# Translanguaging as a Boundary Crossing Mechanism: A Turkish-American Youngster and her Linguistic Negotiation of Three Discursive Spaces

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## Abstract

In order to effectively respond to the increased linguistic and cultural diversity in U.S. schools and close the consistently documented achievement gap between culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students and mainstream students, teachers need to take an asset-based approach and be able to draw on CLD students' entire funds of linguistic knowledge. However, few studies have examined CLD students' linguistic choices in multiple discursive spaces with different linguistic norms, values and practices. This article addresses this research gap through a case study of Elif, a Turkish-American student and her linguistic boundary crossing experiences within and across three discursive spaces: her home, her Turkish heritage language school, and her mainstream school. Through in-depth analysis of interviews, observations, and field notes, the study revealed that Elif experienced different linguistic environments and boundary types. She negotiated experiences that ranged from smooth to managed to insurmountable boundaries. Finally, translanguaging practices acted as a key boundary object that mediated sociocultural discontinuities in the Turkish heritage language school, and facilitated Elif's experiences between Turkish dominant and English dominant discursive spaces.

**Keywords:** translanguaging, bilingualism, border crossing, heritage language, community-based language school, Turkish speakers

## Introduction

As in other English-dominant societies like Australia and Canada, the population of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students (i.e., who speak a language other than English at home) continues to grow in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2013), the CLD student population increased from approximately 47 million in 2000 to approximately 62 million in 2013. The U.S.

Census Bureau (2019) reported that the total CLD population in the U.S. was 48 % of the entire K-12 population in 2018. The English Language Learner (ELL) population, a subgroup of CLD population, comprised of approximately 10% of the total student population in 2016 (National Center for Educational statistics, 2019).

CLD students face challenges in schools, as illustrated by persistent patterns of educational underachievement when compared to non-CLD students (Hornberger & Link, 2012; Martin-Beltrán, 2014). To better address CLD students' needs, research has suggested that teachers need to shift from a deficit-oriented approach to asset-based approaches to teaching and learning. Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies that treat CLD students' experiences as a resource for teaching and learning, have been proposed as imperative for this group of students (Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Ruiz, 1984). One dimension of asset-based teaching for CLD students is for teachers to understand and build on students' linguistic repertoires as they develop within and across different contexts, that is, "the language and literacy practices that students bring with them from their home communities" (Martin-Beltrán, 2014, p. 212) as well as those being developed within formal school settings.

To date, scholars have examined CLD students' linguistic repertoires primarily from the perspective of students' use of multiple languages either at home or at school. They note continuities and discontinuities in linguistic practices and norms in each space (e.g., Daniel & Pacheco, 2015; Haneda, 2006; Jonsson, 2013; Martin-Beltrán, 2014) and ways that different linguistic features are included and excluded, e.g., ways that non-English languages are or are not legitimized and valued in school settings (Reynolds & Orellana, 2014; Sayer, 2013). Less is known about the linguistic practices that govern other spaces that comprise students' lived worlds (e.g., social media, community-based language classes) and students' experiences as they negotiate being within and moving across these worlds. The purpose of this study was to address this gap. Specifically, the study examined the following research questions. How does a newcomer CLD student navigate her linguistic repertoire as she moves across home, school and heritage language school? What is the role of translanguaging in her boundary crossing experiences?

After an outline of the study's theoretical framework, this article presents a case study of a Turkish-American student, Elif, and how she experienced crossing the linguistic boundaries between home, school, and her Turkish heritage language school. The article concludes with a discussion of findings and implications for practice.

## Theoretical Framework

To understand bi/multilingual students' linguistic experiences within and across discursive spaces, this study draws from boundary crossing theory (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a; Bjorgen, 2010) and adds a linguistic focus to this framework through the concept of translanguaging. The sections below briefly outline both frameworks.

