

**Addressing Translanguaging Practices at Higher Education in a Bilingual Virtual Learning
Environment involving learners from Diverse Regions of Colombia**

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Abstract

This qualitative research project employed an exploratory study aiming to address translanguaging practices in a Bilingual Virtual Learning Environment (BVLE) of higher education settled in diverse regions of Colombia, through an open online questionnaire and the observation technique for achieving three goals: to explore the relevance of translanguaging practices in a higher education setting, to design a proposal with those practices adapted and thought up to the study context and to determine the implementation's influence on the selected practices. This project arose from the need to overcome a monolingual perspective and analyze the perceptions of students about taking advantage of both languages -English and Spanish- in BVLE and the tensions related to bilingualism in this multicultural context. As a result, this study expects all the participants and agents of higher education to reflect upon bilingualism, and their roles when exploring new pedagogical approaches in language learning.

Key words: translanguaging, higher education, Bilingual Virtual Learning Environment (BVLE), multicultural context, monolingual perspective, exploratory study.

Resumen

Este proyecto de investigación cualitativa empleó un estudio exploratorio con el fin de abordar las prácticas de translanguaging en un Ambiente Bilingüe Virtual de Aprendizaje (ABVA) de educación superior establecido en diversas regiones de Colombia, a través de un cuestionario abierto y en línea y la observación como técnica para alcanzar tres objetivos: explorar la relevancia de las prácticas de translanguaging en un escenario de educación superior, diseñar una propuesta con dichas prácticas adaptadas y pensadas para el contexto de estudio y determinar la influencia de la implementación de las prácticas seleccionadas. Este proyecto surgió de la necesidad de superar una perspectiva monolingüe y analizar las percepciones de los aprendices sobre el aprovechamiento de ambas lenguas -inglés y español- en un ABVA y las tensiones relacionadas con el bilingüismo en este contexto multicultural. Como resultado, este estudio espera que todos los participantes y agentes de la educación superior reflexionen sobre sus roles a la hora de explorar nuevos enfoques pedagógicos en el aprendizaje bilingüe.

Palabras clave: translanguaging, educación superior, Ambiente Bilingüe Virtual de Aprendizaje (ABVA), contexto multicultural, perspectiva monolingüe, estudio exploratorio.



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Introduction

According to UNESCO (2022) "the pandemic has unleashed the biggest educational crisis in a hundred years" (p.6). This is why the entire world has had to make an abrupt leap toward the intensive use of digital resources to ensure the continuity of academic processes at all levels of education. Being aware of the worldwide situation shares specific effects after the pandemic related to what Tesar (2020) mentions about university instructors and students who were forced to adopt new repertoires to handle academic discourse under the "new normal", including looking for viable solutions to guarantee all students could access the virtual new modality of learning.

Counting on language learners from diverse backgrounds, cultures, needs, ages, and careers in a common group requires a lot of perspicacity from the teacher to manage these learners so that they establish and demonstrate solid interpersonal relationships, procure a sense of collaborative work, develop communicative skills, and comprehend the diversity they find out among them. With no doubt, when learners sign up for a class, they have a common goal which is to be successful during and at the end of the educational process; nevertheless, the situation could change over time finding differences regarding language levels, empathy, confidence, and face a monolingual setting that might exclude the socio-cultural and language learning characteristics among them.

This project arose from the need of overcome a monolingual perspective analyzing the perceptions of students about taking advantage of English and Spanish languages; in this sense given the relevance of the translanguaging and the correlation with the learning pedagogical practices it is framed within the MABA bilingualism axis. It sought in educators and learners a critical reflection about the linking of translanguaging practices that promote the role that communities play through the posture of the participants, that consider the complex and different

ways of learning that language users have, allowing the use of the native language and everything that the language users can draw on to take advantage of their repertoire and make sense of what they learn while making themselves understood by others and expand the options for argumentation; at the same time, promote the linguistic interactions of all participants, especially those with little participation (García, 2009).

Thus, recognizing and including translanguaging as a teaching-learning strategy will allow the language users of the study group at this private Colombian university to reflect on the development of their learning roles while working as a team with their peers without feeling the pressure experienced in a monolingual environment. In this sense, pedagogical practices should consider what Baker (2001) mentions about how helping language users strengthen their language weaknesses and enhances the creation of connections between their educational environment and their home and integrating them regardless of their language proficiency.

Reflecting on this reality, a qualitative and exploratory study guided by the following research question was conducted: How to address translanguaging practices in a bilingual virtual learning environment of higher education involving learners from diverse regions of Colombia?

1. Literature Review

Taking into account the arguments of evidence presented in the introduction analyzed by the group of researchers, and because one of the members of the research team was an active participant in the community where this study was carried out, it was evidenced by the fact that learners required a redefinition of bilingualism together with the reality of the modality of virtual education through which students from different regions of Colombia made part of, but, gaps in heterogeneous academic levels among them constitute big challenges for language learning, interaction, collaboration, and to achieve somehow the goals established by the language courses of the higher education institution.

In this sense, Bonilla & Rodríguez (2012) agree with the mindset that bilingualism can be understood from the perspective of living with two different identities and with a cultural diversity that prevents homogenization and unification of thought; besides it, García Benito (2009) highlights that currently, the societal changes taking place contribute to a growing occurrence of intercultural interactions. Those individuals engaging in these encounters, specifically those who immerse themselves in a new language and culture, are required not only to grasp the language and culture but also to embrace an alternative lifestyle. Consequently, one of the primary goals of language education in modern times is to foster the capacity to effectively navigate such intercultural encounters.

1.1 Contrapositions of Bilingualism in Colombian Higher Education.

Even though, enforcing a bilingual program must guarantee the priorities in education and its principles as UNESCO (2021) reports everybody has the right to education, inclusion, and learning throughout life as well as develop autonomy, decision-making, collaboration, and in general life skills. Various studies (Martinez, 2016; de Mejia, 2006) agree with the incoherence of Colombian standards for foreign language learning which have been structured regarding foreign models that do not necessarily fit the circumstances and contexts presented in the country by the “Colombia Bilingüe” program established in 2004 by the MEN (Ministerio de Educación Nacional). These standards obey an ideal of contribution to the insertion of the country in the processes of universal communication, the global economy, and cultural openness; however, in the real world this could be an imaginary aspiration since besides living in the same country, citizens do not have the same opportunities and conditions speaking of education, jobs, quality of life and access to learning a new language. Despite education is a human right, the social and economic factors varied according to geographical location, social class, and local politics.

Additionally, Bonilla & Tejada-Sanchez (2016) insist on the importance of seeing “bilingualism as an instrumental characteristic of the students, and not as a skill which carries much more than the linguistic code”; in this sense, bilingualism should be seen beyond that the possibility to communicate using correct grammar in the verbal or written expressions since being bilingual is to understand more the culture of others, respect his thoughts, and recognize there are not two equal people, and everyone has a different way to see life as happens in the educational multicampus context of the research setting. Garcia Benito (2009) expresses that more than learning a new language, it is to learn another culture and another way to live to avoid misunderstandings when facing cultural meetings since sometimes the message people express could result different from the real intention despite being linguistically “correct”.

Through the internal guidelines of the higher education institution, in this case a multi-campus private university, the Acuerdo Superior No. 459 (2019) establishes the English language as a mandatory requirement for the graduation of students enrolled in any undergraduate program of the university; therefore, it includes English levels at the curriculum to be carried out all through the academic semesters. In this sense, considering this agreement, students should confirm the following performance levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Foreign Languages bachelor's degree (C1); International Business (B2); Other professional programs (B1); Technical and technological programs (A2). It means, the participants involved in the research must overcome and complete successfully the English level, or, otherwise, they must certificate by an international sufficient exam the communicative competence and the equivalent English level previously mentioned, according to the academic program which is pursuing a degree at the university (Acuerdo Superior No. 459, 2019, artículo 10). Moreover, according to the 'Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo' (PNB), (2009), the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN) contemplates that students who have completed higher education programs from careers different than licenses to teach English must demonstrate proficiency in the intermediate B2 level regarding the CEFR.

As a disruptive consideration, it is necessary to estimate when designing curriculum in a higher education level that covers a multicultural country, to be on the same page which implies agreeing on goals and joining forces among policymakers, stakeholders, researchers, instructors, parents, and community because it is a common and collective well-being for the learners as the future professionals who will be in charge of a country and other citizens; to achieve it, various authors (Guerrero, 2008; Pedrozo, 2018) agree with a critical interculturality, recognized as a life project and a re-existence towards the collective well-being instead of an ethnic process of culture differences in order to elucidate to all those mobilized by the power configuration that reproduces

dehumanization, racism, subalternation of life, and exclusion; then, interculturality is called to transform society in a profound way considering other languages as part of a bilingualism instead of imposing only English as the language of the new world, and the one that opens scientific and technological progress with the exclusion of indigenous languages in a country like Colombia.

