion on translanguaging.

3.2. Research Design

The research was conducted by using the narrative research design wherein, researchers collect and describe the lives, stories and experiences of individuals (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Hence, detailed information about the participants' linguistic background, stories and personal experiences has been procured which serve as testaments to the theory generated. Since the researcher has gathered information on the participants' first-hand experiences, the study also becomes a phenomenological research, which Neubauer et al. (2019) describe as an approach that studies a phenomenon by looking through the perspective of those who have experienced it. Its goal is to explain the whats and hows of the experience. Then, the collected stories, opinions and experiences of the participants were compiled using the case study method. It served as the

most suitable method for this research as the experiences and stories of individual participants concerning their language use and linguistic and cultural identity could be collected in depth and separately analyzed. According to Mesec (1998), “a case study is a description and analysis of an individual matter or case [...] with the purpose to identify variables, structures, forms and orders of interaction between the participants in the situation (theoretical purpose), or, in order to assess the performance of work or progress in development (practical purpose)” (p. 383). Only a few texts use case studies as a central subject because no encyclopaedic reference provides information on the design and methods in case study research to guide students, teachers, researchers and professionals who want to use it for rigorous research projects or programs (Mills et al. 2010)

3.3. Participants of the Study

The participants were a unique set of four Bangladeshi and one Chinese-Bangladeshi undergraduate students who had studied in Indian schools. They were all exposed to two or three languages in school and knew more than two languages. Often, they code-switched and used the various varieties of English, be it Hinglish, Banglish and even Nepali, to meet the requirement of the situation. Currently, three of them are studying in Bangladeshi universities and two of them in Canadian universities.

Table 1*List of Participants*

Initials	Age	Sex	Nationality	1st lang	2nd lang	3rd lang	Years in India
B. K.	21	Female	Bangladeshi	Bengali	English	Hindi	12
M. H.	22	Female	Bangladeshi	Bengali	English	Hindi	9
F. W.	25	Female	Chinese- Bangladeshi	English	Bengali	Cantonese	5
M. S.	23	Female	Bangladeshi	Bengali	English	Hindi	10
T. R.	22	Male	Bangladeshi	Bengali	English	Hindi	9

Note. B. K., F.W., M. S. and T. R studied in the same school.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data from participants was collected in two phases:

Phase 1:

The participants were first e-mailed a Google form containing a survey questionnaire which took them approximately five to ten minutes to fill. It included basic questions about their nationality, educational qualification, languages they speak and a few theme-related questions. This was followed by a semi-structured interview that was conducted with each participant on Zoom. Participants were asked about their experiences in school in relation to the linguistic situation, regular and formal speech in English, opinions on translanguaging and its impacts on English speaking ability, and the social and affective factors that may/may not have influenced their speech. Each interview spanned for thirty to sixty minutes.

Phase 2:

A follow-up, semi-structured interview was conducted to procure more information about their experiences of learning the English language, opinions on the use of translanguaging in classrooms, psychosocial problems faced and their linguistic and cultural identity. Each of them spanned for about thirty minutes.

3.5. Research Instruments

The researcher used a survey questionnaire and two semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants.

3.5.1. Survey Questionnaire

Participants had to initially fill out a questionnaire containing open-ended questions, which helped make the participants familiar with the research and gave them time to formulate opinions and organize their answers. In the words of Satya (2017), a questionnaire is “a list of mimeographed or printed questions that is completed by or for a respondent to give his opinion” (p. 273). She further writes that questionnaires must have a purpose in tune with the objectives of the research, and the researcher must clarify how he will use the findings. Furthermore, Weller et al. define open-ended questions as those “which may produce lists, short answers, lengthy narratives”, whose goal is to collect the most important ideas and themes. They are either used alone or combined with other interviewing techniques to explore topics and processes in detail and to discover the possible causes of observed correlations (2018, p. 2).

3.5.2. Semi-structured Interview

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted. Britten defines semi-structured interviews as those having a loose structure and containing open-ended questions. They are initially used to explore the research topic from which the interviewer or the interviewee may

divert themselves to further explore an idea (1995). The interviews helped to obtain spontaneous answers from the participants and further clarification of their opinions.

3.6. Data Analysis

A bottom-up approach or deductive research method of qualitative research was taken to analyze the data. By using a bottom-up approach in research, a theory is generated by interpreting data through the finding of patterns and relations (Attia, 2020), this data being the background information, knowledge, and experiences of participants. At first, the themes were identified, and questions were constructed on their basis. Next, the data was collected, codified under the themes and then interpreted. Directed content analysis was used to identify the relationships between the different themes and to draw a theoretical conclusion. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) opine that directed content analysis is useful when an existing theory or prior research is to benefit from further inspection and description (p. 1278). This theory then helps the researcher develop the initial coding scheme before data analysis (Kyngas & Vanhanen, 1999).

3.7. Ethical Considerations

First and foremost, the participants were briefly informed about the research. The researcher briefly explained to them the term ‘translanguaging’ and how one’s dependence on multiple languages while speaking in English can affect his/her speech. They were also told that they had to share their experiences about the language situation in school and attend a questionnaire first. Verbal consent was then obtained from them. The participants were e-mailed the questionnaire whose form description contained the purpose of the survey. They were also requested to sit for an interview and provided the option to withdraw at any time. Moreover, the questions of the questionnaire and the interviews were designed by keeping a very neutral point

of view to prevent any chance of provoking or hurting sentiments and letting the participants freely express themselves. During the interviews, the participants' opinions were given utmost priority, which were also valued and taken into consideration during analysis. Participants have been referred to by their initials to prevent the risk of identification.

3.8. Obstacles

The major obstacle was to conduct face-to-face interviews with the participants due to the ongoing pandemic situation. Hence, the researcher was unable to read the body language, gestures and facial expressions of participants, which could otherwise be noted in a face-to-face interview. Though she had the facilities to conduct interviews on Zoom, they did not prove as convenient because it was tough to note expressions and gestures on a computer screen unless both sides had a very stable internet connection and high-quality webcams.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter is primarily divided into five cases of the five participants. It entails the qualitative data that was collected from them through a questionnaire and two semi-structured interviews. Information about their educational background, use and opinions on translanguaging and psychosocial issues faced by them in their multilingual schools, high schools and universities has been compiled under four to five subsections.