### Boundary Crossing Theory

Boundary crossing theory was developed to better understand how students negotiate learning as they move from one space to another. As students engage in different settings within school and across settings (e.g., school, workplace, home), they encounter different sociocultural norms and expectations. These differences create dissonances or boundaries, defined as "the sociocultural differences leading to discontinuity in action or interaction" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011b, p. 133). As CLD students move across discursive spaces, they negotiate different values and norms around language(s) and language use. A discursive space is any interactional space that has its own sociocultural rules and requires

unique ways of communication. For CLD students, these discontinuities are integral to their lives as the multilingual norms at home and their communities often contrast with the monolingual (English) ones they encounter in U.S. schools (Coady, 2013; Haneda, 2006; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Jonsson, 2013; Otcu, 2010). Jonsson (2013), for example, asked six high school students to note their language practices in diaries to understand the variances in their language practices between home and school. While students were involved in several multilingual conversations in their home communities, they predominantly practiced the standard language at school. Only a handful of studies compared and contrasted language practices between homes and heritage language schools and find different language and literacy practices. Some studies described heritage language schools as more bilingual spaces when compared to homes (Byeon, 2015; Creese et al., 2008; Li Wei, 2014; Otcu, 2010); yet others illustrated homes as more bilingual spaces than the community-based heritage language programs (Helmer, 2013; Lo, 2009; Lytra, 2015).

**Boundary crossing.** Boundary crossing refers to the transitions between different settings where students "negotiate and combine ingredients from different contexts to achieve hybrid situations" (Engeström, Engeström & Kärkkäinen, 1995, p. 319). Transitions can be described as smooth, managed, traumatic, and insurmountable (Phelan et al., 1991). When sociocultural norms and values shared commonalities, CLD students are more likely to experience a smooth or managed boundary crossing. In contrast, distinct differences without any mediation by others, students' boundary crossing experience may be more traumatic or insurmountable (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a).

Boundary crossing experiences affects learning. The smoother the transition, the more students are afforded the opportunity to deeply engage in learning and achieve successful interactions with teachers and peers. In other words, students benefit from connecting familiar knowledge or practice with new knowledge or practice (Aikenhead, 2001; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a; Macalik, Fraser & McKinley, 2015).

**Boundary crossing mechanisms.** Boundary crossing experiences are mediated by boundary crossing mechanisms. When students experience sociocultural differences, these boundary crossing mechanisms help ensure that discontinuities do not turn into barriers but rather can become resources for strengthening identities and practices and for re-establishing continuities.

Akkerman and Bakker (2011b) identify three types of boundary crossing mechanisms: objects, brokers, and interactions. *Boundary objects* are both artifacts and processes that bridge the unfamiliar and the familiar. For example, photographs of family members, hobbies or home life and newspapers in heritage language played the role of boundary objects in Pacheco and Miller's study (2016) by making a connection between homes and schools and facilitating CLD students' learning at schools. *Boundary brokers* (also called boundary people) are individuals who have experienced boundary crossing before or who themselves will move across contexts to scaffold students' learning, including teachers, parents, tutors, bilingual assistants or peers (Alvarez, 2014; Gort & Sembiante, 2015; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Palmer, 2008; Reynolds & Orellana, 2014). They create connections between familiar and new practices or prior knowledge and new knowledge for students. For example, in Isik-Ercan's (2012) study, Turkish-American parents supported their child's adjustments to English dominant worlds, especially school, by working with a role model (tutor) who was an experienced boundary broker. The tutor engaged the child in several social and academic events and supported his critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities for navigating multiple challenges as a Turkish, American, and Muslim teenager. Finally, *boundary interactions* bring members of different discursive space communities, also called communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), together for specific purposes, such as parent-teacher conferences. Curriculum topics can also function as a boundary interaction, for example when they includes both the heritage and mainstream culture (García *et al*., 2012; Kenner & Ruby, 2012). In

Kenner and Ruby's study (2012), heritage language teachers and mainstream teachers collaborated to implement lessons in both schools, allowing students to use their full linguistic and cultural resources to learn new content.

**Translanguaging**

Boundary crossing theory does not specifically consider CLD students and hence linguistic practices do not constitute a focus within this line of research. In bringing in this perspective, we turn to the notion of translanguaging. García (2008) defines translanguaging practices as "*multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage *in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds*" (p. 45, italics in original). Translanguaging recognizes that bilingual individuals naturally shuttle between languages to support their language learning and maximize content learning. It treats multilingualism as an integrated, holistic system rather than different, separate fragments (Canagarajah, 2011; Grosjean, 1989).

Translanguaging practices support students' engagement, participation, and learning. For example, Daniel and Pacheco (2015) examined four multilingual middle and high schoolers' language practices in mainstream schools and found that translanguaging supported multilingual students while taking notes, researching content, studying for tests, draft-writing assignments, and making sense of schoolwork. It thus functions as a boundary crossing mechanism, creating a bridge between different discursive spaces (e.g., home and school language practices).