1.2 Addressing Bilingual Learning in Virtual Education Environments.

Ayu (2020) states, “with the growing importance of lifelong learning, virtual education has become a popular tool which is well received by 21st-century learners” (p. 48); hence, a virtual setting could result in more significant when the purpose is developing learners’ skills according to what they must demonstrate at this digital age. On this point, virtual environments should seek the implementation of a decolonial perspective considering the diversity professors, as well as learners, might find in a multicultural space where accepting others’ differences imply a critical gaze and deconstruction of knowledge. In the same way, it is pertinent to work on the students’ digital abilities collaboratively as it is claimed by Joynes et al. (2019) when declaring digital literacy in the 21st century indicates individual confidence in the use of media, proficiency, interactive digital skills, and critical use of digital tools, plus the ability to attend ethical responsibilities require in participatory culture in technology.

Additionally, some other studies (Martinez & Gallego, 2003; Todd et al, 2019; Ayu, 2020) confirm that learners can access anytime and anywhere as this learning occurs in order to be increasingly diverse; it provides learners with a broader range of cultural experiences, facilitates intercultural interactions, and allows for personalized language learning journeys. However, it is essential to balance online accessibility with real-life intercultural experiences to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded intercultural education. (Zabala, 2018). Thus, virtual education

makes it possible to overcome geographical barriers since it is not necessary to travel anywhere; hence, in coherence with the OECD (2023) the goal of inclusive education is to respond to all students' needs, going beyond school attendance and achievement, while improving all students' well-being and participation. For this reason, a virtual environment might be a possible way to combine study with work and family responsibilities considering learners can organize and make arrangements regarding their duties, and problems of demand since the same academic program can be followed and taken by people who share interests but who are from different geographical areas and contexts.

Then, Bilingual Virtual Learning Environment (BVLE) also gathers people with different interests but with the same goal, which is taking and finishing a course independently of their reasons. "This is a key advantage in online learning communities, where participants rarely know each other, may never meet, and may have little in common apart from their interest in the subject being studied" (Mason & Rennie, 2006, p. 108). Given that, in virtual settings interculturality is a main characteristic that is supposed to introduce diversity and the recognition of the "other"; however, the educational system has not rethought all those pedagogical, curricular, didactic, or evaluative actions that reproduce the subalternation or exclusion of the "other", instead it has remained as an added speech of diversity understood as convivence and tolerance. In fact, addressing bilingualism in virtual education implies the recognition of "the other"; also, it shows a universal and reciprocal character that leads the users of a language to recognize their own culture, make decisions, promote agency, identify themselves with others, and at the same time to give meaning and significance to the culture of speakers of other languages (Bonilla & Rodríguez, 2012; Walsh, 2012).

Taking into consideration this virtual bilingual learning environment in the field of study, participants may discover the great tools they have at hand due to the variety of learning

resources. In the same way, Araque (2022) argues, society, the government, and institutions must adapt needs to the “new reality” that is changing, it is innovative and disruptive; it means, the learning environment – including space and place - is integrated by the technology as well as it is favorable, flexible, collaborative, transformative, must be listened and generate new learning (Heraud et al.,2019; Rodriguez & Araque, 2021). Finally, emphasizing our virtual setting including synchronous and asynchronous sessions, Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2020) highlight the impressive growth in online education where teachers and learners cross boundaries and cultures to create, share knowledge, and design thinking. The great possibility of virtual environments is that everybody has space and is welcome in a heterogeneous group considering the linguistic and sociocultural diversity that links the participants allowing a transcultural integration (Araque-Torres & Rodriguez, 2021).

1.3 Translanguaging in a Multicultural Environment.

According to De Mejia (2016) Colombia has been recognized since the 1991 constitution as a multiethnic and multicultural country with around 69 indigenous languages spoken; despite that, the Colombian government has established a European model to measure bilingualism in the country where English is considered mainly as a means of competitiveness and internationalization. This last situation undervalues all the other languages recognized as co-official and determines only one language, English to be globally competitive; in this sense, translanguaging is considered a possible practice to recognize minorities and rescue the communicative meaning of language.

The concept of "Translanguaging" since its origins arises with different authors. On the one hand, Ofelia García as one of the leading representatives in recent decades; it has become increasingly popular among researchers and teachers alike might be due to its inclusive approach to language education, which may have transformative potential for schools and society (García & Wei, 2014). According to García (2009), translanguaging is the act performed by the user of a language to access different linguistic features of what are described as autonomous languages to maximize communicative potential; however, some researchers like Jaspers (2018) have criticized the concept for being inaccurate, as it is applied to describe different phenomena in classrooms and everyday interactions.

On the other hand, Lewis et al. (2012) clarify that translanguaging refers to using one language to reinforce the other to increase understanding and argue students' activity in both languages. It is relevant to distinguish between natural and official translanguaging, Williams (2012) exposes that natural translanguaging refers mainly to acts by students to learn, although it may also include that teachers use it to ensure full understanding of the subject; in contrast, official translanguaging is conducted and set up by the teacher and includes more planned actions, to deepen explanations to the class of complex parts of the topic being taught or to have profound discussions of language or social issues. The actual research focuses its efforts on taking the official translanguaging as a practice worthy of reflection in our Colombian higher education environment precisely for its planned and prepared character as mentioned before.

According to García and Wei "adopting a translanguaging lens means that there can be no way of educating learners inclusively without recognizing their diverse language and meaning-making practices as a resource to learn" (2014, p. 227). As the EDUCAUSE Horizon report by Pelletier (2022) shows, higher education takes place in particular social contexts and learning experiences where teaching and learning in higher education are fundamentally social practices. In

this sense, in relation to García & Kano (2014), the fact of including translanguaging as a teaching-learning strategy will permit the language users in the study context to make sense of their world, successfully across languages by combining semiotic signs, also allowing them to engage in learning going beyond just learning new language structures; instead permitting the integration of new language practices, that makes up in learners creating own repertoires of meaning-making resources emerging through social interaction. Without forgetting that translanguaging as pedagogy is transformative, has a sense of social justice, and involves purposes of enhancement, support, and expansion.

1.3.1 Translanguaging in higher education

Translanguaging has become a possible source to promote respect between the different contexts in a multicampus university to feel more comfortable communicating each other and expressing their own opinions with no barriers of communication but the commitment of participating in an active learning environment and a dialogical space of deconstructing bilingualism. As Sterzuk (2015) mentions “we can no longer position ‘sameness’ as a learning goal” (p. 64); in other words, it is recommended that universities move towards acknowledging differences and to determine ways to help the agents of learning adjust to heterogeneity. It is helpful to consider changes in thinking about English language ‘standards and policies as an act of decolonization. Then, translanguaging becomes a practice to let these changes mentioned above happen.

Two big challenges mentioned by Martinez (2016) involves changing the importance level of learning English for university students, due to the collective imagination of being the

requirement for graduation rather than a real valuable asset for future as well as the need to create plans in higher education institutions to develop strategies to improve the effectiveness of a foreign language learning; then, translanguaging has become a possible source to promote respect between the different contexts in a multicampus university to feel more comfortable communicating each other and expressing their own opinions with no barriers of communication but the commitment of participating in an active learning environment and a dialogical space of deconstructing bilingualism.

Addressing translanguaging practices in this multicultural context, enhance the construction of meaning and collaboration with each other by using the language they feel more comfortable with, considering that in a favorable bilingual environment, it could result quite common to find indigenous learners being a multicampus Colombian institution where English might result in their third language becoming a challenge for them to learn a new one and keep their own, fighting to it not be forgotten. The higher education institution counts on 17 seats distributed in different regions of Colombia, where learners who speak Wayu, Creole, Sikuni, or Huitoto, to name a few, might be part of the bilingual learning environment; it means, we can find a variety of ways of thinking, behaviors, and backgrounds where all people must be included and accepted; “language, race, and gender cannot continue to erect walls that create differences and end up mattering in education” (Wei & Garcia, 2022, p.322). In addition, all educational community is part of a multicampus university that accepts diversity, inclusive education, and favors the construction of equitable relationships between men and women as part of its inclusion and intercultural policy. (Acuerdo Superior No. 503, 2019).

The development of the literature review allowed the researchers to configure this proposal, which is necessary to determine the elements that must be considered for the project.

In this way, higher education is framed as the macro and first concept remarkable to propose a different view with some contrapositions about the determinisms established by the policy makers related to standardization in a Colombian context, and the requirements that through the last decades, the MEN has demanded to accomplish institutional goals set under the speech of globalization and competitiveness. Moreover, the second element related to BVLE became a challenge in the 21st century for both agents, professors, and learners who taking advantage of ubiquity, educators might research the trends and pedagogical approaches that allow students to learn for life and develop the required language, social, and digital skills to be a competent person and professional; in this sense, also learners as educational agents should handle autonomy, self-management, and life project. Finally, translanguaging is seen as an innovative pedagogical practice that involves a sense of opportunity and negotiation for language learning permitting to overcome a monolingual perspective, gain self-confidence and build and re-build knowledge where barriers and exclusion should not exist.

2. Method

The research design used a qualitative method, as Rojas (2010), and Maxwell (2019) mentioned the objective is to provide a research methodology to understand the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of the people who live them; this design had a flexible and emergent character that involved making decisions in context during the process. In this sense, we can declare that qualitative research is the study of people from what they say and do in the social and cultural setting, the researcher interacts with the participants and with the data, seeks answers to questions that focus on social experience, how it is created and how it gives meaning to human life.