4.1. Phase 1 (Questionnaire and Interview)

4.1.1. B.K.

i. Language use and cultural experience in school (10 years)

B.K. studied in a boarding school in Siliguri, West Bengal. Although Bengali and Hindi were most dominantly spoken there, English was a mandate in school. Teachers asked the weaker students to learn to speak in English from those who had good command. B. K. also mentioned that students with poor English speaking skills were not considered “classy enough”. Errors in speech or incorrect use of the language were frowned upon and laughed at. Students who were caught speaking in vernaculars among each other were also punished. They could only use them while communicating with caretakers and domestic workers. As a Hindi-speaking majority surrounded B. K., she occasionally used Hindi jargons in conversations with her friends such as ‘ah chalo!’ (come on), ‘areh jaar!’ (a phrase mainly used for expressing annoyance). She even code-mixed the two languages, of which she gave an example: “I am the ulta (opposite) person”. Through translanguaging and studying Hindi as a third language, B. K. ultimately learnt the language. Furthermore, she mentioned that the Bangladeshis and the Nepalese were the minorities in school who mostly spoke in English, which helped them get along.

ii. Language use and cultural experience in high school (2 years)

After graduating from 10th grade, B. K. changed schools within Siliguri. In her new school, she was surrounded by a Nepali-speaking majority, who hailed from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong, Bhutan and Nepal. Consequently, she was exposed to the Nepali language. In an effort to fit in accompanied by a genuine interest to learn the language, B. K. made attempts to understand Nepali and used many Nepali exclamations and phrases such as ‘ambo!’ (an exclamation used to express a variety of emotions such as shock, surprise, sadness and happiness) and ‘alikasi’ (little) while speaking in English, and tried to show that she knew the language. Besides Nepali, Hindi was also widely spoken by teachers and students during class hours, which made her employ Hindi in her conversations too.

iii. Language use and cultural experience in university (2nd year)

B. K. came back to Bangladesh for her higher studies. She got admitted to a private university and is currently in her second year. Due to the onset of the pandemic, she could barely attend a semester on the campus and was unable to properly interact with her friends and teachers. However, she socializes with them through virtual conversations where she uses some Bengali words and idioms such as ‘je’ (that), ‘shetai toh’ (that’s what) and ‘akash theke pora’ (an idiom used to express extreme astonishment) and a few Hindi jargons too. She claimed that this practice of translanguaging in casual conversations does not affect her formal speech in English because she is very conscious when speaking in a professional setting. She also tries her best to practice speaking in English with her friends.

iv. Opinions on translanguaging

B. K. opined that it is not a good practice to code-switch and code-mix for people who want to master speaking English as it hampers their fluency. It also does not help in making a

good impression. She suggested that learners can use translations from English to their native language for remembering the meaning of difficult words. It can also prove helpful for beginners who are still grasping the mechanics of the language. B. K. further mentioned about the majority of the students in her university who do not practice or are scared to speak in English, which makes them use Bengali when speaking in English. It also causes them to stutter, take long pauses and use fillers such as hmm, umm during formal presentations and reading exercises. Hence, she emphasized that vernaculars can be used at home, but if someone genuinely wants to learn to speak in English, s/he must practice it separately as theoretically studying the language will not make one proficient.

v. Linguistic and cultural identity

B. K. is a proud Bangladeshi. However, she is more accustomed to the Indian Hindu culture than the Bangladeshi culture as she had to adapt to the former since the age of seven. She identifies herself as a Bangladeshi by birth but her beliefs and attitudes are more oriented towards the Indian Hindu culture. Furthermore, B. K. also considers it a blessing to have had a first-hand multilingual experience. She said that it has not only helped her learn and understand various languages and cultures, but has also expanded her mindset, grown more as a person and made her adaptable to any culture.

4.1.2. M. H.

i. Language use and cultural experience in school (7 years)

M. H. studied in a school in Kurseong, West Bengal, where Nepali alongside English were dominant languages. Inside the school premises, English was spoken while Nepali was mostly spoken everywhere else. At the age of ten, she had to adapt to a surrounding where people hardly spoke her mother tongue. Fortunately, M. H. knew how to speak in Hindi, which

helped her communicate with the caretakers, who did not understand English. With time and more exposure to Nepali, M. H. understood the language. As she stayed in the school hostel since childhood, she got along well with the students there. However, the Bangladeshis stayed together as they spoke the same language and belonged to the same culture.

ii. Language use and cultural experience in high school (2 years)

M. H. came down to Siliguri after completing 10th grade and got admitted to a school there. Since it was a day boarding school, she had to stay as a paying guest at the home of a Marwadi family who spoke in Hindi. Her friends at school preferred to talk in both Hindi and English. Unlike in school where she constantly spoke in English, M. H. spoke in Hindi and English and some Bengali with her Bangladeshi and Indian Bengali friends. She also used Hindi words and idioms like ‘yaar’(friend), ‘areh’(ugh), ‘dost’(friend), ‘bekar mae’(of no use), ‘bandar kya jaane adrak ka swad’(unless one is aware of something or knows about it, he/she cannot understand its value), ‘ab aya uth pahar ke niche’(when a stubborn person agrees to something) while conversing in English with her friends.

iii. Language use and cultural experience in university (4th year)

M. H. is currently studying at a private university in Bangladesh. She is in her fourth year and unlike B.K., she has had a fair exposure to the Bangladeshi culture. After coming back to Bangladesh, she began to retrieve her knowledge of Bengali and also learn more about its culture. With continuous exposure to Bengali and mainly Banglish used by students in her university campus, she began to speak in the latter language. Currently, M. H. is quite fluent in English, but she often uses Bengali words, phrases and expressions such as ‘mane’(meaning), ‘pera nai’(no worries), ‘dhet’(ugh), ‘aayhaay’ (oh no) unconsciously. ‘Pera’ is not a formal Bengali word. It is a jargon used by the Y and Z generations and has its origin in the English

word ‘paranoid’, which is used to mean a life crisis or any other problem when used in the Bengali context (Ahmed, 2016).

iv. Opinions on translanguaging

M. H. does not support the idea of speaking in other languages along with English. She reasoned that it makes the language lose its originality, causes grammatical and syntactic errors and even makes one fall short of words. M. H. emphasizes learning and maintaining correct grammar to speak proper English. She also mentioned that translations may not always be accurate and cited Google Translate as an example, whose translations tend to sway from the actual meaning. Nevertheless, she recommends the use of code-mixing to improve vocabulary. For example, when someone speaks in Banglish, s/he incorporates English words into Bangla, which helps to know more English words and vice versa

v. Linguistic and cultural identity

Although M. H. lived among a linguistically and ethnically diverse group of people, she did not feel alienated. Language and culture did not matter if she was able to connect with the other person. However, when she returned to Bangladesh, she lacked knowledge about her own culture and faced a culture gap. M. H. was more accustomed to the Indian Hindu culture and knew extensively about its festivals. In fact, she came to know about major festivals like Pohela Falgun and Mongol Shobhajatra after joining her university. Interestingly, she used to be called a ‘Bangladeshi’ at her high school in India and an ‘Indian’ at her university in Bangladesh. This however, did not stir her self-identity. On the contrary, she now claims to have a fused identity of both as a Bangladeshi and an Indian.

