EXPLORING MULTILINGUAL PEDAGOGIES IN
BELIZEAN LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOMS

By

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Abstract: This qualitative study examined four Belizean primary teachers' multilingual pedagogies in language arts instruction. The research question, what multilingual pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in the Language Arts classrooms guides this multiple case study. Using a thematic analysis in the data analysis process results in the development of four themes across the cases. The findings revealed that the teachers used multimodal and translanguaging pedagogies to facilitate multilingual students' meaning-making processes. Through language teaching partnerships, the teachers positioned students as agents of their own learning and others’ learning. The teacher enacted these multilingual pedagogies with an ethic of care that includes responsibility for their students’ emotional well-being. The study makes recommendations for teachers and educators who chose to use multilingual strategies including incorporating multimodal representations of content in various modes, teachers using their multilingual skills to convey meaning, and fostering peer-teaching among students across multiple languages. The study highlights the importance of using students’ full cultural and linguistic resources in language arts teachings for students to experience meaningful growth in their literacy lives.

Keywords: translanguaging, multilingual pedagogies, multimodal, cultural and linguistic resources
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The intersection of immigration, multilingualism, and literacy education has become the site of scholarly inquiry focused on transnational education, globalization, and mobility in students’ home and school lives (Ghiso, 2016; Tolbert & Knox, 2016). Most schools are linguistically diverse; as a result, scholars call for a shift in the implementation of education to adapt to these complex realities and provide equitable education to culturally and linguistically diverse students (Gutiérrez, 2021). In addition, most of the world’s population now engages in two or more languages; therefore, multilingualism has become a way of life as multilinguals navigate the world (Ghiso, 2016).

Language plays a crucial role in shaping society, for it acts as a means of communication tied to culture, traditions, values, attitudes, behaviors, and identity (Gee, 2015). Language also acts as a means of meaning-making. Language is a means through which we identify ourselves, but it is also a means by which we are identified by others (Fisher et al., 2021; Forbes, 2021). This study explored Belizean primary teachers’ multilingual pedagogies in language arts classrooms. Students in Belize begin primary school at age five.
The following discussions describe the statement of the problem, the purpose of this study, the research questions, its theoretical perspective, an overview of the methodology, and its significance.

**Formal Statement of the Problem**

As an education officer for the Ministry of Education, I often facilitate literacy coaching sessions with primary school teachers and students. In one of these sessions, the students were placed in small groups and given various reading and writing materials. They were encouraged to use the writing prompts and other materials to engage in writing activities. However, as the students wrote, their major questions were, *Did I spell this correctly?* or *Did I write it in proper English?* Their main concern was perfecting their written responses using English only. In my experience as a Belizean educator for over twenty years, it is often the norm for teachers to disregard students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds and embrace learning in academic English only.

With Belize being such a diverse society, our schools' cultural and linguistic student and teacher populations are multilingual. I have observed many students needing help understanding school materials due to the disconnection between their background knowledge and the new concepts being taught. The emphasis on academic English remains dominant as students' native and home languages become dormant. Teachers add to the monolingual ideology in schools by adhering to English-only teaching practices. Such teaching decisions may lead to the marginalization of students and put them at a disadvantage in learning (Mooznah, 2011).

However, teachers could use multilingual pedagogies that include learners’ previous knowledge and other linguistic wealth. *Multilingualism* is the presence of several languages
and cultures in a given societal and geographical context and is viewed as an asset in the lives of multilingual people (Cenoz, 2012; Romer, 2020). Likewise, *multilingual* refers to one’s knowledge of multiple languages, including spoken or signed languages. Facilitating multilingual pedagogies in the early years of schooling is critical, especially when children transition from home to school amidst the complexities of globalization. Multilingual pedagogies meaningfully include learner’s language practices in a way that supports and develops their diverse linguistic repertoires (García & Kleifgen, 2020). When students are challenged cognitively but provided with the contextual and linguistic supports required for successful task completion, they acquire more success in language and content (García & Lin, 2017.)

On the other hand, some schools in Belize categorize themselves as elite schools because academic English dominates students’ home languages in classrooms. Their expectations are for students to communicate using a monolingual approach. However, completely disregarding students' linguistic repertoires and overlooking the use of their native home languages may lead to the silencing of students rather than enhancing their voices and other learning possibilities (Delpit, 1988). Dyson (2013) argues that children learn language as a matter of situated construction over time, given the interactional opportunity. Thus, allowing students to actively construct meaning in their literacy lives in a way that connects with their home languages supports generative multilingual development. Teaching that supports students’ multilingual and multicultural competence allows students to use their full linguistic resources, knowledge, and experiences as springboards for learning (D’warte & Callow, 2019).
Although Belize’s National Curriculum Framework calls for inclusiveness to meet those students whose home languages are not English (Ministry of Education, 2021), the residue of colonialism remains a force to grapple with as the ideologies of teaching and learning solely in English prevail. For instance, it is the norm that when students are assessed, they must respond in English only. Sometimes, if the students misspell an English word, they lose points on their tests. These experiences limit students' active participation in class and add to the marginalization of learning for students whose home language is not English. It is as if their linguistic identities were being stifled. For this study, linguistic identity refers to how one identifies or is identified by others in each language in one’s linguistic repertoire (Fisher et.al, 2020). Delpit (1988) reiterated that teaching practices that affirm students' cultural and linguistic identities in schools will enhance the trusting environment they need to become successful.