This research project employed an exploratory study according to Batthyány et al. (2011) exploratory studies serve to prepare the ground and precede other types; these studies are characterized by being more flexible and broader in their methodology compared to descriptive or explanatory studies. In other words, Hatch (2002) mentions the objective of qualitative research is to understand the world by focusing on capturing the perceptions or perspectives of realities that surround the actors in specific social settings.

This exploratory qualitative study aimed to highlight and understand the experiences of translanguaging practices that have not been thoroughly studied in our country as have been abroad, this study aimed to get the following goal: to establish the influence of addressing translanguaging practices in a bilingual virtual learning environment for higher education learners settled in diverse regions of Colombia. Then, researchers sought to answer to the next objectives; the first, to explore with a group of students the relevance of translanguaging practices in a higher education setting focused on language learning, the second, to design a proposal with translanguaging practices for a group of higher education learners in a virtual modality setting, and

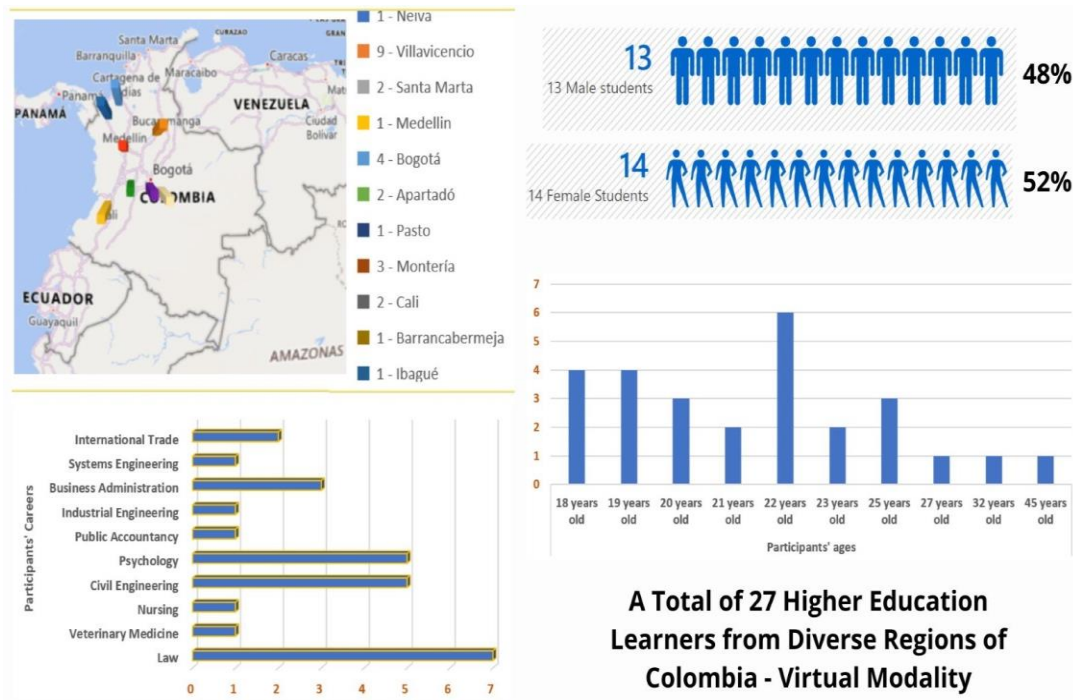
the third, to determine the implementation's influence on the selected translanguaging practices in a higher education setting focused on language learning.

2.1 Participants

The data generated by participants through the first instrument applied in the study allowed the researchers to characterize them since the open online questionnaire started with a session of relevant and personal information to identify the learners' ages, careers, and cities according to the private multicampus higher institution involved ([see figure 1](#)). The participants are a group of 27 language learners enrolled in a bilingual virtual learning environment who study in different semesters and careers –academic programs- that integrate a level 4 - B1 class; furthermore, they belong to 11 cities from the 18 seats in Colombia where the institution is present. Among them are identified 13 men and 14 women whose ages are between 18 and 45 which indicates this is a heterogeneous and multicultural group due to the diversity that exists in a country like Colombia among its regions including different accents when speaking their mother tongue; in this way, every participant has unique backgrounds, experiences, traditions, ways of learning and behaving.

Figure 1

Participants' characterization



Note. This figure shows the main participants' characteristics according to the open online questionnaire. Source: own elaboration.

It is essential to highlight due to the modality of the learning environment, that most of the learners take their lessons from home; however, there are others who connect to synchronous meetings from their campuses when having classes before or after, a few from their workplace, or a public setting considering the speed of the internet connection and access especially those who live in rural areas. In addition, the teacher in charge of the multi-campus group has access to the sessions in similar conditions, from home or the higher education campus; finally, the actors involved are aware of their participation in the research, have signed the informed consent format and for referring to them were encoded as (S1, S2...S27) for students, and for teacher (T1) as well identified as participant observer.

Regarding the data collection instruments, the planned method involves the use of two mechanisms for obtaining the information required to be processed, then analyzed. It was possible through a consent certificate format provided by the Open Lingua program academic coordinator, teacher, and level 4-B1 students. This consent allows the researchers to apply an open online questionnaire; besides the academic sessions analyzed through an observation guide.

The team has classified the instruments in the following table:

Table 1

Data collection instruments

<i>Data collection</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Focus</i>
Open online questionnaire	Asynchronous sessions /10-20 minutes approx. per person.	<p>According to Dewaele (2018) the open online questionnaire has the positive aspect of anonymity, as there is no face-to-face interaction between researchers and participants, and no pressure to participate, which enhances the level of honesty in responses. Indeed, because there are no social consequences for participation, there is less chance that participants may be tempted to exaggerate or distort the answers.</p> <p>On the other hand, the researchers designed the open online questionnaire avoiding any type of coercion from the title or questions designed, following the recommendations stated to avoid responses to please the authors of the questionnaire. The instrument was shared in a specific moment during one virtual session; however, participants had solved it at different moments for 2 weeks period sufficient to receive twenty-seven questionnaires to explore their perceptions and opinions of the use of both languages -Spanish and English- and some open questions related to the translanguaging practices in their context. This process demanded the signature of an informed consent format for the participants; the questionnaire was analyzed through an excel matrix in the first months of 2023.</p>

[Observation
guide](#)

3 sessions
/60-80
minutes
each one.

In the research field, based on Rojas (2010) observation is understood as a process aimed at obtaining information directly from the context where the actions take place. According to Cifuentes (2011) participant observation is a technique that makes possible the process of getting information about people's attitudes to link the theoretical and methodological reflection; the process of combining participant and non-participant observation allows confronting the actions with the oral dialogic practice; the observation format was taken and adapted from Trujillo (2020).

To carry this out, the research group determined for the process of registration the implementation of the observation guide which included components such as key moments and elements related to translanguaging practices, and all the aprioristic categories found in the first instrument; the observations were made in the first months of 2023.

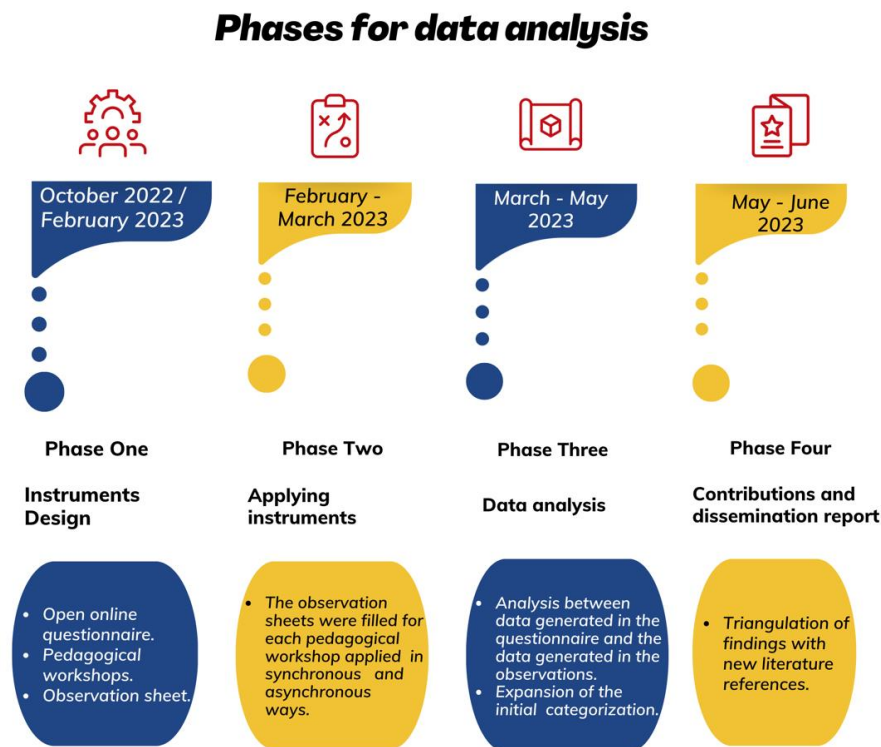
With the groundwork laid in the method section and the research questions clearly defined, the subsequent analysis section will shed light on the findings and insights derived from the data, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the influence of addressing translanguaging practices in a Bilingual Virtual Learning Environment (BVLE) for higher education learners.