4.1.3. F.W.

i. Information on ethnic and linguistic background, language use and cultural experience in school

F. W. is a Chinese-Bangladeshi who was brought up in Hong Kong by a Chinese father and a Bengali mother. During her childhood, F. W. was taught English, Bengali, Cantonese and Mandarin consecutively. Not only was this confusing for her but being conditioned according to the lifestyles of two very different cultures added more to the disarray. Although F. W. fluently spoke Cantonese, the native language of Hong Kong, she was still considered an outsider due to her facial features and skin colour, which was a shade darker. Up until grade 5, she regularly faced discrimination which ultimately made her suffer from an identity crisis. Nevertheless, she did not give in and moved to an international school in Hong Kong, consisting of students from India, Pakistan, and the Philippines, where she faced less discrimination.

Soon after, F. W. decided to change her school again when her parents started having regular quarrels, which majorly impacted her academics. She then moved to India and was admitted in grade 6 to the same boarding school B. K. was studying. F. W. spent five years there. Since students and teachers spoke in English almost every time, it was easy for her to communicate and accommodate herself. Moreover, she got along well with the Bangladeshi and Indian Bengali students. Communicating with them in Bengali also made her feel at home. F. W. was also able to adapt to Siliguri's lifestyle, which was close to that of Bangladesh. Nonetheless, she faced some major obstacles. Within the first few months of joining, F. W. was asked to change her Asian-British accent to make it sound more Indian so that she could become acceptable. To top it all, she had to study Bengali as her second language, in which she could neither speak fluently nor read and write. There is no end to human potential, and this was

evidently proved by F. W.. She managed to write basic Bengali within a month! However, F. W. felt left out on special occasions when the children watched Bollywood movies. Everyone was able to enjoy those movies thoroughly while F. W. had to make sense of the visuals as she did not understand Hindi very well. However, this did not discourage her, F. W. watched Bollywood films during her vacations, and by the third or fourth year, she was able to understand conversational Hindi.

ii. Language use and cultural experience in high school and university (2nd year)

F. W. moved to Toronto in Canada after graduating from her school. Her first time in the country was not overwhelming as she was raised in a city in Hong Kong which was more extensive and populated. To adapt to Canadian English, F.W. picked up common Canadian phrases and expressions like ‘no, yeah no’ and ‘yeah no, for sure’ to mean no and yes, respectively. She also tuned her previous Indian accent to the typical Canadian accent by watching T.V, videos and listening to music. Moreover, the city has a vast diversity of cultures. F. W. made friends with people from Russia, Italy, Portugal, Brazil, Spain, India and Mexico at her high school and university. She also picked up a few phrases, words and greetings from their languages. To this day, F. W. has never faced any identity crisis or discrimination there as everyone is seen as Canadian first. Her facial features and skin colour no longer matters. Although English is most commonly used, anyone is considered equally intelligent if s/he knows a language other than English. Therefore, it was not very difficult for her to communicate with people and quickly adapt to their lifestyle. It has been seven years since she moved to the country.

iii. Opinions on translanguaging

F. W. suggested that translanguaging can be a good practice for new speakers of English. She also gave an example of immigrants in Canada who tend to use some Hindi and Portuguese phrases when speaking in English. This, she reasoned, is not necessarily wrong as they do not speak perfect English and can easily communicate with others through a bit of help from their native languages. She also informed me that translanguaging keeps the brain active and thinking about what is to be said next and in which language. Hence, she finds it acceptable to code-switch and code-mix among bi and multilingual people in a social setting. However, F. W. does not recommend its use in professional and educational settings. She said that if a student is not a good English speaker and faces difficulty, the teacher can use his/her mother tongue to clarify doubts, but as s/he progresses, the teacher must give it up. Besides, every language has a unique style and meanings. Mixing them up will ruin their authenticity and make one sound unprofessional.

iv. Linguistic and cultural identity

Despite facing some major social identity crisis in Hong Kong and India, where she was neither accepted as a Chinese nor as a Bengali, F. W. was able to adapt to the culture of every country she went to. She is indeed a true cosmopolitan. F. W. said that different cultures have different ways of expressing emotions through language, and once one is able to grasp it, s/he will become adaptable. S/he can also become more acceptable to their community if s/he shows interest in their culture, for instance, by picking up a few words and phrases of their language, listening to their music, trying out their cuisine, etcetera

4.1.4. M. S.

i. Language use and cultural experience in school (10 years)

M. S. was admitted to a missionary school in Kurseong in grade 1. Although students were expected to speak in English, M. S. was not very fluent in it. She picked up Hindi before English as her class teachers spoke in Hindi with her. By grade 3, she began to speak English fluently. M. S. was also exposed to Nepali as the domestic workers, attendants, some students and faculties spoke in it. With time, she started to use some Nepali sentences, phrases and exclamations in her conversations, such as” Timilai maya kardechhu” (I love you), “Kosto chha?” (How are you?) and ‘Ammamama!’(used to express shock and annoyance). Gradually, she learnt the language and became fluent in it. However, in the process of learning so many languages and with little to no exposure to Bengali, she almost forgot how to speak in it.

In grade 6, M. S. joined the school in Siliguri to which B. K. and F. W. went. Although English was dominant, she used Hindi jargons like ‘areh jaar!’, ‘Kuch bhi bolta hai ye’ (S/he speaks anything he likes). Sometimes, teachers too used them. In contrast to her previous school, Bengali was more dominant than Nepali after English and Hindi. There were many Bangladeshi and Bengali-speaking students, nurses and faculties who occasionally spoke in the language. M. S. also mentioned that most Bangladeshi students spoke better English than others, but it was not necessarily used to get accustomed to the Indian culture. The Bangladeshis gelled with each other due to the commonality of nationality, language and culture.

ii. Language use and cultural experience in high school and university (4th year)

M. S. came back to Bangladesh after completing 10th grade and was home-schooled for two years. She was adequately exposed to the Bangladeshi culture only after joining a private university in Dhaka. M. S. could speak fluently in Dhakaiya (a dialect of Bengali language

spoken among people living in Dhaka) but lacked knowledge of written Bengali and its vocabulary as she had studied Hindi as her second language in school.

iii. Opinions on translanguaging

M. S. said that it is very challenging for bilinguals to speak in one language unless they are in a formal setting because there is a tendency to mix languages unconsciously. She also suggested code-mixing for removing communication noises or barriers between the same native speakers communicating in English. M.S. added that language is subject to change, and the English language too has undergone many transformations over the years. Hence, it is most likely for bilingual/multilingual teachers of the English language and literature and the Communications departments to preserve the authenticity of languages as they are used to switching them.