According to the Abstract of Education Statistics of Belize (2021), the highest repetition rate at the primary level occurs in the early years of schooling. As an educator, when deciding on retaining students, we looked at their performances in language arts. Therefore, our most significant reason for retaining a student was based on performance in language arts. However, multilingual teachings, especially in the early years, should capitalize on students’ cultural, linguistic, and interactive nature for better academic performance (Ladson-Billings, 2000). According to Siegel (2006), the global nature of communicating in the 21st century requires flexible abilities that involve multiple representation modes, which allow students to draw from their cultural and linguistic resources that support an interactive meaning-making experience. Learning becomes a meaningful and subconscious process because students naturally experience weaving
together their background knowledge with new information. Multilingual learners benefit from deploying their full meaning-making resources in classrooms (Pierson & Grapin, 2021).

Before Belize’s education reform of the National Curriculum Standards, students who completed their primary school took a National Primary School Examination (PSE) that included a creative writing section in the English Language paper, where students wrote fictional and non-fictional pieces. Also, students in Standard Three were required to take the Belize Junior Achievement Test (BJAT), which also includes a fictional writing section. I recalled an experience while supervising the writing section of the BJAT with a student whose home languages are Spanish and Kriol. He said, “I do not know how to write it in English, but I can tell it to you in my language. I can do it in other ways but not in English only.” The paper was left blank. This student needed a shift in pedagogies that fostered his academic growth and allowed him to demonstrate his knowledge using his full cultural and linguistic resources (Lee & Anderson, 2009).

In my teaching experience, creative writing lessons often focus on grammatical structure and the end product instead of the student’s funds of knowledge. Teachers who use students’ funds of knowledge acknowledge and support instruction that links students’ lives, local histories, and community contexts in learning (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Writing includes intellectual, emotional, psychological, affective, and cognitive processes (Bazerman et. al, 2017; Graham et.al, 2019). Writing is also a social act (Dawson, 2017). Although students must write often and experience writing as a recursive process, they must also find pleasure and comfort in the process (Murray, 2003). Thus, a safe and supportive space where
they freely explore their linguistic resources can help students as they generate meanings (Xu & Drame, 2007).

Vygotsky (1978) adds that children are constructors of meaning, and written communication is one-way students interact with language to construct meaning for themselves and others. Therefore, written language adds to the forms of meaning-making, including spoken language. Elbow (2000) calls for balancing reading and writing courses in the curriculum so students can experience conveying their meanings and thoughts using various forms of written language. Writing also gives students a voice—a picture of the mind. Thus, written language is an important tool for meaning-making and communicating (Graham et al., 2019). Teachers can support writers in exploring their cultural and linguistic competence by freely opening up space for students' engagement.

In knowing their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, teachers can select teaching practices that situate students’ lived experiences and knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 2000). They can select multilingual pedagogies that allow for multiple experiences and opportunities for students to explore their home languages in the process (Banks & Stark, 2003). In doing so, students develop ownership in regulating their developmental pathways and become agents of their own learning. These experiences help affirm and sustain one's linguistic identity and the generation of their own meaning as one grows into a lifelong learner beyond formal schooling (Gee, 2015).

For this study, the next section discusses the purpose of the research in relation to multilingual pedagogies in language arts classrooms.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**
This qualitative case study investigated Belizean primary teachers' multilingual pedagogies in language arts classrooms from a socio-cultural and socio-linguistic lens. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ multilingual practices and teachings in their language arts classrooms and investigate how the teachers used these multilingual pedagogies during their lessons to facilitate students' learning and development. Case studies are designed around at least one research question that asks what is most important for understanding the topic of interest (Stake, 2006). My main research question holds the case together and helps bind the study. For my study, I developed one broad research question that identified the setting and the context of the study (Patton, 2015). The main research question focused on the binding topic of interest: *What multilingual pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in Language Arts classrooms?* The two sub-questions guided a deeper investigation of the topic and maximized further understanding of each case:

a) What multilingual oral language pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in Language Arts classrooms?

b) What multilingual writing pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in Language Arts classrooms?

The main research question that guided and directed the study was developed from my theoretical stance, substantive interest, and disciplinary framework (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). Embedded in the main question were the assumptions of multilingualism as part of one’s linguistic identity that includes spoken and written language as forms of communication. The main research question has a logical alignment with case study methodology. With this research question, I investigated and explored four teachers’
multilingual pedagogies and highlighted their teaching decisions and contributions to multilingual education.

**Theoretical Perspective**

Crotty (1998) described epistemology as the theory of knowledge and theoretical perspective as the stance used to inform one’s methodology. One’s epistemology in research refers to what one comes to know situationally and in context (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). I chose constructionism as my epistemology, upon which my theoretical perspective of constructivism was grounded. The epistemology of constructionism is that subject and object emerge as partners in generating meaning. Truth and meaning are constructed through our engagement and interactions with the world (Crotty, 2015). Therefore, I believe that in the construction of knowledge, different people do so in different ways, even about the same phenomenon.