Using the boundary crossing and translanguaging framework, this study explores how bilingual individuals' (are encouraged to) use their entire linguistic repertoire as they move from one discursive space with its own sociocultural norms, values, and practices to another. A unique aspect of the study is that this question was considered in the context of three discursive spaces: home, a heritage language school, and a mainstream school. Specifically, the study focuses on the boundary crossing experiences of one Turkish-American student's linguistic practices, Elif (pseudonym). Elif was a six-year old Turkish-American emergent bilingual, who grew up speaking predominantly Turkish at home. She was born in Hong Kong and lived there for three years. She attended an international preschool in Hong Kong for a year and started learning Cantonese and English. Next, she moved to Turkey and attended pre-kindergarten for another year and kindergarten for one semester. In the spring semester of the kindergarten, they moved to the U.S., where she completed kindergarten. Elif considered herself a fluent Turkish speaker and an English language learner, who knew "little" English (Elif's first interview). She also knew "two words" in Cantonese (Elif's first interview). Turkish was the language that she felt the most comfortable communicating. Elif's English literacy skills were limited to writing her name and a few other words and reading short, familiar words. At the time of the study, she was a first grader, and it had been six months since they moved to the U.S.

## Research Design

### *Context*

The study considered Elif's linguistic practices at home, Cagdas Turkish School (CTS), and mainstream school.

### *Home*

Elif, an only child, lived with her parents who were born in Turkey. Elif's mother was a fluent Turkish speaker and considered herself as a beginner level English speaker. Her father was a fluent Turkish speaker and advanced English and German speaker. Her father run a company and her mother worked

as the finance manager of the company. They moved to the U.S. so that Elif could receive a good education, and chose to live in their current neighborhood since the school success rates in the neighborhood were the highest in the district (interview with parents).

Elif's parents valued Elif's multilingualism in Turkish, English and Cantonese for several reasons. They believed English played a significant role in Elif's school success and could give her a voice at school. They valued Turkish as it was their "mother tongue" and "a wealth to preserve" (interview with parents). Lastly, they valued Elif's Cantonese proficiency as she was born in Hong Kong and had Hong Kong citizenship.

### Cagdas Turkish School

Cagdas Turkish School (CTS, pseudonym) offers Turkish lessons to the children, who were born in the U.S. and speak dominantly English in their daily lives. It serves 12 to 20 students (aged 4-14) for two hours on Sunday afternoons from the beginning of October to the end of May every year. Two female teachers, teacher Sibel and teacher Ayla (pseudonyms), had been working in the school for two years to expand the Turkish-American youngsters' knowledge of Turkish history, language, geography, music, folk dances and culture. Teacher Sibel was 42 years old and graduated from the tourism and business administration program in Turkey. She moved to the U.S. two years ago and started working in the CTS voluntarily. Teacher Ayla was a retired history teacher in Turkey and moved to the U.S. three years ago. She worked as a substitute teacher in a U.S. elementary school before. Both teachers highlighted that the CTS aimed to create connections with the students' families in Turkey and build a community in the state.

### Mainstream school

Elif's mainstream school hosted a diverse student population. Her classroom consisted of 21 students of whom one was African-American, two were Latino/a, one was Arab, one was Haitian, and one was a special education student (interview with mainstream teacher). Including Elif, five students were pulled out daily for a one-hour specialized English language class. Elif's mainstream teacher, Ms. Daniels (pseudonym), had a master's degree in education and had been teaching at elementary level for twelve years. She was a fluent English speaker and could "speak some Spanish" (mainstream teacher interview). Elif was the first Turkish background student she had worked with, and she had very limited knowledge about Turkish language and culture.

## Data Collection

A social constructivist framework, which advocates that meaning or meaningful reality is constructed through interactions with the world, informed the methodology, research design, data collection and data analysis tools of this study (Crotty, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The data sources included three 30-60-minute interviews with the student participant focusing on background information (1st interview), her language use (2nd interview) and her transitions between discursive spaces (3rd interview). One interview was held with her parents, two heritage language school teachers, and her mainstream teacher. While the interviews with the participant, her parents, and heritage language school teachers were conducted in Turkish, the interview with the mainstream teacher was in English. The transcription was done in the language through which the interviews were conducted. The Turkish interviews were transcribed and analyzed in Turkish and translated into English before reporting. In addition, observations were conducted over a period of eleven weeks in the heritage language school (total of 20 hours), one full day in her mainstream school (six hours), and half a day at home (four hours). Twenty hours of classroom interaction in the Turkish heritage language school were audio-recorded and transcribed.