Notwithstanding, M. S. discourages translanguaging during teaching because students will consciously and subconsciously believe it to be the norm and eventually practice it. Teachers can only code-switch to students' native languages for explaining a sentence or a word in English. M. S. further exemplified Raba Khan's book, *বান্ধবি* (Bandhobi, meaning friend) as a representation of the typical Banglish speech and claimed that it butchered both languages. She also noted the invalidity of translations. According to her, language is more than encoding and decoding as it has an emotional value. Messages cannot always be translated with the exact emotion portrayed and can often be misperceived.

iv. Linguistic and cultural identity

M. S. is still seen differently as a Bangladeshi. This, she reasoned, had a lot to do with her more liberal conditioning at home and school and her religious identity as a Hindu. At her university, she was teased with names like 'Rajakar', 'Manufactured in Bangladesh and

assembled in India’, ‘hybrid’, ‘didimoni’ and the list continues. M.S. had also faced an impediment in her job as a freelance reporter, where she could not read the Bengali headlines of newspapers. Upon seeking help, a coworker remarked, asking her to learn to read and write Bengali if she wanted to be a Bangladeshi! To this day, she continues to face cultural shock amongst her friends in many contexts, such as women's rights and opportunities, gender roles, etcetera and finds it difficult to communicate with her friends in written Bengali.

4.1.5. T. R.

i. Language use and cultural experience in school (7 years)

When T. R. joined the boarding school in Siliguri, he did not know how to speak English but understood Hindi. Within three months of rigorous practice through interaction with other students and translating words from Bengali to English, he was able to master speaking English. The language almost felt natural to him as students primarily spoke in it and only code-switched with non-English speakers. Furthermore, he was able to adjust easily in an environment different from home as his nationality and culture were never used as grounds for discrimination. One’s ability to speak in English was also not used to judge his/her status.

ii. Language use and cultural experience in high school (2 years)

After completing school, T. R. joined a day-boarding institution in Siliguri to complete his high school. There, students mostly used their native languages. By then, T. R. was already well-versed in English, Bengali and Hindi, making it easier for him to mix with speakers of those languages. However, he could not communicate properly with the Nepali-speaking students in his school as he did not speak the language. This made him feel secluded from them.

iii. Language use and cultural experience in university (2nd year)

T. R. shifted to Saskatoon in Canada after completing high school and has been living there since. Like F. W., he is exposed to diverse cultures. He is currently studying and working as the manager of a company, which has made him interact with people from over 40 nations. T. R. had noticed that these interactions depended on how he presented himself and carried out conversations rather than his ethnicity. He further opined that humans are more susceptible to psychological cues than cultural ones, and he tries to interpret the former cues to interact effectively. Besides, T. R. speaks fluent English, which he claimed is beneficial for blending and coexistence among cultures. By speaking in a common language, people can also have an idea about other cultures, identify their social cues and in the process, are ultimately unified.

iv. Opinions on translanguaging

T. R. discourages the practice of translanguaging in classrooms upon reflecting on the rules imposed at school, which emphasized grammatically correct spoken English. If students are taught in a universal medium such as English in English medium schools and English language courses, it will help them master proper spoken English. Translations can sometimes be allowed, but teachers must not encourage students to speak in their mother tongue in these classes as it will not enrich their vocabulary. Students must also be encouraged to speak in English, even if it is broken, as with time and more interaction, they will become fluent.

Furthermore, T. R. admitted to suffering from communication glitches sometimes. He generalizes and misplaces words or makes grammatical errors which, if pointed out, hinders his confidence, makes him anxious and causes him to stutter. This mostly happens when he is communicating with his landlord, who is a very proficient native English speaker. T. R. also

pointed out that the transition from English to Bengali and vice versa is not smooth because different tongue movements have to be produced to utter words in the respective languages.

v. Linguistic and cultural identity

In India, T. R. lived among students with varying linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds, who bonded despite their differences. He thus summed it up as a lifestyle rather than as the Indian culture. Though T. R. can easily blend in with different cultures, he cannot fully adopt their habits, attitudes and customs. He places more importance on his principles rather than socio-cultural attitudes and dictations. T. R. still identifies himself as a Bangladeshi even though a lot of people in Canada assume that he is an Indian due to his accent, skin colour and the prominence of the Indian diaspora in the country.

4.2. Phase 2 (Interview)

4.2.1. B. K.

i. Opinions on translanguaging

B. K. finds it confusing to use vocabularies from two or more languages altogether in her speech. She said, “It’s like a hodgepodge”. B. K. also reasoned that though translanguaging helps the other person understand better, she feels dissatisfied for not having spoken more articulately. She also does not find the need to translanguage most of the time as she lacks command of other languages. Instead, she can remember the English equivalents of words in Bengali and Hindi better. Moreover, B. K. places importance on the language’s grammar and structure. She said that she instantly rectifies any grammatical errors she makes. B. K. stated that translanguaging could also have disastrous impacts on students’ writing. According to her, writing is just like speaking and depending on one’s mother tongue to write in English, as in translation, will not

produce good writings. If students require help in understanding complex concepts, the teacher can use simple English words, diagrams or take the help of visual aids to break down meaning.

ii. Linguistic and cultural identity:

B. K. is more at home with Hindi than Bengali as she understands it better. She feels puzzled when she comes across complicated Bengali terms. During her school years, English acted as a unifying element among a multilingual and multicultural group of students and teachers. They felt a sense of belonging and even expressed all kinds of emotions in the language. Furthermore, a common language prevented the rise of class or cultural differences and misconceptions about cultures. However, she admitted to feeling left out during her high school years. Hailing from a unique linguistic-cultural background, B. K. was a minority among the majority Nepali-speaking students and teachers. She felt excluded as they constantly conversed in Nepali which she could not understand so well. During her first year at the hostel, she was shunned for not being able to understand and speak the language. Language connects people, but in her case, it was the contrary. B. K. narrated an incident where she and a friend of hers asked their teacher to clarify a particular concept in class. The teacher then used Nepali to simplify the concept for them, assuming that it would be the correct language to speak in as it was the mother tongue of the majority, however overlooking B. K. and a few other students. Ironically, B. K. and her teacher had the same mother tongue. Despite everything, B. K. worked hard to adjust to her language situation. By her senior year, she was able to understand twenty percent of spoken Nepali but could not speak in it due to lack of practice. She also learnt the national anthem of Nepal. Besides, B. K. could also read Nepali as its alphabet system is almost similar to Hindi. When asked to share her thoughts on her experience in a multilingual and multiethnic environment, she said that she is happy to have lived such an experience as its

essence can never be accurately depicted in movies or books. Nonetheless, she claimed that she would be true to her national identity wherever she goes.