My theoretical perspective is grounded in the belief that knowledge and truth are constructed as we evolve and as we make meaning and search for the truth through our experiences and interactions. The constructivist paradigm is built on the notion of the social construction of reality, recognizing the subjective human creation of meaning (Abama & Stake, 2014; Yin, 2003). Constructivism is a conceptual fit with constructionism, for its proponents of these paradigms share the goal of understanding the world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings to be constructed by its social actors (Schwandt, 1994). It becomes the researcher’s responsibility to illuminate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings manifest in the language and actions of society. Allen (2019) argues that a constructive approach builds upon students' cultural heritage and strengths by
acknowledging their active role in learning and building bridges between their pre-existing knowledge and experiences and curricular content.

Methodology

My chosen methodology of case study was guided by the epistemology of constructionism and the theoretical stance of constructivism. I aligned my epistemology, theoretical perspective, and methodology to achieve a conceptual fit in the research design (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). Patton (2015) reminds us that case studies should take the reader into the case situation and experience. Qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and particular situation (Stake, 2006).

The boundaries of this case study include four teachers from two primary schools in the urban Belize District. These teachers believed that they used multilingual pedagogies in language arts instruction and voluntarily participated in the study. All four teachers used the language arts teaching standards from the national curriculum to guide their teachings and they followed the schedule of instruction provided by the Ministry of Education. The study was carried out during the fourth teaching cycle of the academic school year which starts in the middle of April and concludes in the middle of June.

This case study included lived observations of multilingual pedagogies in four different classroom contexts. It included interactions with participants through individual interviews, observation field notes, and lesson plan artifacts, which served as my primary data collection method. For my choice of data collection methods, I reflected on the purpose of my research, for the “purpose drives my data analysis and design frames analysis” (Patton, 2015, p 552). I believe knowledge is a two-way process and does not reside with just one
individual who is the keeper and dispenser of knowledge. Each of us brings some kind of deeper knowledge and experiences to a situation to better understand and make meaning. Stake (2006) reiterated that when choosing a case, we always study its situation to construct meaning.

**Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to the growing body of research on multilingualism. Thus, my study examined what the teachers did well and honored their professional expertise instead of blaming them for poor student performance or assuming a lack of knowledge. My findings provide Belizean educators with examples of specific practices that support multilingual literacies and give educators tangible ideas for scaling up these practices. The teachers’ practices supported equitable and inclusive meaning-making experiences for multilingual learners as they explored and challenged their full cultural and linguistic resources using a variety of modes and forms.

In the findings chapter, I’ll demonstrate how the four teachers in this study identified with the realities of their multilingual learners. They noticed the need to alter and refine their teaching practices on an ongoing basis to sustain spaces for diverse learning. These teachers not only had a passion for teaching but also took a stance toward improving their pedagogies to develop students’ cultural and linguistic competencies (Garcia & O’Donnell-Allen, 2015). Their choices of multilingual practices acknowledged and sustained the diverse student and teacher populations by opening learning spaces where students fluidly navigated across their home languages while also being bound by the official language of the education system. The teachings of these four primary teachers acknowledged their students’ multilingual repertoires in designing and nurturing learning spaces that were meaningful to
every individual learner as they made meaning of new information. Their sustaining practices reflected their learners' needs, lives, and interests (Paris & Alim, 2014).

This study enabled educators to explore their multilingual pedagogies in their language arts classrooms. The teachers reflected on meaningful pedagogies that catered to their students’ multilingual repertoires, enabling inclusive language classrooms. As a result of their teaching decisions, they opened up safe and supportive language arts spaces for students to explore their multilingual competence. For instance, students moved fluidly between their home languages and school languages as they made meaning using oral and written responses in lessons. The students were not just limited to an English-only learning space, but they were free to use all their resources as they navigated new learning through their responses and meaning-making. When students' diverse linguistic practices are included and supported through classroom pedagogies, learning becomes meaningful (Krulatz & Jonas, 2020).

By welcoming students' linguistic resources into the classrooms, the students developed multilingual awareness of other languages as they supported their peers, whether it was translating an idea or repeating a concept. Belize is a multi-ethnic society, and its students' socio-cultural and linguistic diversity makes it essential for teachers to use multilingual pedagogies that sustain their students’ linguistic repertoires. For example, Paris and Alim (2014) remind us that these culturally sustaining pedagogies can affirm students’ linguistic identities and give them a voice in supporting spaces built on trust.

The following discussions provide insights into the nature of multilingual education and an overview of Belize's historical and societal nature to contextualize this study.

**A Multilingual Perspective**
With over six ethnicities and languages, Belize’s population is diverse, and our schools' teachers and students mirror this cultural and linguistic diversity. Therefore, we must connect our multilingual context with teachers’ pedagogies to optimize students’ learning (García & Lin, 2017). Learning spaces that enable multilingual learners to connect with their full linguistic repertoires generate deeper meaning-making. Multilingualism is complex and includes issues of identities, culture, and knowledge systems (Krulatz & Iverson, 2020). In this regard, students experience learning opportunities relevant to their needs while sustainably preserving their cultural and linguistic identities. According to D’warte and Callow (2020), multicultural and multilingual classrooms require learning that allows learners to use their linguistic repertoires and includes a variety of linguistic, communicative, and semiotic resources. Thus, school systems can shift and adapt to these complex realities to provide an equitable education to these culturally and linguistically diverse populations (Gutiérrez, 2021). It begins with acknowledging the languages of the learner and then weaving in other languages of the institutions to create a multilingual education that would contribute to improving learning and developing student confidence and self-esteem.