3. Data analysis

This qualitative research and exploratory study implemented the inductive coding analysis, as Hatch (2002) asserts that findings from this process emerged generated from the ground up, discovering patterns and relationships through this qualitative data analysis; this way researchers followed some phases to find emerging codes and analyze the results. The table below illustrates the analysis process organized through phases and instruments interpretation.

Figure 2

Phases for data analysis



Note. Phases followed by researchers. Source: own elaboration.

Bearing in mind that the approach used in this research project is qualitative, it was defined as a general objective to establish the influence of addressing translanguaging practices in a bilingual virtual learning environment for higher education learners settled in diverse regions of Colombia. In order to validate the first instrument, the open online questionnaire, aimed at exploring the relevance of translanguaging practices in a higher education setting, the researchers formulated twelve questions in English and Spanish regarding the concept of translanguaging; the questions were previously validated by experts from the research group of the Centro Internacional de Lenguas y Culturas Extranjeras (CILCE) Villavicencio, and the tutors of the MABA bilingualism axis, who recommended restating some questions that might affect the answers, hence, six questions were defined. Another criterion to validate the instrument regarding the use of both languages -English and Spanish- was to facilitate the participants' understanding, allowing them to express their ideas with confidence, and obtain more relevant information.

To achieve the second objective which was to design a proposal with translanguaging practices for the studied context, a pedagogical workshop technique was carried out with three selected practices named: my childhood hero; life is like a story told at the musical rhythm; and a life landmark in my story. Then, through the observation technique the second instrument was the observation sheet, applied synchronously and asynchronously, considering the schedule and academic activities organization in virtual methodology to reach the third objective focuses on determining the implementation's influence of the practices in the context.

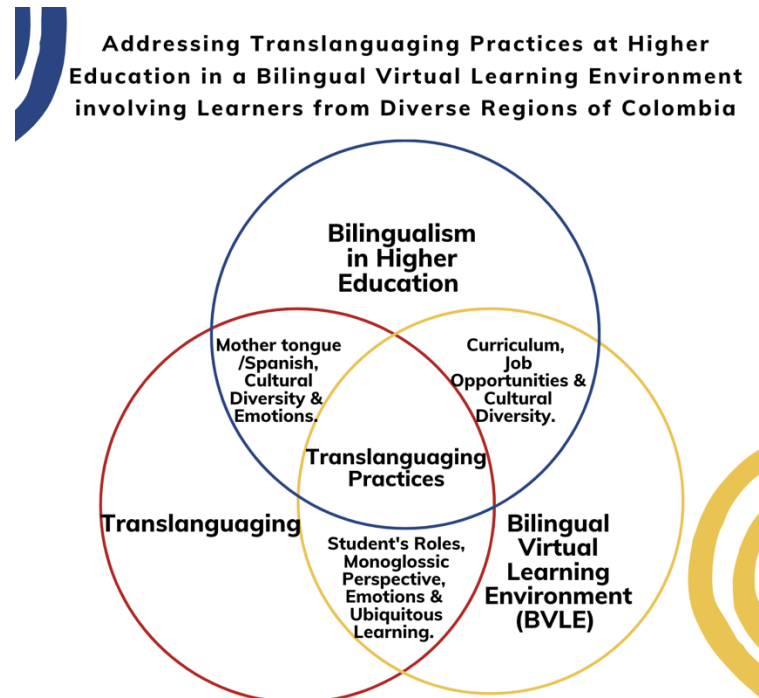
Data analysis phase involved a period of two months and it was carried out by three researchers, one as a participant researcher due to the rapport with the participants from the virtual group and it was codified as teacher 1 (T1) responsible of leading three different translanguaging practices previously designed by the researchers; the workshops had a duration of

one hour per session carried out on three consecutive Fridays in March 2023, the other two researchers had the role of non-participant observers.

Researchers conducted an adaptation of Hatch (2002) model to begin first with reading data and observing the virtual sessions to get new insights and identifying units of analysis called aprioristic categories; the second, identifying emergent categories; then, confirming the relationship with data, and finally creating a connection between categories by taking advantage of excerpts and supporting arguments from authors. Researchers by hand-made analysis and in vivo coding identified three aprioristic categories ([see figure 3](#)) and subsequently, some emergent categories connected to the main domains along this analysis are presented accompanied by participants' excerpts and contributions from authors, as well as notes taken from the observation sheet, and the products generated by the participants from the practices; the templates of the instruments are found in [Appendix A](#), the informed consents are located in [Appendix B](#), data collection and pieces of evidence are situated in [Appendix C](#). For the coding process the answers and excerpts of the instruments were encoded as (S1, S2...) for students, and for the teacher (T1) as well identified as a participant observer.

Figure 3

Categories & subcategories



Note. Aprioristic and emergent categories connected when addressing translanguaging practices in a BVLE. Source: own elaboration.

3.1. Discussion

3.1.1 Bilingualism in higher education

This way, the first main category in a macro level is Bilingualism in higher education, considering this concept as definitive for national and institutional implementation of policies and affectations in curriculum comparing experiences in a higher education institution with previous educational stages as mentioned in the questionnaire: “El inglés desde la educación superior me ha permitido mejorar mi formación en el segundo idioma, que personalmente no tenía un fuerte como egresada de bachillerato.” (S2).

Ortiz et al. (2018) point out the urgency of being epistemologically disobedient to transit to a decolonial education to deconstruct a new decolonial curriculum, one that comes from the south and fight euro-centric impositions; researchers established a connection within this unit of analysis and the emerging code higher education curriculum, regarding the frequency of enunciation by the participants in the questionnaire: “creo que solo nos limitamos a una nota, sería bueno implementar algunas modificaciones en el sistema.” (S1); “...es un reto implementar nuevas modalidades de comunicación y de socialización en las culturas.” (S26). It gives us a correlation between the empirical research exercise and what is indicated by the theoretical references as Rodriguez (2022) mentions, it is necessary to carry out further research and systematize experiences to obtain new results that lead to a more critical orientation in relation to a wider perspective in the educational system and bilingualism development.

English in this setting is conceived as an opportunity in learner's or student's careers and developing job skills, getting a job, and accomplish global demands as it is also expressed by Usma (2009) given that public perceptions in Colombia of formal education and the learning of a new language are seen by people like a real possibility to succeed and find a better job, as was confirmed in the first instrument: "es una ayuda para que uno no se quede corto a la hora de investigar y en un futuro como profesionales... para conseguir un trabajo y este exija tener un segundo idioma." (S24); “al aprender inglés se abren muchas puertas tanto laborales como en relaciones interpersonales.” (S15). However, the reality is different considering learners are enrolled in the same course but not all of them arrive with the same English level and finish it with equal skills, ideals, and job opportunities when graduating; in this sense, inequality in education is evident, especially with those who come from rural contexts, or small towns where access to economic development, infrastructure, and a variety of careers in higher education institutions are limited compared to capitals or big cities.

In addition, various studies (Rodríguez, 2022; Tupas & Martín, 2016) mention that the social hierarchization of languages is related to political power, the fight for power, and dominance; this turns into inequity and disrespect to the learners with an excluded mother tongue. Then, seeking possible strategies to bridge this inequity gap in terms of chances to access opportunities and life project choices evidences the need for a negotiation between culture and languages that permit a more heteroglossic mindset for emerging bilinguals, which constitutes a challenge for researchers.

Being aware of the last statements, professional improvement is the next emerging category identified since students associated the English level accomplishment as a chance to upgrade their work skills and get a better quality of life; for instance, the following participants mentioned in the open online questionnaire: “Tener conocimientos de otro idioma abre puertas... al desarrollarte en otro sitio o conseguir un trabajo con esa modalidad o exigencia.” (S12, S9). In addition, having a professional advancement makes learners reflect on life and the implications it has when suffering due to some episodes they would have not liked to feel, but those that allowed them to overcome unexpected situations and at the same time, encouraged them to continue living, studying, preparing more, or simply changing the way they were living, as were expressed by some of the participants on the third translanguaging practice titled “A life landmark in my story” ([see appendix C](#)):

“I just want to tell you that wherever you are, I'm still fighting for that dream that one day you told me, and I told you that I was going to achieve it. I love you daddy.”

(S4); “I did not know how to value a great person like him, after his death I learned to value my loved ones, he was a great man. I promised to graduate from college to honor his death.” (S13); “...the phrase that he left me “Mijo estudie”. The teaching that he left me is humility, not believing oneself more than anyone else and always being the same.” (S23);

“since 2014 I gave my life to God and decided to change my lifestyle, cling to life, I did not want to die.” (S9). (Friday, March 24th)

This bilingualism perception by participants is coherent with Tupas & Martin (2016) who states the correlation of English language, jobs, and economic opportunities in society as the discourse of necessary social and economic good to make workers of the world, and restarting the way how Colombian higher education students perceive the demanding of knowing English as a foreign language in the society, it is appropriate to lay on the table the power of English as Garcia & Baetens (2009) express in the following quote: “...although English is poised as giving access to the most lucrative and powerful jobs, it remains an instrument to close the ranks of the elite. Because it gives power, people are desperate to acquire it” (p. 175).