4.2.2. M. H.

i. Opinion on translanguaging

M. H. said that when people are surrounded by speakers of different languages, they are naturally motivated to learn their languages, which results in picking up words and hence translanguaging. However, she faces confusion when she employs translanguaging in conversations. Sometimes, she cannot remember the required/accurate English words and phrases to form sentences and thus has to elaborate their meaning by using simpler terms. Additionally, M. H. reveals that the practice of mixing up two languages in her speech has impacted her writing skills as she often muddles up the sentence structure and grammar of the two languages (English and Bengali). She also advocates using only English during English language classes for properly mastering the language, as she further recounts her own experience of learning English under a teacher who had a different mother tongue and continuously communicated in English in class.

ii. Linguistic and cultural identity

At M. H. 's school, the continuous practice of speaking in English helped in diluting students' and teachers' differences and unified them. On the other hand, Hindi was more understood and spoken than English at her paying guest and school in Siliguri, and dominated other languages. There was also a group culture among them. These groups were tied to each other due to a common language and culture, such as the Biharis, the Marwadis, the Nepalis and the Bengalis and Bangladeshis.

4.2.3. F. W.

i. Opinions on translanguaging

F. W. reasoned that it is natural for multilingual people to get confused when speaking in English (especially if it is not his/her first language) because they are constantly using and learning other languages. She also said that bilingual/multilingual students could seek clarification in their native language to improve their understanding. If the teacher does not speak the student's mother language, the student can seek the help of the dictionary or even other classmates and seniors who speak his/her native language. However, F. W. claimed that translanguaging could affect students' English writing skills as s/he can unconsciously follow the structure and grammar of his/her mother tongue or another language, which can lead to errors.

Furthermore, she emphasizes the constant practice of individual languages. F. W. exemplified herself as forgetting Cantonese, which she has not spoken for around 5-6 years. In a very recent incident, F. W. had to contact the visa office in Hong Kong to renew her passport. She had a difficult time communicating with the authorities as they did not speak any English. Presently, F. W. is motivated to learn Russian. She chuckled and said that as she already knows English and Cantonese, learning Russian would mean that she knows the language of the three world powers. Her Russian friends motivate her to learn the language too.

ii. Linguistic and cultural identity

F. W. discussed some of the issues with the language situation at her school in India. Since a larger number of students spoke in Hindi, they used to treat Bengali as a language almost alien to them, despite their school being located in West Bengal. She also noticed that when someone spoke in Bengali, some Hindi-speaking students used to feel uneasy and even make fun of the language and its words. Such treatment, however, did not extend to the Nepali-speaking

students despite them being a minority. Thus, F. W. credits the English language for helping in toning down these linguistic and cultural differences among students in her school. Had it not been religiously practiced, it would create deeper segregations among the linguistic groups. Additionally, F. W. holds every language equally important even though one might claim that English, French and Chinese are the most important in Canada, where she resides. She also does not consider herself a part of any culture or regard her upbringing as one according to any specific culture.

4.2.4. M. S.

i. Opinions on translanguaging

With English as the lingua franca and a bridge of communication between different language speakers, the practice of translanguaging may prove to be a hindrance if it becomes a solid habit. Dependence on using phrases and expressions from one's mother tongue or other languages, for instance, "achcha" (okay), "toh" (so) in English, can appear in one's formal speech. Nevertheless, M. S. said that by being able to learn and use multiple languages, one can truly appreciate cultures, feel one with them and hence, truly understand diversity.

ii. Linguistic and cultural identity

M. S. is a free spirit, but it is seen as taboo for a woman in her society. Certain gestures like hugging a male friend or being very vocal and active are not taken lightly, even by the students of her university, which she claims would be treated as normal back in India. Moreover, she also had to take a compulsory Bengali language course at her university. Her struggles with written Bengali had been misjudged and highly criticized. Some students called her pretentious and a show-off for not knowing Bengali. To top it all, her Bengali language faculty ridiculed her

for pronouncing the Bengali word ‘Shongskriti’ in Hindi as ‘Sanskriti’, despite being informed of her educational background by the university authorities.

4.2.5. T. R.

i. Opinions on translanguaging

T. R. sometimes faces difficulty in precisely describing an emotion or a thought as he falls short of vocabulary. Consequently, he tends to use more words to describe it. As a multilingual, T. R. thinks in his native language but speaks in the target language, which often causes difficulty and errors in his speech. This has led him to become more subconsciously aware of grammar, mainly English, when he switches languages. T. R. further emphasizes using correct grammar in speech, as according to him, more attention is paid to it, especially by native speakers. One will be considered a poor speaker if s/he makes grammatical errors, but if s/he does not use precise vocabulary, it will be often overlooked. He further said that it would be unprofessional of a teacher to translanguage in an English language class, especially when teaching students of multiple cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, he admits that the practice of translanguaging has offered him job advantages as he found more people willing to work with him. His multilingual and multicultural background and experiences have also helped him to identify social cues and analyze people’s thought processes.

ii. Linguistic and cultural identity

Although T.R. was primarily motivated to learn English at school, he was keen to learn Hindi too, as he did not want to feel excluded from the Hindi-speaking majority. Besides, he was also taught to read and write in Hindi as a third language. During his high school years, T. R. furnished his Hindi speaking skills because it was the primary mode of communication among his peers. He also began to sound like a typical Hindi speaker from South Delhi or New Mumbai.

Moreover, he had at least two languages in common with his peers, which permitted him to use them according to the need of the situation. T. R. also attempted to learn and speak some Nepali upon encountering Nepali-speaking students in his school.

Currently, T. R.'s motivation to learn new languages has become stagnant despite being surrounded by people of different tongues. This is because, in Canada, people use English as the main mode of communication. Nevertheless, T. R said that if his environment or situation requires him to learn a new language, it will surge in him a new drive to master it. Finally, T. R. claimed that he feels like a part of every culture. However, he does not hold a special tie with any, including his own culture. As much as he upholds Bangla, the Bangladeshi culture and its history, he refrains from showing extreme pride and adherence.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter includes the discussion of the data from findings under the three themes, namely:

5.1. Inability of using English only

It was found that B. K. feels dissatisfied when she cannot carry out her speech fluently due to code-mixing and code-switching. This is because when she employs different words in a single language or shifts from one language to the other, it causes breaks in her speech, thus reducing spontaneity and making her sound less fluent. Besides, translanguaging can also impact proficient speakers. T. R. said that he often thinks in his mother tongue and converts the same into English which causes him to generalize words and even misplace them. It is true that we as bilinguals and multilinguals tend to think in too many languages. Hence, our mental dictionary consists of words in different languages, which either mean the same or are similar to an English word. We may often become accustomed to using translated versions, which may be similar to English words. This results in generalizing or simplifying words which make us less precise with our selection of words.