Thus, multilingualism requires an educational response that is relevant and inclusive of learners' cultural and linguistic identities (Cenoz, 2012). How educational institutions position themselves regarding the languages students come with to school impacts how students construct and shape their linguistic identities. Thus, the processes of identity negotiations for students can become a place of opportunity struggle in institutional spaces through various grain sizes of cultural and linguistic reference (Lee & Anderson, 2009). However, when multilingual experience learning that fosters their cultural and linguistic wealth, it increases their engagement and their academic growth. Linguistically diverse
students are often at a higher risk of academic underachievement when their home languages differ from the school language (Kapoyannis, 2019). This complex cultural and linguistic diversity makes considering how linguistic identities are conceptualized and framed as valuable in social interactions across different contexts. Bridging multilinguals’ cultural and linguistic assets with new experiences and ideas supports the shaping of their linguistic identity trajectory as they confidently apply and transfer these repertoires across situational contexts in this global education shift (Ball, 2012). Therefore, multilingual identities are critical to the processes involved when designing educational policies and procedures because learners' ways of being and their understanding of how they navigate the world are influenced by how they position and identify themselves and how others identify them (García & Kleifgen, 2020).

**An Overview of Belize’s History**

Belize is the only official English-speaking country in Central America and is part of the Caribbean by its geographical location and historical background. Gaining political independence from Britain in 1981 helped shape Belize as a developing, multilingual, and multicultural country (Shoman, 2011). However, before the Europeans arrived in Belize, the Mayas occupied much of what is now Belize, but they retreated further inland to the south after the arrival of the Europeans. The British settlers, who called themselves Baymens, began cutting logwood in the settlement and started importing slaves from Africa to Belize. As a result of the intermingling between the Baymens and the African slaves, Creoles were born, giving rise to the Creole population and the Kriol language (National Kriol Council, 2024). In the early 19th century, many Garinagu exiled from British colonies in the Caribbean arrived in Belize and settled on its southern shores, bringing their language and
other traditions. The Caste War, an Indigenous uprising in Yucatan, Mexico, led to thousands of refugees fleeing to Belize and settling in the north (Shoman, 2011). These migrants, also known as Mestizo, now contribute to much of Belize’s population.

However, this migration introduced a variety of agricultural developments, and the owners of some of these estates sponsored the immigration of several Chinese and South Asian laborers to Belize. Additionally, Mopan and Kekchi Mayas, fleeing from the oppression in neighbouring Guatemala, also established communities in southern Belize. The effects of globalization and other social issues in neighboring countries such as Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua have added to Belize's diverse cultures and languages as people migrate to Belize, bringing Spanish as their native language and other customs. As a result, Belize’s population is rich in culture, history, languages, traditions, values, beliefs, and identities.

**Belize: A Multicultural and Multilingual Society**

As a result of the rich cultural and linguistic makeup of Belize’s population, language is a prominent feature of Belize's diversity, with six main languages spoken by various ethnicities across the country: Kriol, Spanish, Garifuna, Mayan (Kekchi, Mopan, and Yucatec languages), English, and German. However, Kriol, Spanish, and English remain the most dominant languages used by the population for conversant purposes (Census of Belize, 2010). Thus, students’ demographics mirror that of the country. The Ministry of Education (2000) sector plan and the Census of Belize (2010) reiterated that 63% of the population over three reported speaking English well enough to converse. English is Belize's official language and instruction language in schools.
Many Belizeans have a cultural expectation that Belizean people should be able to communicate in Kriol, but only 45% of the population can speak Kriol, according to the 2010 Census. Belize’s Kriol is an English-based Kriol. The National Kriol Council developed a system for writing Kriol. Some of the symbols used in English are used in Kriol. For example, long $a^\prime = ay$ as in *way* (way) and $tr = chr$ as in *chree* (tree, three), *chros* (trust). Some symbols are different; for example, nasalization words such as $wan = one$ and $de = there$ (National Kriol Council, 2024). Kriol is often used for oral communication, so limited access to teaching and learning materials in the written form for Kriol remains a challenge for educators. In 2007, a Kriol dictionary was published by the Belize Kriol Project, which includes translation and grammatical descriptions (National Kriol Council, 2024). A travel book in Kriol and English was published by the Kriol Project in 2005. The Kriol Project also published a revision of a book that teaches the symbols for each sound, intending to make Kriol easier to read and write. To date, a few storybooks have been written in Kriol with English translations available for sale in selected bookstores in Belize. Although a few resources have been published, the availability, accessibility, and usability of printed materials in Kriol are still very limited. Resources and other texts in English are easily accessible in hard and digital copies.