## Data Analysis

The analysis of the data occurred twice with a different focus each time. The first analysis aimed to identify the boundaries that Elif encountered in each space and how she responded to these boundaries. The second analysis aimed to identify the role of translanguaging as a boundary crossing mechanism by focusing on the Elif's languaging practices in different discursive spaces. In each analysis, open, axial and selective coding were used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and the five steps of linguistic ethnography were followed in the analysis processes (Creese, 2008). The steps included (1) interrogation of context, (2) selection of moments for macro and micro-analysis, (3) the line-by-line micro-analysis of selected moments that are transcribed narrowly, and a macro-analysis of data transcribed broadly, (4) weighing emergent interpretations of macro- and micro- analysis results, and (5) generalizing beyond the event (Rampton, 2006).

## Findings

This section first discusses differences in language use and then considers how these differences created different types of boundaries based on Phelan's categories (smooth, managed, traumatic or insurmountable). The third section shows how translanguaging practices functioned as a boundary object as Elif participated in these three discursive spaces.

### Adult and Peer Language Use

The analysis of language use at home, school, and CTS revealed distinctly different sociocultural norms for the use of Turkish and English. Since adults shaped the norms in whole class discussions while peers influenced the norms in small student groups, the results are presented separately for the two groups.

#### *Adults' language practices*

Adults refer to Elif's parents at home, the CTS teachers, and her mainstream teacher. While adults at home and in the mainstream school used their linguistic resources more monolingually, adults in the CTS used their linguistic resources more bilingually (see Figure 1 below).
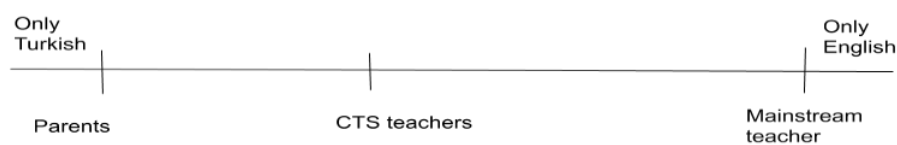


**Figure 1** *Adults' language use in home, school and the CTS*

Turkish was the dominant language in Elif's home. Elif's mother mentioned that they preferred to speak only Turkish at home because they wanted Elif to maintain her heritage language and they considered their English too limited (interview with parents). They wanted to expose Elif to Turkish at home as much as possible so that she maintained her Turkish skills. They only used English when they helped Elif with her homework or when they discussed a school-related issue. They expressed that they preferred not to send her to a Chinese heritage language school yet, in order not to confuse her with three languages. They wanted to give her some time to overcome the differences between Turkish and English languages and cultures first. The same concern about confusion and tensions informed their choice not to teach Elif how to read or write in Turkish, thinking she might get confused when learning literacy skills in English in school.

In the mainstream school, Ms. Daniels spoke predominantly English (and occasionally Spanish with Spanish-speaking ELLs). She did not know Turkish and believed that intense exposure to English would accelerate her transition to the mainstream world and English proficiency (mainstream teacher interview). Her monolingual approach also emerged when considering Elif's limited participation in class. Ms. Daniels believed that Elif's English proficiency had not progressed as much as other beginner emergent bilinguals. She noted that Elif was one year behind her peers academically and it might be "a learning issue mixed with her language development". She thought Elif should be tested the following year to understand if she had a learning disability and, if so, she should "take an extra 30 minutes of intensive [English] reading instruction because she is very below where she needs to be" (mainstream teacher interview). She used Turkish only through online dictionaries (Turkish-English) to help with Elif's comprehension of materials.

In contrast to the differently monolingual environments at home and at school, the CTS teachers favoured a more bilingual approach. They predominantly used Turkish to maximize exposure to Turkish but used English when the students were lost, or if the Turkish lesson did not make sense to them anymore. This policy aimed to avoid the loss of attention and ensure comprehension. The teachers used snack time as a space where both languages were encouraged since it was a time for the students to build relationships and socialize (CTS teacher interviews).