Furthermore, it is probable that the students in B. K. 's university who depend on Bengali to speak in English stutter, take long pauses and use fillers to bridge the time taken to think in their mother language and translate them into the target language. Such dependency on translations from native tongue coupled with lack of practice in speaking English can often result in the delivery of an unsatisfactory performance. Though one's speech may be pregnant with rich findings, frequent pauses and sounds like 'umm' and 'hmm' can disrupt fluency and the flow of the overall discourse. Teachers may lose focus and also become irritated. Vyshnevskaya et al. inform that many educators discourage the practice of L2 by students as it is a threat to an "English only" instruction medium. A majority of teachers (more than 76%) in his study,

strongly believe that translanguaging limits opportunities for proficient English speakers to practice speaking in the language and thus obstructs the creation of an “effective foreign language environment”, which may negatively impact their thought processes in English (2021, p.1, 6). Many participants also claimed that it is unprofessional for students and especially teachers to translanguage in classrooms because it would be inconsiderate of the teacher to favour his/her native or any other language s/he knows in a multilingual class setting. This is adequately true as it can cause considerable confusion among students who do not understand the language. Moreover, students who speak the teacher’s language may receive more favour and start dominating in class, thus creating power dynamics among students.

One of the participants warned that students can subconsciously and unconsciously adopt translingual speaking as the norm, which is almost suicidal for a beginner attempting to learn the language. Beginners and especially children, have insufficient knowledge of the target language. It is very likely for them to emulate the teacher by observing and absorbing how the language is taught and then reproduce the exact language forms without fully understanding. As a solution to this, T. R. suggested that beginners practice speaking English, even in its most battered form, which the researcher too advocates. Through regular interactions and communication in English with better or proficient speakers, learners will be able to grasp the language’s rules subconsciously, and as a result, learn the correct forms and rectify mistakes. The speech of proficient speakers can act as a model, and they themselves can act as a source of extrinsic motivation for them. Besides, casual interactions also help to enrich vocabulary. Gradually, these learners will achieve a natural flow and command of the language. Their learning will also become solidified in language classes where teachers provide explanations to language rules, take tests and even communicate with them in proper English. Additionally, positive

reinforcements like words of encouragement and gifts can go a long way in facilitating a beginner's language learning journey.

M. H. and M. S. admitted to using Bengali phrases and expressions unconsciously, which may be early signs of internalization. In response to a question about continuous dependence on translanguaging having an effect on grammar, M. H. said, "(...) You know when I was in boarding school, we used to use English almost all the time so at that time, command over the language, my command over the language was really goodAfter I came to Bangladesh, even now when I'm speaking, I don't know, unknowingly, I might have used Bangla words (...)"

This implies that the habitual practice of using phrases from other languages when speaking in English can become ingrained and gradually reflected in students' formal English speech.

Furthermore, dependence on translanguaging can even impact learners' writing skills. Grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, and other language components considerably vary from one another, which indicates that learners must prevent using translations. It was found that various research studies on translanguaging in writing are based on Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia which means "the simultaneous use of different kinds of speech or other signs, the tension between them, and their conflicting relationship within one text" (Ivanov, 1999, p. 100).

Translanguaging in writing can always be encouraged and endorsed to bring about awareness of languages, appreciate a nation and its culture, and shed light on conflicts. However, such a writing style may not have a fair chance of being practiced in most English medium educational institutions as it derails the purpose of teaching English/in English.

5.2. Inaccurate use of the language

T. R. identified how rough the transition from English to Bengali is and vice versa due to the different tongue movements he has to make for producing words in the respective languages.

He also admitted that it sometimes causes errors. This is because English is an intonation language while Bengali is a flat language. Naturally, the constant process of switching will not be smooth and cause one's tongue to slip or twist. As a consequence, he may mispronounce or even make grammatical errors such as missing out on the plural 's' or the third person singular 's', etcetera. T. R. also admitted that errors like these tend to make him feel anxious, lose confidence and become overly cautious about grammar and rules of sentence constructions. This shows that he cannot converse with ease. Moreover, constant thinking about right and wrong forms and language rules can create more confusion, causing one to stammer, use fillers to fill the gap in conversations and make more errors.

The findings also indicate that three of the participants face confusion while translanguaging. Switching from one language to the other tends to cause a shift in their thinking processes and thus cause errors. English has an SVO syntax structure while Bengali has an SOV syntax structure. Translanguaging can cause a person to jumble up the two. For instance, "I told you je proshnota na korte" translates to "I told you not to ask the question". Here, the sentence started with an SVO structure (I and told), only to end up in an SOV structure when the speaker switched to Bengali, thus causing an irregularity. This is a very simple example of intra-utterance code-mixing, which can also be employed when a person forgets a word in the target language and turns to his/her mother language. Bernardini & Schlyter discovered that when bilingual children code-mix, they tend to use more complex syntactic structures from their stronger language and content morphemes and phrases from their weaker language in order to facilitate their communicative capacity in the weaker language (2004). Transitions like these often cause errors in speech in the form of grammatical errors, structural misconstruction, falling short of words, etcetera. Canagarajah highlights that it is difficult to identify these errors, as

translanguaging does not recognize interference from other languages. They are, in fact, seen as creative constructions and facilitators rather than as hampering communication (2011). A major limitation to this section of findings is the lack of samples of translingual texts, which could otherwise have proven useful as real-life examples.

Furthermore, if a student constantly relies on his/her mother tongue or a third language to speak in English, s/he may face difficulty in remembering the simplest of words. M. H. admitted to breaking down the meaning of a word she wants to use but has forgotten into simpler words. Although this may help accelerate a conversation and improve communication, constant reliance will make students endorse casual speech on formal occasions, resulting in losing precision and appeal. Rhetoric or formal and informal speeches can only have a strong appeal if accurate words are used. Moreover, M.S. highlighted that translations cannot convey the exact emotion. For instance, the Hindi phrase ‘khane baetho’ roughly translates to ‘Have dinner’. However, the English phrase would not convey the same emotional appeal as it shows less belongingness. ‘Baetho’ has a hidden ‘you’, while it is not the case for the English phrase. Moreover, by using the Hindi phrase, the subject asks the object to sit down and have dinner, whereas when one uses the English phrase, the object can have his dinner any way he wishes. Thus, it is possible that translations like this can cause misinterpretation of words and feelings. Furthermore, many participants also claimed that Google Translate is faulty. This makes language more humane as it cannot be restricted to most scientific categorizations.