Furthermore, Spanish is spoken by 56.6% of the population (Census of Belize, 2010), with the focus of its teaching in primary schools being on conversant purposes. This focus aligns with the expectation of the teaching standards in the national curriculum. Students are not expected to communicate using its written form at the primary level. However, accessing written materials in Spanish is far easier than accessing Kriol materials. In most primary schools in Belize, visual aids and other prints are sometimes written in Spanish and English.
For example, most schools have written forms for the sounds of the letters of the alphabet in both English and Spanish. Teachings and learning of other languages, such as Maya and Garifuna, are not a part of the national curriculum standards and goals.

However, Gulisi Pre and Primary Schools located in the Southern District of Stann Creek acknowledge and welcome their students’ native languages in the classroom by integrating additional subject matter that would produce competency and sustain students’ knowledge of the Garifuna language, history, and culture (Ambergris Caye News, 2024). Although only 2.9% of Belize’s population speaks Garifuna, the Garinagu remains one of the most recognized ethnic groups (Census of Belize, 2010). The Garifuna language, dance, and music have been awarded the title of Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangibles Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO, 2021). One of the aims of Gulisi pre and primary schools’ curricula is to link their students’ cultural and linguistic knowledge with the Ministry of Education’s curriculum standards through an Intercultural Trilingual Education System incorporating English, Spanish, and Garifuna. Its goal is to ground students' learning in their own culture and, at the same time, prepare them for when they leave school. Consequently, the school pushes back on Belize’s societal norms of an “English only” education system and facilitates learning by sustaining and fostering students' cultural and linguistic wealth in their classrooms. The Ministry of Education recently partnered with the school to extend this practice to other primary schools in the Stann Creek District (Love FM News, 2024).

In addition, 10.5% of the population speaks Maya, 3.9% speaks German, 0.9% speaks Chinese, and 9.9% speaks other languages (Census of Belize, 2010). Therefore, the rich linguistic diversity of Belize’s population should be a part of students' learning experiences for a more equitable and inclusive one. According to Xu and Drame (2007),
meaningful education facilitates students’ learning and development and enables their academic success using their cultures, language, and heritage in the process. As a result, students feel valued and respected when their full identities are honored in the vision and mission of the country’s educational policies and goals.

**Belize’s Education Reform**

All Belizean schools are spread out across the six administrative districts, each with its unique environmental, economic, and demographic characteristics, including a diverse community of learners with multilingual identities, culture, knowledge, and mobilities (Menjivar & Salmon, 2018). The Ministry of Education in Belize, cognizant of its diverse student and teacher population, acknowledged that Belize's heterogeneity, including its ethnicity and home languages, should be considered in the design and delivery of the national curriculum, teacher training programs, and student assessments (Ministry of Education, 2021). Therefore, Belize's Language Policy highlights its respect for the multilingual and multicultural nature of the country and encourages teachers to use students’ native or home language to facilitate learning where needed (Ministry of Education Belize, 2000). However, in a system primarily influenced by the residue of colonialism, the monolingual ideology of an English-only education system creates a challenge for teachers when supporting a multilingual education. As a former teacher, some challenges include minimal access to professional development for teaching in a multilingual context, multilingual resources, and a traditional English-only assessment and evaluation practice.

To achieve its expected academic outcomes in the next five years and pursue its vision for education in Belize, the Ministry of Education pledges that all its citizens will have access to quality and relevant education regardless of ethnicity (Ministry of Education,
In the school year of 2023, the Ministry of Education revised and amended its National Curriculum Framework, which aims to better prepare students for meaningful participation in society and the world. The National Curriculum includes standards that aim to be inclusive, respect Belize’s cultural diversity, and cater to students with diverse education needs and those whose native language is not English (National Curriculum Framework, 2023). Thus, with the adaptation of a competency-based education, the goal is to shift how education was traditionally carried out to implement a system that puts learners’ cultural and linguistic identities at the forefront of teaching and learning. This system intends to support teachers in facilitating students’ learning by empowering them to positively impact society while becoming agents of their own learning.

At the primary levels, the subject-specific framework of the National Curriculum includes seven to eight key learning areas taught to students. The key learning areas include Language Arts, Mathematics, Health Education, Spanish, Science and Technology, Belizean Studies, Physical Education, and Expressive Arts. Language Arts is one of the core subject areas and accounts for most instructional time on the suggested teaching schedule developed by the Ministry of Education. Language Arts components include Reading Fluency and Accuracy, Comprehension, Production, and Grammar and Usage. Instructional time spent on each of these components may vary across schools countrywide. For example, some schools adopt a whole language approach that uses various literature to teach the language components. However, some schools teach each component separately or focus on a component such as Production (Writing) twice a week. Schools have the autonomy to adjust instructions that meet the learning needs of their students. Additionally, goals 11 and 12 of the National Education Goals of Belize
allow students to communicate proficiently in English and Spanish (Ministry of Education, 2000). However, some schools may focus on an English-only classroom which they believe helps their students to develop better communicative competence in English.