Thus, the unit of analysis that emerges is cultural diversity; Tupas & Martin (2016) asserts that some expressions of national identity suggest a call of the imaginary of nation and language as inextricable, in this sense, some educational and sociolinguistic trends contribute to consolidate mother tongue position in education at the same time; then, this emergent unit of analysis resulted from the convergence between the results of the two instruments applied as the following: “Una modalidad multicampus con diversidad cultural deja muchas experiencias desde la formación” (S2); at the same time, the observation of the first practice named “My Childhood Hero” ([see observation sheet 1](#)) can confirm that the use of Spanish in topics related to Colombian culture doesn’t interfere with the intention of meaning-making; on the opposite, it is evident that students showed a good connection or interest regarding the topic, in this case the professor super O and the glossary related to Policarpa Salavarrieta's story as follows:

T1: What is tribute?

S17: No estoy segura, pero es como tributo?

S27: ¿Es como un impuesto?

S17: Si, es como algo que debían pagar.

S18: Un regalo

T1: but in this context... is a bit different? Because there are some words that are different in a specific context.

S18: ¿Cómo un homenaje?

T1: for example, when we exalt to someone, we are grateful...

S18: como un regalo o una expresión de gratitud. (Friday, March 17th)

As seen before, and in the example that follows, the inclusion of mother tongue does not impede the learning of new words, expressions, or vocabulary in English to understand a context; rather, it helped to clarify and evidence how learners take advantage of their local culture, the knowledge about their country and express freely their thoughts related to how they can save homeland in the real world by respecting others' opinions as well as it is noticeable the power of translanguaging when involving a sense of opportunity for language learning. The following excerpts are a clear example of social interaction in a bilingual virtual learning environment just as Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2020) declare that "teachers and students use their native language to share their knowledge in an attempt at reducing the anxiety that might occur in teaching and learning in a cross-cultural online setting" (p.6).

T1: Save homeland. To make a nation free after a long period of oppression or warmth.

What is the meaning of this?

S18: Salvar Patria

T1: Yes! You saved homeland. ¡Salvó la Patria! Can you tell me something interesting about how we can save homeland? ¿Cómo podríamos salvar la patria, in the real life?

S17: Quizás en unas elecciones, una buena decisión.

T1: Excellent! Another example?

S27: Keep our culture as we are, our traditions.

T1: Like keeping the values, principles... (Friday, March 17th)

Moreover, researchers could identify the importance of working on teams and the ability to communicate in a multicampus and virtual modality environment, when learners are able to conform groups, and express their opinions considering their cultural backgrounds and experiences. As Hora et al. (2019) state “teamwork required not only communication skills” (p.2237). In this sense, cultural diversity is highlighted when the teacher (T1) proposed in the second pedagogical practice ([see observation format 2](#)) called “Life is like a story told at the musical rhythm” to create a comic to tell the story of Latinoamerica song where participate Calle 13, a Puerto Rican band; Toto La Momposina, a Colombian singer of Afro-Colombian and indigenous descent; Susana Baca, a Peruvian singer – song writer; and Maria Rita Camargo, a Brazilian singer. In the following excerpt taken from one of the comics, two learners, one from Bogota campus, and another from Neiva, emphasize the love people must have for their culture and homeland:

“...how beautiful our continent is and that in the face of difficulties, we always stand tall...the love we had, and we should continue to have for our homeland. And as Rene said...el que no quiere su patria, no quiere a su madre.” (S26; S1).

Additionally, according to Casado & Dereshiwsky (2007) one of the recommendations to accept, value, and incorporate cultural diversity awareness in an environment is to include women as well as men to speak in the sessions and to be unbiased in selecting student participation in class considering every single person; those who speak a lot, usually volunteers, and those who never take the initiative; in this sense, the aforementioned authors also express that when women and men work together “diversity of views adds richness to class discussion and helps to create a community of equals” (p. 227). The following is a part of the short story ([see figure 4](#)) written and

designed in another product concerning comics by student 10, a 22-year-old-man who studies civil engineering, and student 8, a 19-year-old-woman who studies law; both from Villavicencio campus who also set an example of collaborative learning.

S10: We are love, tolerance, berraquera and happiness.

S10–S8: We’re the ones who fight every day.

S8: They are friendly, with character and workers. What do you think of the song?

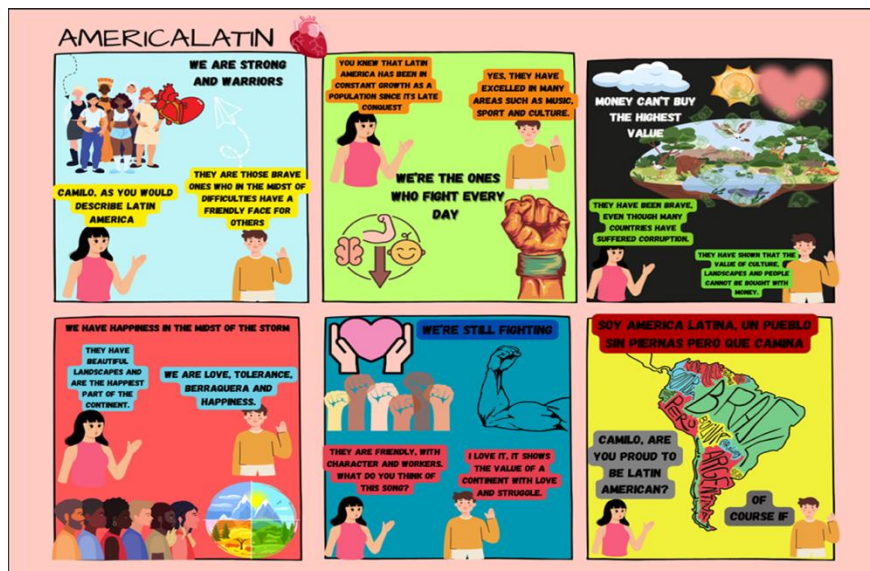
S10: I love it. It shows the value of a continent with love and struggle.

S8: Are you proud to be Latin American?

S10: Of course. Soy America Latina, un pueblo sin piernas pero que camina.

Figure 4

Americalatin Comic



Note. This comic was a product built by S8 and S10 who worked together asynchronously.

3.1.2 Bilingual Virtual Learning Environments

On the other hand, Bilingual Virtual Learning Environments (BVLE) appears as the next aprioristic unit of analysis regarding the students' perceptions to access multiple tools, innovative resources, and ubiquitous learning, since they have the possibility to access learning anywhere and anytime in virtual modality, on the word of: "La oportunidad de ver inglés virtual permite revisar y considerar los recursos que nos quedan disponibles" (S2); it was identified the importance of the use of exclusively English in the academic bilingual learning space where participants are immerse which evidence for the researchers a monoglossic ideology as the next testimonies show: "En inglés, ya que así nos lo solicitan." (S22); "Lo único que puede ser ventajoso en el uso del español es para verificar si se entendió bien algo." (S20); and "I believe that when we use only English in the classroom we have more learning for the language, we force the mind to understand more of the language." (S13).

Hence, Garcia & Wei (2014) express that bilingual speakers become complicit in their own domination as they often conform to monolingual monoglossic practices that constrain their own bilingualism to two separate autonomous languages. When interacting in bilingual environments, it was evidenced by the observation of the [first practice](#) applied, that a participant felt free to answer questions stated in English about what a revolutionary thought is, and this one answered as follows "Cambio por la vida." (S5); this contribution represents a contradiction of a monoglossic ideology for the first instrument applied and the observation of the practices in BVLE when using English and giving opinions about bilingualism and interaction. Daniel & Pacheco (2016) assert that monoglossic ideologies include perceptions related to language prestige and power in social and academic spheres or in other aspects that are useful for jobs and are incorporated in the instruction of language. In this way, as Rodriguez (2022) adduces that through a horizontal process

of recognition, it might evolve from a fixed to a benefit mindset to reach real transformations in our Bilingual environments.

Despite a monoglossic ideology has been established in the curriculum due to the institutional policies, researchers could observe that through the implementation of the pedagogical practices during the sessions and the learners' products, the curriculum was disrupted when allowing the use of both languages –English and Spanish – for specific purposes in a group that coming from different regions of Colombia and where besides the acquisition of knowledge, it is most important the construction of it. In this way, when learners show serenity, freedom, empathy to choose and work with a partner from the same or another campus, and understand the subject matter, definitely “translanguaging becomes the natural result of languages coming into contact both inside and outside the classroom setting” (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017, p. 165).