### Peers' language practices

Elif's peers included the children of their family friends and classmates in the school. Since we could not observe or record Elif's interaction with her peers at home, the data about Elif's peers' language practices at home are based on Elif's self-report and her parents' reports. Although monolingual practices were more dominant among Elif's peers at home (in Turkish) and the mainstream school (in English), bilingual practices were more frequently used in the CTS (see Figure 2 below).
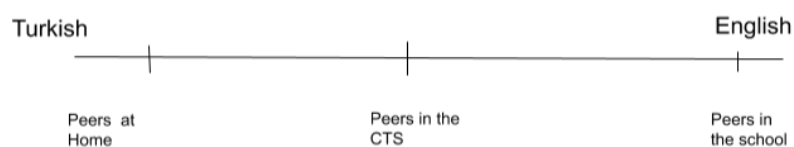


**Figure 2** *Peers' language use with Elif at home, school and in the CTS*

Elif's peers spoke predominantly Turkish with Elif when they visited her at home because their family friends were also proficient Turkish speakers. On the other hand, Elif's peers at school used mainly English or Spanish (not strategic or controlled by the teacher) in their interactions with each other, but only English in their interactions with Elif since they did not know Turkish. Elif could remember two occasions for speaking Turkish at school: 1) when she met another Turkish-speaking student, and 2) when she taught a few words to one of her Spanish-speaking peers. Other than these two occasions, the school did not provide Elif and her peers with any opportunities to speak Turkish (student interviews). Although monolingual language practices were dominant in Elif's home and school, her peers' language practices were more bilingual in the CTS. The English and Turkish proficiencies of the students in the CTS varied, and students moved between Turkish and English to convey their messages. Moreover, the CTS teachers supported students' bilingual practices so that the students could embrace their identities and build community without language being a barrier. Since Elif was more fluent in Turkish, Elif's proficient bilingual peers in the CTS spoke mostly Turkish to interact with her. However, Elif's peers with limited Turkish proficiency spoke mostly English to communicate with Elif.

**Language Use & Boundaries**

The differences in language use by adults and peers in the three discursive spaces created different boundary experiences for Elif. Using Phelan et al.'s framework (1991), home-mainstream school, home-CTS and CTS-mainstream school boundaries fell on a smooth to insurmountable continuum.

*Home and CTS*

As mentioned before, Elif's parents used only Turkish to interact with Elif at home. Similarly, the CTS teachers used predominantly Turkish to achieve communication with Elif. Since Elif was a fluent Turkish speaker, she could meet the CTS teachers' linguistic expectations, participate in the Turkish dominant instructional practices, demonstrate her knowledge and comprehension and raise questions when she felt confused. Thus, the adults' language practices at home and school shared large commonalities, and thus formed a soft language use boundary between these two discursive spaces for Elif.

On the other hand, Elif's English dominant language practices with some of her peers in the CTS differed from her home language practices. To fully engage in these peer discussions in the CTS, she often needed translations from her bilingual peers. For example, in a coloring activity, Elif was confused by the colors of a cow. To clarify, she addressed her peers with the question "inek ne renk?" (What color is a cow?). Although Turkish-fluent students understood and expressed their opinions, Elif decided to address the question to her teachers so that they could translate for all and she could also hear her English-fluent peers' opinions. The teachers repeated the question in both Turkish and English, and they agreed that while some cows were brown, others were white and black. In this case, Elif's English-fluent peers' limited Turkish comprehension skills and her limited English proficiency created discontinuities in her interactions. The teachers and peers played an important role in mediating these continuities to soften the boundaries. Elif's transition between home and the CTS could be positioned between smooth and managed.

*Home and mainstream school*

Turkish-dominant language practices in Elif's home and English-dominant language practices in Elif's school shared limited commonalities and resulted in strong discontinuities between these two spaces, which became insurmountable in the mainstream classroom.

Thanks to her parents' bilingual abilities, these home-mainstream school discontinuities could be more easily re-established (mediated) at home. For example, when Ms. Daniels sent a note home letting parents know students were free to wear costumes for Halloween, Elif's mother was confused about what kind of costumes were allowed, and asked Elif if she remembered the teacher's instructions about the costume. Elif explained that she had not understood the teacher's instructions either. Elif's mother wrote a note to the teacher and the teacher clarified the cultural expectation. In this case, not having access to English and Turkish at school created a discontinuity at home. However, her mother re-established continuity using her bilingual resources and learning took place.