Therefore, with Belize’s classrooms being multilingual, facilitating multilingual teaching practices across all school levels could enrich students' educational journeys that allow for the illumination of their full linguistic identities. Multilingual learners benefit significantly from instructional support that draws on their linguistic and cultural practices and funds of knowledge because it supports a deeper, authentic experience in their generation of new meaning (España et.al, 2019). Instructional decisions that place students’ cultural and linguistic diversity at the center of teaching and learning facilitate opportunities for teachers and students to learn about and alongside each other (D’warte & Callow, 2019). Students develop higher interest and motivation when their learning experiences connect their background knowledge to new ones. In addition to fostering the experiences of their students, teachers must interrogate their positionality, which acts as “touchstones” that they will continue to return to as they respond to the learning needs of their students (Garcia & O’Donnell-Allen, 2015, p.13)

Ladson-Billings (1995) reminds us that teaching that uses a humanizing pedagogy and respects and uses students' realities and perspectives is integral to educational practice because it promotes students’ well-being. Authentic experiences that weave students’ prior knowledge, skills, and dispositions into learning support a system that places the learner at the center of the process. The students are encouraged to use their full linguistic resources to communicate and represent their knowledge. For instance, teachers can gauge instruction so that the academic knowledge and skills are situated within students’ lived experiences and
frames of reference, enabling new information to become more personally meaningful to these students (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Students thrive in an environment that supports their full cultural and linguistic identity.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy views children's funds of knowledge--their cultures and experiences and translingual and multimodal literacies--as assets the education system must maximize in classroom learning (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Paris & Alim, 2014). Moreover, students develop a growth mindset of belonging and the competencies required to support positive impacts and contributions worldwide. As a result, education becomes a means of educating students not just for schooling but to survive and function beyond formal school "as agents worthy of emulation" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p.76). Students experience learning that embraces and nurtures their unique competencies and use these assets with new knowledge to sustain new meanings. Similarly, students find fulfillment in supporting their peers because they acknowledge that as agents of change, their actions and behaviors contribute to their own development and growth and that of others.

Similarly, Hawkins (2013) reminds us that literacy practices are interwoven into cultural practices because interacting, valuing, thinking, speaking, and often reading and writing are everyday experiences of people. However, multilinguals often experience literacy in restricted language spaces within scripted curricula, significantly limiting the cultural and linguistic resources available to them. Literacy practices that are situational, contextual, and interwoven into the very texture of wider practices that involve talk, interactions, values, and beliefs have a deeper meaning (Gee, 2015). Furthermore, positioning students as agentive users of their language and literacy maximizes their communicative potential. These practices support students’ full use of their sociocultural and linguistic resources.
Conclusion

Teachers' knowledge of student’s cultural and linguistic wealth should inform their pedagogical and curricular decisions and practices in the classroom to facilitate students’ active engagement in relevant and sustaining learning experiences that are contextual and situational. This qualitative case study investigated Belizean primary teachers' multilingual pedagogies in language arts classrooms. The participants, drawn through purposive sampling from primary schools in the urban Belize District, were language arts teachers who used multilingual pedagogies to weave students’ multilingual identities into their lessons to sustain, generate, and position new meanings. Through classroom observations, informal interviews, and the gathering of artifacts, the teachers’ pedagogical approaches provided a deeper meaning and understanding of the what and why situations.

This dissertation has five chapters. The first chapter comprehensively introduced insights into Belize’s cultural and linguistic context and discussed teaching practices in a multilingual context. It included my statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, an overview of my theoretical perspective, the significance of the study, methodology, and procedures. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the literature on multilingual pedagogies through sociolinguistic literacy practices in multilingual classrooms, focusing on the generative learning process using translanguaging approaches. Chapter 3 focuses on a comprehensive examination of my research design and methodology. Chapters 4 present the study’s findings. Chapter 5 discusses the findings, research implications, limitations, and the study’s takeaways.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review discusses multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies in education, the sociolinguistic nature of language and literacy, and the generative learning processes in meaning-making. It concludes with further insights into translanguaging as a generative literacy and meaning-making practice.

Multilingualism and Translanguaging Approaches to Education

Multilingualism describes the various forms of the social, institutional, and individual presence of several languages, ranging from regional, minority, migrant, sign languages, and dialects in a given geographical or societal context (Franceschini, 2011; Kapoyannie, 2019). A focus on multilingualism as a model has three dimensions, including the multilingual speaker, the wholistic repertoire, and the social context (Cenoz, 2017). These three dimensions are related because the multilingual speaker uses his/her wholistic repertoire to communicate in a social context (Cenoz, 2017). With the global increase in the multiplicity of languages and cultures comes the shift from monolingual ideologies in education to multilingual ideologies and dynamic views of
multilingual education (Gutiérrez, 2021). Many of our classrooms are intrinsically multilingual; thus, a need for promoting education in more than one language where students can use their whole linguistics resources. The educational system needs to be able to meet students where they are with the same high expectations for all learners. Hofer (2017) posits that within an increasingly multilingual and multicultural world, knowledge of multiple languages naturally constitutes an invaluable asset. Since students come from households with culturally and cognitively rich resources, teachers can tap into their prior knowledge to provide a more cultural and linguistic learning experience where students’ differences are capitalized to maximize their full possibilities (Osorio, 2020).