Another downside of using translations is making grammatical and syntactic errors. For instance, the word ‘put’ does not have a past or past participle form. The sentence, “He put the book on the table”, would mean that the subject had performed or is performing the action. If you translate it to Bengali, it would either be “Shey boi ti rekhechhilo” or “Shey boi ti

rekhechhe”. Notice that there is a change in the form of the word ‘put’ in Bengali due to a change in the tense while it remains constant in English. Now, if a student makes the mistake of comparing ‘put’ with the Bengali word ‘rekhechhilo’, s/_he will generally assume that the suffix ‘-ed’ needs to be added to ‘put’ to convert it in its past tense. Hence, ‘putted’ becomes an incorrect form of the word ‘put’. Making errors in such simple words often tends to annoy English language teachers. On the other hand, speakers may also lose appeal, attention and may not be taken seriously.

5.3. Possibility of suffering psychosocial problems

All the participants studied in schools that imposed the practice of speaking in a single language, i.e. English. One may argue that this imposition of language encouraged students to judge and jeer at those who were weaker at it, which in turn can demotivate students from learning the language. Bailey, who analyzed the diaries of 11 learners, concluded that they tended to feel anxious when they compared themselves with other students in class and found themselves less proficient (1983). However, in an English medium school, it is expected of students to speak proper English so that they can perform well in their speaking and writing exams. Moreover, constant communication in the English language helped to level linguistic, cultural and even economic inequality among students. Nevertheless, F. W. claimed that the Bengali language was ridiculed and treated as almost alien by some Hindi-speaking students who were the majority in the same school. Such treatment, however, did not extend to the Nepali-speaking students. Possible explanations could be that (i) the Bengalis were larger in number than the Nepalese. Therefore, there might have been some sort of tension between the two majority language groups and (ii) the Nepali and Hindi languages share a similar alphabet system which may have reduced discriminatory attitudes.

Upon transferring to high schools whose medium was also English, B. K., M. H., and T. R. faced a change in their language situation as speaking in one's mother language was encouraged. Consequently, various linguistic and cultural groups were formed. M. H. said that students in her high school and at the paying guest were segregated into linguistic/cultural groups. M. H. and her other Bangladeshi friends kept together, which was also done by F. W. and M. S. at their school. Small quotes his professor, Giddings, and says that under circumstances where people of the same nationality are in different parts of the world, the bond they have is called "consciousness of kind", which holds more meaning than physical nearness. They maintain energetic group relationships (1915).

In responding to a question on feeling left out due to the dominance of a particular culture, F. W. said, "(...) So when I first joined, during my first few months there, I think there was something about my accent that they didn't find acceptable, like I had to switch up my accent and make it sound like theirs in order for them to really accept me (...)". This is a clear case of accent bias. F. W. was made to lose her Asian-British accent and thus give up a part of her identity. On the same note, B. K. did not know how to speak the Nepali language and was discriminated against and shunned. Likewise, T. R. felt isolated from the Nepali-speaking majority as he neither spoke nor understood it very well. He says, "(...) Even if you are among their groups, you would feel a little bit left out because you did not speak in their language (...)". Ford details that the language marginalization process can include "any action or attitude, conscious or unconscious, that subordinates an individual or group based on language (1994, p.11). Therefore, it is obvious that the participants and the other language group felt a culture gap in their interactions. After all, language connects people, and both B. K. and T. R. could not connect with them properly. It is also unfortunate to know how B. K's teacher generalized that

everyone knew Nepali while completely excluding the students belonging to minority language groups. This shows how language can be used to segregate, dominate and demoralize. There is nothing wrong with assimilating to a different culture, but it must not be felt forced. Forceful assimilation can only make one feel ashamed of his/her identity, face an identity crisis and eventually deny it. It also hints at how schools do not appreciate and tolerate diversity. On account of this, Jaspers informs that although translanguaging may mostly be assumed as liberal, it can become a “dominating force” and exclude all other issues with the language, such as those concerned with the maintenance of minority languages (2017, p.9). It must be noted that although B. K. 's school imposed English speaking, it did not regard any particular Indian culture as superior, which is probably why no such cultural cum linguistic clans were formed among students. The speaking of English instead helped them put their differences aside and value one another for who they are.

When M. H. and M.S. returned to Bangladesh, they faced a culture gap. A popular explanation is that it is natural for people to feel a culture gap after spending a long time in a country and then shifting to a new one. One can feel the same in their own country too. Moreover, T. R. confessed that he does not feel like a part of any culture, including that of his own country. At school, he could neither feel patriotic about India as it was not his motherland nor could he feel the same about Bangladesh as he stayed away from home. All of these experiences also have a lot to do with the education they received and their upbringing in India, which had little to do with the Bangladeshi culture. The education system plays a vital role in assimilating feelings of patriotism by teaching subjects like history, civics, geography and literature. The participants were devoid of such feelings as they were unable to feel patriotic about a country to which they knew they did not belong. At the same time, their upbringing was

attuned to the Indian culture, which is different from that of the Bangladeshi culture, despite their many similarities. For the same reason, M. H. was called an ‘Indian’ at her university and a ‘Bangladeshi’ at her school and high school in India, which shows that she belongs to both cultures. According to Walter Feinberg (1998), when children with different social and cultural identities are grouped together, they share a common school experience and learn to cooperate, which later results in consolidation of identities, intergroup tolerance and engagement in various societal issues.

However, it must also be noted that M. S. faced discrimination in her country which is not only due to her upbringing in India and her inability to read and write in Bengali, but also extends to her religious identity as a Hindu. In comparison to B. K. and M. H. who are also studying in Bangladeshi universities, M. S. had been insulted and in fact, mentally abused by being called names like ‘Rajakar’ (a traitor of the nation) and ‘Didimoni’ (due to her religious orientation). Her lack of knowledge of written Bengali has been ridiculed and scorned, even by her teacher, which is highly unethical and demoralizing. Continuous discriminatory acts and attitudes like these will only prove detrimental as they naturally wear one’s spirit down and the will to be identified as a part of a nation. Moreover, when her coworker made a remark at her to read and write Bengali to be called a Bangladeshi, it clearly meant that she could not be accepted so easily as a citizen with a lack of knowledge of her own mother tongue. Yet, a person’s nationality can never be defined on the basis of his/her knowledge of the mother tongue. In that sense, how have Bangladeshi settlers in other countries secured their nationality as Bangladeshi if they are not residing in their own country or do not know how to speak or write in Bengali?