The discontinuities caused by differences between linguistic norms at school and home influenced Elif's learning and interactions more often and strongly at school. Unlike at home, continuities could not be re-established due to the lack of bilingual practices at the school. For example, in a science lesson, upon teaching the concepts of "sun, stars and moon" to the whole class, Ms. Daniels addressed a comprehension question to Elif: "What would happen if there was no sun?" Elif stayed silent indicating that she did not comprehend the question. The teacher repeated the question to facilitate her

understanding because "she has been struggling a little bit to pick up... She is really struggling to come up with words" (mainstream teacher interview). Although Elif continued to misunderstand the question, she gave an answer the second time to meet the teacher's expectations. She responded, "water". Her wrong answer resulted in her humiliation (she was called "dumb" loudly by one of her peers). Ms. Daniels did not provide more scaffolding and called on another student. When the school ended, I asked Elif the same question in Turkish. She gave a long, correct answer to the question in Turkish. This case showed that lack of linguistic commonalities between home and school, and Ms. Daniels' limited linguistic accommodations appeared as a barrier to Elif's learning and school success. Thus, Elif's transition between home and school could be positioned between traumatic and insurmountable.

### The CTS and school

The CTS and mainstream schools were learning spaces for Elif as she increased her knowledge about cultures and languages, and as she came together with other children at her age in these spaces. However, these two learning spaces differed greatly in terms of curriculum and linguistic norms and values. While the mainstream school curriculum focused more on mainstream U.S. culture, literacy activities and English, the CTS focused on Turkish culture and language. Another contrast emerged in terms of language policy: the mainstream teacher engaged in English- only language practices whereas the CTS teachers allowed bilingual language practices even though the overall environment was Turkish dominant.

As Elif moved from CTS to the mainstream school, she experienced a significant shift from a competent participant to a silenced student. Whereas she could follow the instructions, raise and answer questions and demonstrate her learning comfortably in the CTS, she was quiet and unable to contribute in the mainstream school setting. Given the frequent discontinuities in her learning and interactions in the mainstream school and CTS, her boundary crossing experience between the CTS and the school could be positioned between traumatic and insurmountable.

## Summary

Looking across three discursive spaces, Elif's linguistic experiences moved from smooth to insurmountable as she moved from home to the CTS to the school (see Figure 3).
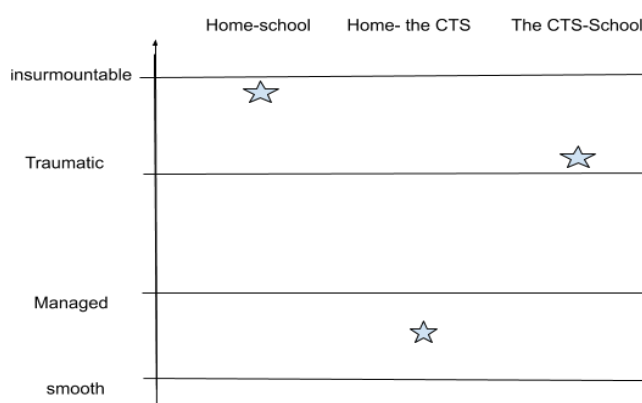


**Figure 3** *Elif's experiences with language use boundary across home, school and the CTS*

While she experienced the softest boundaries between home and the CTS as these two spaces shared great commonalities in language practices, she experienced the strongest boundaries between home

and school. Despite some shared English practices, the CTS and school boundaries can be categorized between traumatic and insurmountable and the mainstream school setting did not provide effective supports or bilingual language use opportunities to mediate Elif's limited English proficiency.

### *Translanguaging as a boundary crossing mechanism*

Translanguaging practices functioned as an important boundary crossing mechanism, particularly in the CTS as this setting brought together bilingual adults and peers. In CTS, translanguaging acted as a boundary object in four ways: 1) Creating bridges between practices, 2) giving voice, 3) scaffolding learning, and 4) affirming identities.