D’warte and Callow (2019) reiterate that promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and the broad commitment to multilingualism and diversity is now central to global education policy and practice. The construct of multilingual competence creates spaces for implementing multilingual pedagogies that support the use of various linguistic repertoires. In a study by McClain and Schrodt (2021), primary teachers made space for multilingual pedagogies within culturally responsive teachings, which shifted the language hierarchies in the classroom while affirming student’s identities. Learning becomes a natural process that nurtures and sustains diversity. Multilingual teachings promote a sense of motivation toward learning because students can relate their prior knowledge to new concepts in an interactive and meaningful environment (Wei & Ho, 2018). Similarly, with a focus on multilingual learners, the opening up of spaces for diversity supports an environment that nurtures and promotes equity among its community of learners. Teachers can help multilingual learners draw on their home languages as a
valuable resource, a practice associated with benefits such as facilitated language learning, increased motivation, and learners' self-confidence (Krulatz & Iversen, 2021).

Language scholars have been shifting how we name multilingual speakers, in order to disrupt the status quo of the naming of people such as English Language Learners (ELLs), Second Language Learners (L2), Bilinguals, and Multilingual speakers (Basols, España et al., 2019) to label individuals who speak any other language(s) besides their home/native languages. ELLs and L2 operate from a deficit perspective by stratifying people from language (Ghiso, 2016). Bi/multilingual view learner's knowledge of more than one language as an asset (Gutiérrez, 2021). Instead, scholars advocate that we focus on what people do with language—a shift to focus on the language of people (España et al., 2019). The language of people refers to the ways people identify and culturally connect to a language as they navigate across other languages (España et al., 2019). For instance, translanguaging pedagogies focus on what multilingual speakers think, act, and do with languages and go beyond named languages as autonomous linguistic structures (Gutiérrez, 2021). Thus, how schools and individual teachers position themselves toward languages their students speak impacts how these students construct their identities and develop cognitively and emotionally (Krulatz & Iversen, 2021). Using students’ full linguistic resources cultivates interests and a sense of belonging, for they see part of their identity valued in schools (Kapoyannis, 2019). Furthermore, languages are repositories of historical and social experiences and act as socialization factors and means of human self-identification (UNESCO, 2023).

In many colonized countries where English is not the first language, English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has been used to teach academic subjects, especially in
higher education. As a result, EMI has gained popularity in multilingual and multicultural contexts where it is used as a lingua franca for professional purposes (Macaro, et.al, 2019). However, the implementation of EMI also creates difficulties for teachers in terms of their pedagogical knowledge of teaching English to multilingual students (Yuan & Yang, 2020). Students with limited English proficiency also needed help learning with the EMI approach. Furthermore, English as a medium of instruction includes an English-only context and suppresses multilingual learners' full linguistic identities. Therefore, to support teachers' pedagogical challenges and students' learning, there is a clarion call for using translanguage practices to replace English-only approaches. A qualitative study by Yuan and Yang (2020) explored a teacher’s perceptions of translanguage. The findings revealed that the teacher used three translanguage strategies in the translanguage approach. These strategies include integrating academic discourse with everyday discourse, linking verbal and semiotic resources, and using students’ first language. As a result, translanguage pedagogies reflect a change in how educators interpret multilingualism. Translanguage entails a functional and dynamic use of one’s plurilingual and language resources for knowledge (re)construction in content learning (Gutiérrez, 2021; Yuan & Yang, 2020).

Multilingual learners frequently experience learning in a language-restricted environment, often through scripted and overly reductionist curricula that limit their linguistic and cultural resources (Machado & Hartman, 2019). Multilingual learners benefit from a literacy environment that promotes multilingualism through rich, interactive language spaces and student-directed instruction. The creation of literacy practices supports the generation of new learning by connecting students’ prior knowledge
with new information (García & Li, 2018). When teaching practices ignore the diverse linguistic assets of students, they develop a feeling of not belonging because their experiences and the ability to use multiple languages are seen as a problem that needs correction instead of an asset for learning (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). In a qualitative single case study by Machado and Hartman (2019) designed to examine literacy practices in a linguistically diverse elementary classroom, the findings suggest that students can creatively and strategically engage in translingual writing with attention to purpose, audience, and expression. Therefore, it is essential to welcome all of a student’s linguistic resources and funds of knowledge into the classroom, and one way to do that is through translanguaging.

The asset pedagogies movement in the 1990s began with the idea that teaching and learning must acknowledge students’ cultural and linguistic assets and extend them into their learning (Woodard et al., 2017). Asset-based pedagogies help promote students’ achievement while teaching students to develop a sense of self-affirmation, which is critical for success. Thus, translanguaging spaces create a social space for multilingual learners to combine their cultural and linguistic resources into one unitary use and to go beyond them. Paris and Alim (2014) suggest culturally sustaining pedagogy as a remix of culturally relevant pedagogy for cultural and linguistic teachings “to foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response to demographic and social change” (p. 88). Culturally sustaining pedagogies affirm students’ cultural and linguistic wealth as an asset for learning rather than a deficit to learning that validates and honors the cultures and communities of people of color (Delpit, 1988).
Translanguaging is a plurilingual and generative meaning-making practice of multilingual pedagogy that sees language as intertwined with many other semiotic resources (García & Kleifgen, 2020). It allows multilingual learners to move fluidly between languages that form their repertoire using a unitary approach. A multilingual approach values all learners’ full linguistic repertoires and develops their metalinguistic awareness to establish the connections among languages they know and experience (Xu & Krulatz, 2023).