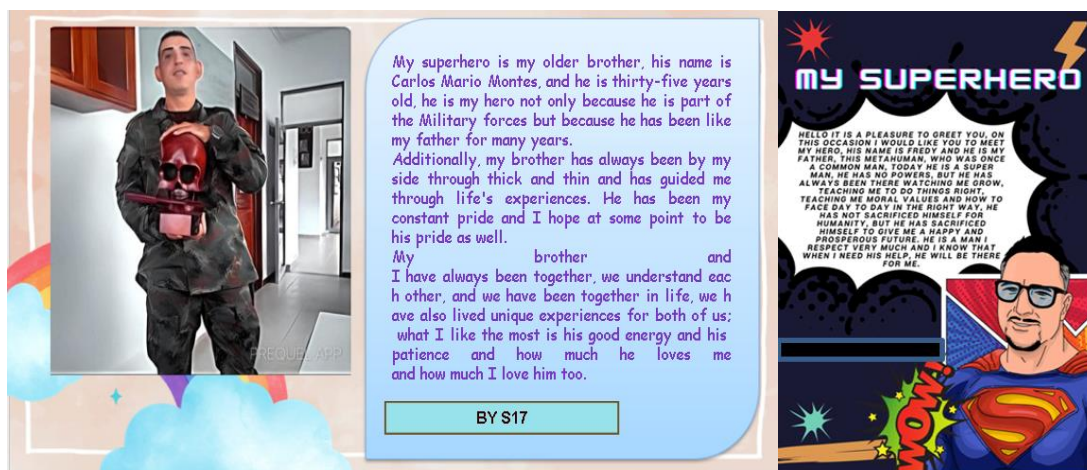
In addition, it is necessary to consider students' roles as a coming up category regarding the responsibility they face during synchronous sessions in this virtual learning space; it was highly mentioned by participants in the open online questionnaire: “...el rol como estudiante es formarse para ser alguien destacado en el futuro y así tener mayor confianza al viajar... y conocer sitios diferentes” (S15); “El rol es la participación en las clases, ya que somos los que estamos adquiriendo esta enseñanza.”, “My role is try to make an effort every day to be able to excel as well and English is a key piece for my career.” (S23); “El rol más importante lo tiene el estudiante, de él depende la constancia e interés que le da a la clase.” (S7); in this way, it counts students' responsibility, autonomy, self-management to reach their goals as well as the right use of digital devices to guarantee their connection and synchronous and asynchronous participation.

Be mindful of the challenges involved in a virtual setting that learners need to assume not only in taking the time to connect the sessions but also the accomplishments of the activities assigned to them to be worked according to their availability, time, and space; researchers found

in their first individual production related to the description of their superheroes, that only 20 students from the total of 27 were “responsible and autonomous” as they should be in a context where as one of the participants expressed about the most important role is from the student, his interest and perseverance. In this case, only 7 participants did not accomplish what the teacher expected from them, but sometimes it would be more. When the participant observer asked these participants the reasons, it was found the limitations according to connection, limited time, ignorance of the assignment as evidence of their learning in the practice due to their absence in the synchronous sessions, or simply this responsibility was forgotten. However, there was evidence of effort, self-management, commitment, dedication, and interest also for learning from those who shared their work and want to improve their English skills as identified in these samples:

Figure 5

My childhood hero



Note. These avatars were individual products made by S17 and S25.

Moreover, the participants proved in the first instrument applied that ubiquitous is

another emergent category and the use of Spanish in different learning environments is another possibility for acquiring a new language in the studied context: “My role is to go further, not stay with the class, but strengthen my English with other means... lo uso jugando videojuegos.” (S18); “Uso inglés cuando estoy en clase o por si mis cuñados necesitan ayuda.” (S24).

For this last, we agree that language stands as a remarkable aspect for language negotiation and there must exist a democratization of language in bilingual learning spaces which defends the liberating speech so as to invent democratic communication of expression, conceived as a verbal interchange that contradicts hierarchy transforming the separation of power among students and teachers, this democratization establishes a common atmosphere where students can express without fear to punishment or embarrassment avoiding any type of authoritarian and threatening mode of communication and interaction where language and context constitutes a social process. (Freire, 2014; Kranich et al, 2020; Danladi, 2013).

3.1.3. Translanguaging

To conclude, translanguaging is considered the last aprioristic category, through some practices carefully and specifically designed and implemented for the selected context with the pedagogical workshop in regards of some previous practices stated by authors in the literature review, for instance, bilingual label quest, simultaneous code mixing, cross language recapping, metalinguistic reflections, playtime as translanguaging negotiation, switching the language mode in bilingual classrooms, stories by pictures and some other practices that emerged by hand with the empirical exercise, the practices were related to the objectives and they are illustrated through the next table ([see table 2](#)) which shows the types of translanguaging and some authors

that support it along including specific characteristics of application with some excerpts for each practice; it is also highlighted how through the observation it was possible to identify other emergent practices of natural translanguaging by the students in their autonomous exercises, in break out rooms, chat interaction, as well as the asynchronous activities, and the results generated by the students' products evidencing each one of the practices.

[The pedagogical workshop](#) describes step by step the activities carried out during the sessions as well as the use of learning resources designed and/or adapted from websites taking advantage of the technology and the tools teachers and learners get at hand. Each one of the practices ended with a product completed by the participants; two of them were individually, and the other in groups of 2 or 3 people like this: first practice ([an avatar of their superhero](#)), second practice ([a comic telling the story of the song Latinoamerica](#)), and the third one ([a landmark in their life shared by a Padlet](#)).

Table 2

Relationship between practices and the observation instrument.

Type of Practice	Definition	Workshop 1 – My Childhood hero	Workshop 2 – Life is like a story told at the musical rhythm	Workshop 3 - A life Landmark in my story	Authors
Bilingual label quest	Teaching of terminologies, concepts or fixed expressions in one language by eliciting corresponding labels from another, allowing 'the teaching to be	T1 introduces a glossary with the meanings using the English language as the input to draw out an answer about the meaning of the terminology in the language preferred.	T1 and Ss discuss the words in different languages by using the Mentimeter app, it was observed some words in French, English Spanish and Italian (e.g.	T1 shares a glossary through an infographic with the students according to the reading so they get familiar with the meaning in English since the reading	Wang & Curdt-Christiansen (2019)



	accomplished Bilingually'	Examples: Revolution: a change in the way a country is governed. Intelligence work: spying on someone or something. Run away: to escape. Martyr of our homeland: a person who died defending a territory or a community.	coucher de soleil, soireé, tramonto) T1: Felicidade: how do you pronounce this? S12: FELICIDADE si es así, etc... T1: What is Lutte? S23: Lucha en francés. S24: Pellicia es piel en italiano y tramonto es atardecer.	was presented in Spanish. Examples: Héroe: hero. Ayudar a la gente: help people. Médico: doctor. Muertes por Covid-19: deaths by Covid-19. UCI: ICU.	
Using bilingual dictionaries when learning new vocabulary.	Include multilingual texts in your classroom library and encourage reading in LOTES.	Students work on a glossary related to independence and professor super O.	Students work on a glossary related to the two songs worked in the session "7 years and Latinoamerica"	Students work on a glossary related to the Covid 19, deaths, tests, lives, doctors, etc.	Daniel & Pacheco (2016)
Using English key scientific terms in discussion in another language.	Making sure that there is a global understanding within the classroom, through possible translations or explanations. Working on the scientific terms in the languages of the subject to clarify.			The glossary proposed in the last practice regarding the medicine words and expressions due to the situation of the pandemic and the story of the Colombian doctor.	Caruso (2018).
Simultaneous code-mixing	The simultaneous need for and use of both English and another language in the process of meaning-	T1 asks questions About the context. T1: Who is professor super O? S1: El super héroe	S15 answers to the question in English message of freedom to unity, represent the sentiment to express your	T1 states a question in English about a story. S22 ¿profe se puede en español? T1: Go ahead claro.	Wang & Curdt-Christiansen (2019)



Switching the language mode	making. 'Each language is used to convey a different informational message.	colombiano, el que lucha por la ortografía. S2: "¿Estás preguntando por el vocabulario que salió en el video?" T1: Yes. What did she do to appear in the 10.000 bill, que es lo que hizo ella para aparecer en el billete de 10000? S2: She fought for the freedom of the people. The student used the vocabulary to answer. T: Why did she die? Why has she been considered a martyr? S2: YES, ella salvó la patria y por eso es considerada una mártir.	nationality your country? T1: Which word don't you know? S15: "Sobra", es que no sé cuál es. In one of the Ss products: "...how beautiful our continent is and that in the face of difficulties, we always stand tall...the love we had, and we should continue to have for our homeland. And as Rene said...el que no quiere su patria, no quiere a su madre." (S26; S1). T1: ...you have seven words in here, and you can type. Remember similar words, synonyms... S1: ¿profe disculpa no entiendo, allí pongo en cada casillita la traducción? S20: ¿profe se traduce como en el orden o en cualquiera?	S22: "Profe al menos antes de la pandemia uno se podía despedir, pero lo único que supe de ella fue una vez que le llevé un helado y ya no la volví a ver ... en la pandemia uno no se pudo despedir. S17: my sister works in health and has been infected three times, positive we were together as a family esto nos unió más como familia porque mi hermana fue la primera contagiada de Covid-19 en las 3 etapas." Teacher supports student. T1: Thank you very much for sharing.	Lewis, Jones, & Baker (2012)
Cross-linguistic flexibility	Alternating languages and media, translating, and translanguaging in writing.	S2: YES, ella salvó la patria y por eso es considerada una mártir.	T1: ...you have seven words in here, and you can type. Remember similar words, synonyms... S1: ¿profe disculpa no entiendo, allí pongo en cada casillita la traducción? S20: ¿profe se traduce como en el orden o en cualquiera?	Garcia & Wei (2014).	