### *Creating bridges between practices*

Translanguaging as a boundary object created bridges between the monolingual and monocultural practices and increased Elif's familiarity with new cultural and linguistic norms and values. Being given opportunities for the fluid use of English and Turkish created connections for Elif to mediate between discursive spaces that were dominated by either Turkish or English. For example, when she was doing her homework at home, Elif counted using some numbers in Turkish and others in English (e.g. ten, one hundred, etc.). Elif commonly used this strategy at school to solve math problems, but in her mind, not aloud. The opportunity to freely translanguage created a meaningful connection between home and school languages and practices.

Another example occurred in CTS. Labelling colors of the objects was a common activity that Elif was familiar from kindergarten in the U.S. When this activity was conducted in the CTS, she unconsciously labelled some colors in English although the teacher requested Turkish labels and she knew them in Turkish very well.

> Sibel: Bu ne renk?
> Elif: Blue
> Sibel: Huh?
> Elif: Aah sey mavi
>
> Sibel: What color is this?
> Elif: Blue
> Sibel: Huh?
> Elif: Uhmm, blue.

This activity, which was a commonality between the CTS and her mainstream school, generally required students to use linguistic codes in one named language only. However, Elif moved back and forth between English and Turkish, and translanguaged. Her unique language practices created a bridge between the CTS and school.

### *Giving voice*

Translanguaging gave Elif a voice when a language use boundary hindered her interactions or comprehension. Through using translanguaging practices, she could convey her messages that she would not have been able to convey if the use of translanguaging was not welcomed in the CTS or school. For example, she engaged in conversations about Hong Kong both in the CTS and in the ESL lesson in her mainstream school, and had an opportunity to share her funds of cultural and linguistic knowledge with others by using Cantonese words or explaining her experiences in Hong Kong using her full language repertoire.

Teachers' translanguaging practices played an important role in her learning. In a discussion about Turkish food, Elif had an opportunity to share her expertise with her peers. Teacher Ayla had involved the students in a discussion about their favorite food. In this discussion, Elif had an opportunity to share not only her favorite food, but also her experiences with the food in Turkey. When her Turkish dominant discourse was beyond her peers' Turkish comprehension skills, the teacher stepped in and translated for others. Through these bilingual practices, Elif's message was valued and conveyed to all. The bilingual environment at CTS gave Elif a voice and provided her with an opportunity to express her personal experiences with confidence.

### Scaffolding learning

Since Elif was a beginner English learner, she experienced frequent discontinuities in her learning when the content was delivered in English only. In these kinds of situations, the use of translanguaging by Elif or another bilingual (boundary crossing) person could facilitate her learning. For example, in the specialized English as a second language (ESL) lesson, the students learned about some important frontier explorers. Although the ESL teacher provided student-friendly definitions, visuals about U.S. history and geography and used Spanish to explain some points, these accommodations were limited in facilitating Elif's comprehension. As a result, she laid her head down on the desk and pretended to be sleeping when her teacher directed her questions about the reading passage. As a post-reading activity, the teacher assigned them a writing task. Since she kept her head lying on the desk and did not start the task for a while, the researcher approached her and asked in Turkish whether she understood the task. Elif responded that she had not understood anything. The researcher summarized the reading passage and the task for her in Turkish, and they worked together using Turkish and English fluidly to complete the sentence frame. In this case, the researcher's and Elif's translanguaging practices scaffolded Elif's learning. Elif became engaged and was able to complete her task.

### Affirming identities

Translanguaging spaces provided Elif with an opportunity to demonstrate her plurilingual identity. Although the opportunities for demonstrating this linguisitc identity were more limited in her mainstream school and at home compared to the CTS, she used translanguaging to demonstrate her plurilingual identity in all discursive spaces. For example, during the ESL lesson at school, the students were assigned to a task and left free after the task. In this process, a group of students started to look at the posters in a pile. When they found a poster of Hong Kong , they called on Elif, and showed her the poster. She joined the group and explained the picture to them by using words in English and Cantonese. By doing this, she gained an opportunity to demonstrate her Chinese-English bilingual identity to them using translanguaging as a boundary object.

Similarly, in the dialogue below, Elif answered teacher Sibel's Turkish question in English to connect with her peer who was fluent in English and demonstrate her Turkish-American identity to both her peer and her teacher.