This confusion of identities is also very prominent in F. W.’s case. Since childhood, F. W. was made to learn languages from two entirely different language groups- Indo-Aryan

(English and Bengali) and Sino Tibetan (Cantonese and Mandarin), which explains why she faced confusion. She was also raised in a mixed culture of the Bangladeshi and the Chinese, which created identity clashes. She said, “(...) So being a mixed-race child, no matter what race you are mixed in, there’s always this feeling of uhh, like, you’re not considered as either one by both sides of the family(...)”. F. W. had evidently suffered from a biracial identity crisis, which happens to people who identify as more than one race. They feel that they do not completely belong to one race, or have to choose a side, or are unable to identify themselves as either one because they cannot meet the expectations of the society (Norwood, 2019). F. W. also faced discrimination from her society because she looked different. Speaking in her native language (Cantonese) also did not help in bonding with her classmates. Nevertheless, F. W. was resilient and always found a way to adapt. In a study by Binning and his associates of Stanford University, it was found that multiracial individuals have various psychological benefits, such as standing one’s ground, not giving in to the social pressure of identifying oneself to a certain ethnicity, which shows resilience. They have a broader sense of conformity which has proven more socially and psychologically beneficial (Norwood, 2019).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Summary of the Findings

From the findings, it was found that four of the participants almost regularly use translinguaging and admit to facing a few problems with their English speaking. The participants encourage its use in informal situations such as communicating with their family members and friends.

However, they discourage it in formal settings and especially in an English language classroom.

They also highlighted the grammatical and structural differences between languages and how translinguaging can result in errors and miscommunication. Furthermore, every participant had a story to tell about their experiences in school and university regarding the psychosocial problems they have either faced or are still facing due to their linguistic, ethnic and religious orientation.

6.2. Practical Implication

First and foremost, this dissertation will help students, teachers and researchers to know about the impacts of translinguaging in their daily speech on formal discourses in speaking English. Education boards and school authorities can implement policies, and teachers can design tasks based on the appropriate amount of translinguaging in classrooms. Secondly, the stories and experiences of all five participants are indicative of significant social and psychological discrimination. Schools must ensure a space where students can relate to their everyday language practices as it will help them maintain a dignified position in a multilingual setting and also recognize their bilingual or multilingual identity (Reyes & Vallone, 2007). Thus, schools and education boards must implement their language policies to create and maintain a non-discriminatory and tolerant environment for bilingual/multilingual students.

6.3. Recommendations

It is not an easy task to implement the policies concerning an appropriate amount of translanguaging in classrooms while keeping an account of every student's linguistic and ethnic backgrounds and religious orientations. However, the researcher can recommend some essential tips on forming an effective and mutually inclusive English language learning environment for students:

- The English language must be used as the medium of teaching in class. However, code-switching, code-mixing and translations can be adopted in necessary situations like providing further clarification on a topic or helping an international student to adjust in the classroom. Moreover, every language must be given due respect.
- Teachers must strive to create an inclusive environment for their students and refrain from biases or morally discouraging acts of any kind.
- Formation of a counseling department in all educational institutions for helping students who face discrimination and to improve their speaking and writing skills.

6.4. Further Studies

This study tells the story of only five individuals. Researchers can conduct broader studies of multilingual and biracial students by using a mixed method. Focus group discussions, face-to-face interviews and quantitative surveys can be conducted to record the speech and non-verbal behaviour of participants, which can be analyzed to determine the rate of translanguaging and other issues. Furthermore, translanguaging in writing needs to be thoroughly studied by analyzing translingual texts of students, teachers, books, etcetera.

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Appendix I

Questionnaire

Opening Note

This questionnaire has been designed to study the emerging issues of translanguaging in speaking English. The purpose is to collect information for my undergrad thesis. If you attend this questionnaire, you are requested to be a part of a follow-up interview whose timing will be mentioned to you later. Your responses are very valuable and will be kept confidential. You may wish to withdraw at any time.

First, let us get familiar with the term 'translanguaging'!

It is the process of using multiple languages at once for effective communication.

Questions:

1. Write down the initials of your name.
2. What is your nationality?
3. Write down the name and location of your school, high school and university. (Separate with a comma)
4. How many years have you spent in India?
5. Please state your native language, second language, third language or more in order.
6. In your entire academic life, you must have been surrounded by speakers of a variety of languages. What languages did you begin to understand and even learn to speak?
7. What words, phrases, idioms, or quotes do you regularly use from other languages when you speak English? If you do not, then you can leave it blank.
8. Do you feel that translanguaging is good for learning to speak English? Please explain why. If you disagree, then please answer the next question.

9. Do you feel that English must be spoken as a separate language because becoming too dependent on translanguaging can lead one to make errors? Please explain why.
10. Are you able to speak English fluently without using other languages as occasional help?
11. Do you think translations from one language to the other can always be relied upon? Why or why not?
12. Do you face social identity complexity (having multiple social identities and being unable to recognize oneself as a part of a specific group and here, a particular linguistic-cultural group) or any other such problem? Can you briefly explain how you see yourself as?
13. Do you believe that using many languages along with English is a way of recognizing cultural diversity? Why or why not?

Appendix II

Semi-structured interview (1)

- ❖ The interview was conducted by expanding on the responses of the participants to the questionnaire.
- ❖ In addition, a few questions were asked:
 1. Describe your stay in India by specifically focusing on the language situation there.
 2. How did the Bangladeshi students get along with local students, students from other states, and other countries? Did they want to be accommodated in a new society by speaking in English?
 3. During your stay in India, did you feel that you could not mix with a specific group of people because you did not speak in their language and hence felt the need to adopt that language or even their culture? Did you think that a certain language was powerful? Did you feel left out?
 4. Do you believe that using many languages along with English is a way of recognizing cultural diversity?
 5. How do you look at the code-switching and code-mixing practices? Are they beneficial in learning how to speak in English?

Appendix III

Semi-structured Interview (2)

The interview was conducted on the basis of the following core questions:

1. What is important to you- using different languages to make meaning of what you say or preserving the correct form and structure of spoken English?
2. It may be possible that the teacher of an English language class may not speak the same mother language as the students. Do you think students' learning can be affected in such a case?
3. Do you feel confused when you are using different languages at the same time and have to put an effort to remember a word, quote or anything?
4. Do you believe that dependency on translanguaging in speaking English can hamper your writing skills?
5. Does using multiple languages make you feel motivated to learn them?
6. During your stay at school, you were exposed to many languages. Have you, for once, felt that a more commonly spoken language assumed more power and that such power was used to exclude minor language groups?
7. Do you think that strict speaking in English at school helped to dilute linguistic and cultural differences with other students?
8. How has translanguaging affected you culturally?