Cross-language recapping	Involves teaching the same course content in one language, and then repeating it in another. The contents taught in both languages were sometimes identical, and at other times more specific in one language than in the other.	The teacher reads the instructions of the activity students should do asynchronously and asks one student who explains or to tell what they must do for clarification and understanding. At the end of the session, the S5 recaps.	When the teacher explains the activity in English regarding the link for building a word cloud, it is necessary to recap in Spanish for clarifying the instruction since some students expressed, they did not understand. S1: Profe disculpe, no entiendo...	Teacher uses Spanish to make an interruption after explaining and reading the instructions in English with the intention of clarifying the asynchronous activity regarding the experience that marked their lives. T1. So, this is not for doing now. Esto no es para hacerlo ahora. Vamos a reflexionar y a compartir esta situación que me afectó durante la pandemia, incluso antes, este año, o el año pasado...	Wang & Curdt-Christiansen (2019)
Repeating content in LOTES to study for tests	Reinforce existing understanding s of concepts by asking students to summarize or paraphrase information into their LOTE.	Students make clarifications of instructions in LOTES. This usually happens in all the practices.			Daniel & Pacheco (2016).
Dual-language substantiation	Refers to the co-construction of disciplinary knowledge with contributions or insights from both languages so as to contextualize.	The teacher and Ss make use of both languages to understand the context, share and construct knowledge. T1: Save homeland. What is the meaning of this? S18: Salvar Patria T1: Yes! You saved homeland. ¡Salvó la Patria!	In one of the Ss products: S10: We are love, tolerance, berraquera and happiness. S10 –S8: We’re the ones who fight every day. S8: They are friendly, with character and workers. What do you think of the song? S10: I love it. It shows the value of a continent with	Teacher shares a personal story about a friend using Spanish language, teacher evidenced emotions that might not be understood in English the same way as in Spanish. Students expressed empathy through translanguaging	Wang & Curdt-Christiansen (2019)



Can you tell me something interesting about how we can save homeland? ¿Cómo podríamos salvar la patria, in the real life? S17: Quizás en unas elecciones, una buena decisión. T1: Excellent! Another example? S27: Keep our culture as we are, our traditions. T1: Like keeping the values, principles... (Friday, March 17th)

love and struggle. S8: Are you proud to be Latin American? S10: Of course. Soy America Latina, un pueblo sin piernas pero que camina.

g: "...esto es una clase virtual y uno no tiene prácticamente contacto con las personas, es muy importante que lo haga y gracias por compartir esta experiencia." (S1).

Learning new languages with family and friends

Students have different options to put into practice their language by creating a multilingual word wall and sharing some of their own language-learning experiences.

Participants evidence they use translanguaging when explaining language at home. "My role is to go further, not stay with the class, but strengthen my English with other means... lo uso jugando videojuegos." (S18); "Uso inglés cuando estoy en clase o por si mis cuñados necesitan ayuda." (S24).

Students work in breakout rooms, in this case chat room 4. In the written chat, it is evidenced collaboration when having a conversation among 6 participants. See: [viernes 10:01 a. m.] S14 Que sigue después de so. S13 we were. S2 Después I started writing songs. S13 después de always es had.

Students demonstrate learning with family and friends, not only a new language but also about confidence and determination, when sharing their experiences. "I just want to tell you that wherever you are, I'm still fighting for that dream, and I told you that I was going to achieve it. I love you daddy." (S4); "I

Daniel & Pacheco (2016).



				did not know how to value a person after his death, I learned to value my loved ones. I promised to graduate from college to honor his death.” (S13); “Mijo estudie”. (S23).	
Making cross-language comparisons when reading, needing done in one language and writing in another.	Develop students’ metalinguistic awareness through activities that encourage cross-linguistic comparisons, such as translation and cognate instruction.	T1 asks what is revolutionary thought? (S5): mentions “Cambio por la vida” this contribution can only be done in Spanish and in the Colombian context regarding the current government in the country this way all could understand the meaning of the relation about what revolutionary thought is.	T1: ¿Qué piensan de la canción? S8: Es una letra muy personal. T1: Why is it so personal or private? S11: Porque cuenta su historia. T1: What is the story about? S13: En lo personal lo que observé es que desde pequeño se le pidió buscar pareja... la soledad, buscar compañía. T1: Everybody is like... telling us to get married, it is time to do this, study...ud tiene tantos años ya la está dejando el tren...pa’ cuando los hijos.... Alguien mas quiere decir algo?	T1: “Cuales profesiones creen que aportan más a la sociedad” S25: Profe yo creo que todas las profesiones son importantes. S15: ..."Doctor, I think that one profession could be is a doctor, have a society is very important for health of people.” S1: “men in law are important,	Daniel & Pacheco (2016). Caruso, E. (2018).
Reading in one language and speaking in another, or vice versa.	Presenting the selected language in a PowerPoint presentation. Everyone is free to speak their preferred language.				Garcia & Baetens (2009).
Presenting questions in one language and responses requested in the other.	Switching the language mode in a bilingual classroom.	T1: Do you believe in superheroes? S22: “No, considero que todos tenemos un lado oscuro.”			García & Wei (2014).



Target language comprehensibility	Using English as a means of instruction. Support the explanation and communication by strategies and techniques like gestures, concrete objects, or visuals to facilitate comprehensibility.	Examples were provided by the teacher when explaining the assignments to be carried out asynchronously. Examples: avatar activity about the superhero.	Examples were provided by the teacher when explaining the assignments to be carried out asynchronously. Examples: The comic students should design by groups.	Examples were provided by the teacher when explaining the assignments to be carried out asynchronously. Examples: Padlet about the story that marked students' lives.	Barahona (2020)
Focusing on cultural products, practices, and perspectives.	Designing lessons with a focus on cultural artefacts to understand their own and other cultures. Connecting content with other disciplines.	The video related to La Pola's story and her role in appearing in the bill of 10.000.	The song called Latinoamerica includes expressions in Spanish, indigenous language, and Portuguese.	The reading proposed in the last practice corresponded to a real-life story of a Colombian doctor who died because of the covid-19. It is part of the Colombian context.	Barahona (2020)

Note. Relationship between practices and observation instrument with some excerpts from the observation guide. Some authors determined names for translanguaging practices, while others use descriptions of the translanguaging practices. *LOTEs: Languages Other than English adapted from Daniel & Pacheco (2016) Translanguaging Practices and Perspectives of Four Multilingual Teens. Source: Own elaboration.

The use of both languages, English and Spanish is identified as the possibility to understand terminologies or instructions due to the low performance and scarce vocabulary students have mentioned in the questionnaire: "...ayuda a comprender un poco más la información ya que algunos términos de inglés aún no los manejo de manera perfecta." (S1); it is important to point out that for participants, the use of both languages has benefits, and it supports them to overcome some weaknesses in English language communication and interaction:

“...interactuó principalmente en las dos lenguas, dependiendo del contexto ya que no es lo mismo hablar o responder ciertas preguntas...donde hay una mayor comprensión en el idioma español.” (S13); “...hay estudiantes que no pueden seguir el ritmo, pero sería mejor que al hablar inglés el profesor/a preguntara a una persona al azar que les explique a sus compañeros” (S18).

Furthermore, students have mentioned the comfort they feel when they use Spanish and English for interacting during the session, to clarify doubts, make sense of meaning, recognize the cultural differences of a multicampus context, and the notorious variety of English levels as it is confirmed by Ortega (2019) since students become aware of the variations concerning both languages when realizing the same phenomenon that happens in Spanish, it is also presented in English. “In other words, Spanish has been used to learn English, and culture has been placed at the centre of learning to draw meanings.” (p. 163).

One example identified in the first instrumente was: “...como esta clase es multicampus hay diferentes acentos entonces el profesor le mete el acento al inglés y algunas veces no se puede llegar a hacer entender, y es bueno que repita en español ... poder hacer ejemplos de lo que estamos aprendiendo en inglés.” (S24). Students are conscious of the need for Spanish, as Rodriguez (2022) mentions it is necessary to take as a reference point the mother tongue and the context problems; the language has started the exclusion and the language lost; in fact, the hierarchy and some colonization factors extended to territories, societies, and communities must generate questioning of the educational processes.

As aforementioned, the emerging categories correlated to translanguaging are the use of Spanish or mother tongue for participation and interaction and the emerging unit of analysis of cultural diversity; repetitions of these codes show certain benefits of the use of Spanish during their meetings and the necessity to elucidate the importance of the Spanish language during the

virtual sessions including the practices observed. According to Halasa & Al-Manaseer (2012) the mother tongue should be actively employed in the process of teaching and learning English, considering it is always present in the user's mind; in this case, instead avoiding it, instructors might facilitate scenarios or situations where learners are able to use it as a positive tool for improving and not for feeling guilty since its use in educational contexts should be seen as "normal". Besides, in the context of this study, researchers consider it important to anticipate the use of unnecessary and awkward translations for some natural expressions that only make sense when they are represented in their own repertoire.