> Sibel: Nasılsın nasıl geçiyor bakalım hafta?
> Elif: Doğum günüydü.
> Sibel: Kimin?
> Elif: Kivanc'ın.
> Sibel: Gerçekten mi? (to Kivanc) Doğum gününde neler yaptın anlatmak ister misin? Pasta yedin mi pasta?
> Elif: Toy ama birthday cake.
>
> Sibel: How are you? How is your week going?

Elif:    It was his birthday.
Sibel:   Whose?
Elif:    Kivanc's.
Sibel:   Really? (to Kivanc) Would you like to share what you did on your birthday? Did you eat a birthday cake?
Elif:    He had a birthday cake, but it was a toy.

Due to Elif's limited proficiency in English, Elif often felt like an outsider in the CTS community. In this example, by using an English sentence in her Turkish dominant dialogue and a Turkish conjunction within her English sentence, she performed her bilingual identity and connected a bridge between her language practices at home and school. Moreover, she not only created a connection between herself and others who shared the same background but also demonstrated her knowledge about Kivanc's birthday to teacher Sibel.

## Discussion

Through examining the case of Elif, this study examined how language practices varied by discursive space (home, school, Turkish school) and how translanguaging acted as a key boundary crossing mechanism in a CLD students' boundary crossing experiences.

The findings of this study indicate that language norms and practices vary by discursive space – home, school, heritage language or community-based schools (Hornberger & Link, 2012; Jonsson, 2013; Phelan et al., 1991). Similar to other studies, the heritage language school provided the most opportunities to CLD students to use their linguistic resources fluidly (Byeon, 2015; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Li Wei, 2014; Otcu, 2010). On the other hand, home and the mainstream school were mostly monolingually-oriented linguistic spaces. This finding is important as each space encourages and affords children different opportunities for language use and language development. Collectively, they help construct the bilingual learners' entire linguistic repertoire. It is important, therefore, that teachers are aware of and consider this variation when planning instruction. Considering only one discursive space may limit teachers' understanding of students' full linguistic repertoires within and across named languages.

This study moves beyond this finding, using boundary crossing theory to illuminate how boundaries between discursive spaces vary and how CLD students engage with different sociocultural norms and language practices as they cross these boundaries. This study showed that for a newcomer emergent bilingual student fluent in their home language and limited in the school language, the transitions between home and a heritage language school were the smoothest, and the transitions between home and school were the most insurmountable boundary crossing experience. This pattern was influenced by the bilingual skills of adults and peers in the home and CTS and hence their ability to smooth possible discontinuities. In contrast, the monolingual school environment provided few resources to approach teaching and learning bilingually. Although this study found smoother boundaries between home and the heritage school, other studies have noted more insurmountable boundaries (e.g., Byeon, 2015; Helmer, 2013; Lo, 2009; Otcu, 2010). One reason for this different outcome may be that heritage language teachers in other studies tended to value monolingual heritage language practices more. In contrast, the Turkish teachers' goals and curriculum supported a space where both languages were used fluidly for communication and for building relationships.

Translanguaging emerged as a key boundary crossing mechanism. More specifically, translanguaging practices created a bridge between monolingual linguistic spaces, gave voice to Elif's experiences and expertise, scaffolded content learning and task completion, and opened spaces for bilingual identity

performance. Although not framing translanguaging as a boundary crossing mechanism, other studies have identified similar functions of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in mainstream schools and/or heritage language schools (Byeon, 2015; Jonsson, 2013; Li Wei, 2014; Lytra, 2015; Otcu, 2010).

## Conclusion

As teachers around the world encounter more students whose linguistic and cultural experiences may be significantly different from their own, it becomes increasingly important to find ways to respond to this diversity in our schools through asset-based approaches. Research has shown that deficit orientations lead to practices that negate students' linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge and fail to build on students' lived experiences and their prior knowledge.

To date, research on the language practices of CLD students has often limited its scope to schools and/or home as important discursive spaces. Our study of Elif's language experiences at home, in school, and her Turkish heritage language school underscores the importance to include other discursive spaces when exploring students' linguistic repertoires. Within these spaces, translanguaging serves as a core strategy that can support CLD students' boundary crossing experiences and enhances learning, interaction, and engagement. Teachers adopting asset-based approaches should create opportunities for translanguaging so that CLD students can demonstrate their full potential in learning. This study thus brings heavily into question the implementation of English-only policies as a misguided attempt to enhance students' academic achievement in schools.

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