Therefore, when participants were asked to remember a life landmark in their story during the third practice and recall an expression that brought to their minds this person or experience, they made use of their mother tongue since it does not represent the same when thinking in the "correct" form to say it in English. Thus, researchers identified in the virtual environment that translanguaging brought back emotions and feelings of happiness, but also melancholy and highlight the participants as Spanish users found the best option to express a remarkable phrase by using their mother tongue as in these excerpts:

" He always told us to remember him. Something he always said was "siempre te voy a cuidar, eres mi princesita." (S21); God is good and has given us many strengths to follow, even though we miss him every day. LA VIDA ES MUY EFIMERA, DISFRUTALA." (S8);

"...Although he is no longer physically with me, I will always carry him in my heart and in my memories. The phrase my grandfather used to say to me is Siempre respete a los mayores hija." (S16); "The most important thing is that all those memories will live in my mind forever. A phrase that she usually said especially is: eso negra carajo." (S17).

Insofar, the next emerging category is emotions referring to the feelings' participants handle during their learning experiences, when using Spanish, or for presenting their ideas in front

of the screen; some of the emotions identified through the first instrument were frustration: “Querer participar en clase, pero no tener nada que aportar es un reto y una frustración a la misma vez.” (S12); shame and failure when participating, for instance: “La mayoría de los estudiantes tienen miedo a hablar en otros idiomas por miedo al fracaso.” (S13); even participants apologize when using Spanish to make sense: “hacerle questions to the teacher uso el Spanish, jajaja perdón por mezclar los idiomas solo quería dar el ejemplo.” (S12). In these terms, some other situations regarding emotions showed during the workshop observation stage, [practice 3](#); helped the students to work on their confidence, emotions, and way to express in their mother tongue, for instance in the course of the third session and after reading a real story of life in Spanish regarding “Carlos, el joven médico que conmovió a todo el país” teacher mentions

T1: “feel free about telling your experience what teaching you get from the reading?”

S22: “profe se puede en español?... esto me recordó una historia relacionada a mi bisabuela”

S22: “...como decía el texto antes de la pandemia uno se podía despedir...pero lo único que supe de ella fue una vez que le llevé un helado y ya no la volví a ver.”

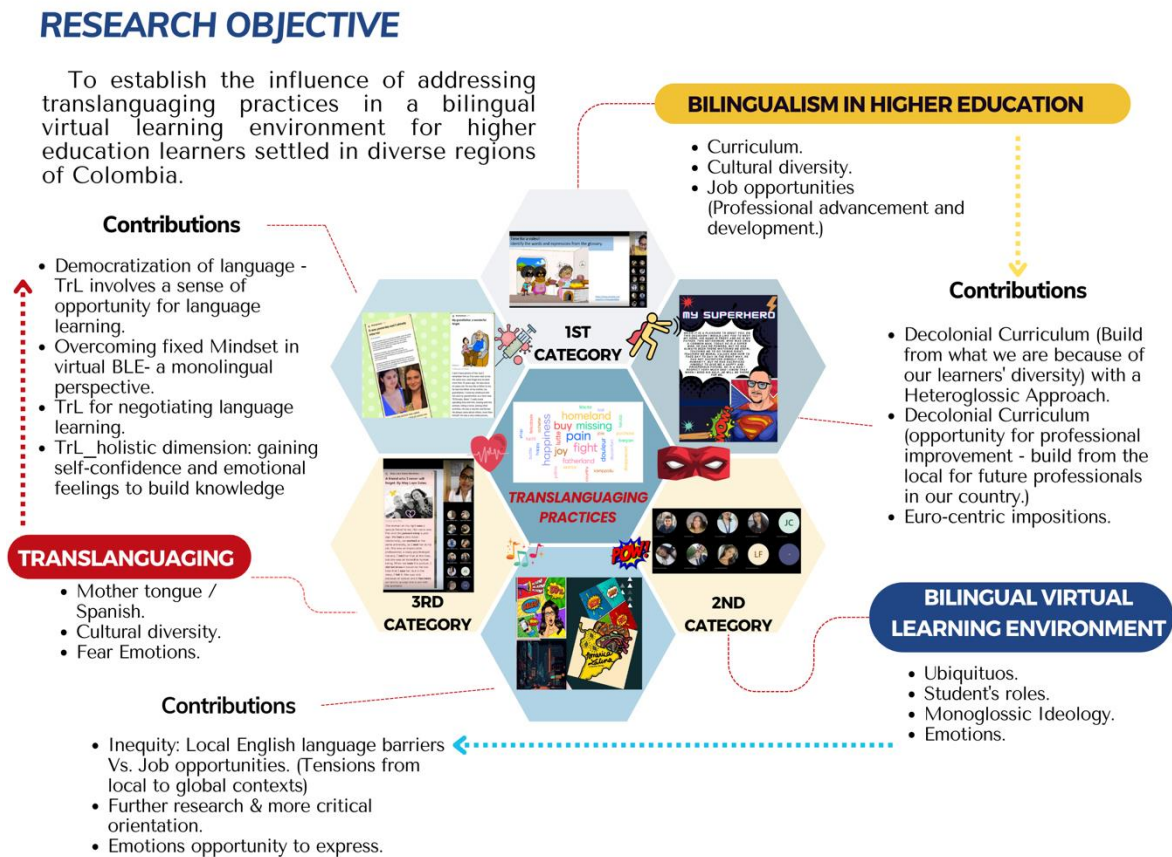
T1: “This is devastating, this is so sad.” (Friday, March 31st).

At the end of the third session, some participants intervened expressing their gratefulness linked with the emotional component that translanguaging contains: “...esto es una clase virtual y uno no tiene prácticamente contacto con las personas, es muy importante que lo haga y gracias por compartir esta experiencia.” (S1); “Espero que estas prácticas continúen implementándose para que los estudiantes pueden aprovechar al máximo su potencial lingüístico y cultural” (S22); “Las prácticas fueron muy amenas, ver el progreso de cada uno de nuestros compañeros es muy agradable, considero que la clase fue muy significativa para mi desarrollo...muchas gracias por compartir su conocimiento con nosotros” (S2). To sum up, the following figure evidences the

contributions associated to the categories established in the exploration of translinguaging practices carried out in this research.

Figure 6

Contributions from the translinguaging practices.



Note. Contributions that were arisen from the pedagogical exercise of translinguaging practices implemented in a BVLE for higher education in Colombia. Source: own elaboration.

Conclusions

This exploratory study set the ground for researchers to whom translinguaging practices in Bilingual Virtual Learning Environments (BVLE) for higher education might be of interest, it also reveals how the influence of addressing translinguaging practices represents a duality mainly for local tensions on professional advancement, when thinking about professional improvement and life projects; on the other side, some other views defended the use of mother tongue for emotional and equity factors, thus, the scope of this study impacts directly bilingualism. The translinguaging practices explored might result in support for further investigations; the relationship of translinguaging with emotional components related to overcoming fears and frustration, expressions of gratefulness about the flexible heterogeneous pedagogical practice (S22, S2, S1), teamworking, increasing socio-critical positions towards cultural topics, it also evidenced how exploring translinguaging practices permitted the use of their whole repertoire, the recognition of ubiquitous learning, and the negotiation of language by using their mother tongue "profe se puede en español?" (S22) and English as considered by Garcia (2009) the possibility to use their full repertoire for meaning making avoiding monoglossic ideologies.

The monoglossic ideology of participants is considered a limitation, this might affect the exploration of official and natural translinguaging practices in the learning process, especially for those reluctant to use mother tongue and used to English-only sessions, as well as for others who need Spanish to feel confident; these ideologies have permeated students mindsets including language prestige and power in social and academic spheres and the tendency to accept uncritically the necessary connection between English language proficiency and better employment prospects (de Mejia, 2006; Daniel & Pacheco, 2016) as it was highly enunciated by

participants “para conseguir un trabajo y este exija tener un segundo idioma.” (S24). Considering teamwork was essential for the exploration, it was recognized as a challenge for some students since it is common to find learners (S9, S20, and S18) who want to work by themselves, because they feel more comfortable alone than socializing and interacting with strange people.

To conclude, It is also necessary to reconsider teachers and learners' role in BVLE, various studies highlight how some limitations of language deal with curriculum deconstruction and enactment, and the pertinence of a curriculum assumed from transformation of roles of different actors involved, when English is standardized as mandatory it turns into inequity for learners with their excluded mother tongue (Rodríguez, 2022; Tupas & Martin, 2016); then, trying to bridge this gap of inequity constitutes a need for a rigorous analysis regarding negotiation and democracy between languages. Given that, It is important to clarify that researchers were not aiming at establish translanguaging as a panacea or the virtue of this approach; instead, to analyze the effectiveness further investigation might be necessary to explore the impacts of this inclusive practice with a critical position towards a disruptive bilingualism, to take advantage of mother tongue for life-long learning, as Medina agrees (2019) to contribute to existing and future research studies concerning disruptive practices, attitudes, and perspectives about translanguaging in BVLE in Colombian higher education.



Appendixes

[Appendix A. Instruments](#)

[Appendix B: Informed Consents](#)

[Appendix C. Data Collection](#)



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