In the next sections, I investigate the socio-linguistic nature of language and literacy, and generative learning processes in meaning-making. I discuss translanguaging as a generative literacy pedagogy for interpreting multilingualism in classrooms toward the end of the chapter.

The Sociolinguistic Nature of Language and Literacy

The sociolinguistic views of literacy practices support the premise that meaning is socially constructed. Social interaction is an ongoing process as we interact with the world linguistically; thus, languaging as a process is shaped by situations and contexts (García & Kleifgen, 2019). Literacy is a social practice that recognizes multiple literacies that are contextually situated. Gee (2015) argues that “words and the world are married” because the way individuals make meaning is influenced by the knowledge acquired, our experiences, values, and beliefs (p. 29). Freire (1978) argued that literacy practices that engage one in reading the word and reading the world can reposition individuals socially and politically. Reading the word and reading the world influenced one’s views, beliefs, and actions, for the elements of language and society are intertwined in meaning-making.
Furthermore, literacy in itself, abstracted from historical conditions and social practices, has no effects; instead, what has effects are the historical conditions and social practices of individual identity (Gee, 2015). Thus, for multilingual learners to explore their full linguistic resources, multilingual practices must hone in on their funds of knowledge (Delpit, 1995). Learners’ meaning from information involves connecting to prior knowledge to make long-lasting memories (Wittrock, 2010). To enact specific socially recognizable activities, individuals must include their distinct ways of being and interacting with various literacy practices, people, tools, and technologies--the sociocultural connection (Gee, 2015).

Additionally, teachers’ understanding of literacy often determines their actions and behaviors toward their classroom instructional approaches and methodologies. The ability to read and write often sums up a cognitive descriptor of a traditionalist interpretation of literacy; however, from a sociolinguistic perspective, literacy encompasses much more than just reading and writing, for an individual does not become literate through merely physical contact with symbols and texts (García & Kleifgen, 2019). The shared beliefs and practices among social groups and their ways of interpreting them enact and become the liberating forces for a literate society (Gee, 2015; Scribner, 1984). From a sociolinguistic perspective, literacy is not the sole domain of the written word; it is the oral performances and accompanying visual texts, culturally regulated storytelling, songs, texts, prayers, and didactic teachings (Hawkins, 2013). Literacy includes the controlled use of secondary languages, for these secondary discourses are built on and extend the uses of language we acquired as part of our primary discourse (Gee, 1989). Literacy is much like an identity kit or discourse kit
because it includes “one’s way of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and, often, reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities” (Gee, 2015, p. 4). Through these interactions and participation, individual literacy becomes relative to social literacy with a social entity.

In their argument, the scholars who developed the New Literacy Studies (Cope et al., 2018) described literacy as a cover term for a variety of sociocultural practices that include multiple literacies with varied situational contexts; these multiple literacies are entwined with socialization, enculturation, and the transformation of groups of people (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Gee, 2015). One’s literate identity is embedded in one’s funds of knowledge, for our literacy proficiency is interwoven by one’s sociocultural practices, specific literacy practices, and ways of knowing. Thus, literacy is neither static nor has a universal essence, for in various parts of the world, literacy takes on meaning as society evolves within a shared community context (Scribner, 1984). Literacy is a collection of communicative and social practices shared among communities, and it includes the multilingual identities and cultural experiences individuals bring to the learning environment. It provides opportunities to promote, amplify, and support these variations of languages (NTCE, n.d.). Being literate is one tool that supports an enabling environment that nurtures and shapes humanity by validating their lived experiences through the connection of history, narratives, life possibilities, and social trajectories (Hawkins, 2013). Thus, literacy forms part of an individual way of becoming in this world, for our identities help shape and humanize our practices and ways of being.

Thus, literacy is a social practice with complex actions that rely on various social and historical contexts. A multicase study by Walker (2020) recommends that teachers
understand the linguistic diversity of their students and design physical and affective spaces that support their multilingual communities. Creating rich language and literacy learning spaces can actively engage students in meaningful literacy growth and foster their meaning-making. Educators can help cultivate, sustain, and generate literacy practices in an environment that harnesses students’ linguistic resources to make meaning with new information (Tsimpli et al, 2020). Leveraging learning opportunities for every individual to actively and critically participate fully in society shapes lifelong learners.

**Generative Learning Processes in Meaning-Making**

In an inviting multilingual environment, students connect and make sense of prior information and experiences by using all their cultural and linguistic resources with new dispositions, skills, and knowledge to generate new meaning. Fiorella and Mayer (2015) stated that generation refers to the connections a learner builds between the different materials to be learned, between the to-be-learned material and learners’ existing knowledge. Generative learning practices focus on a growing area of research interest that looks at what the learner can do to foster generative practices rather than solely focusing on what the teacher does to promote learning (Wittrock, 2010). Thus, generative learning allows learners to take ownership of their own learning and enables an authentic and relevant experience that acknowledges learners at the center of the process. The learning experiences focused on meeting every individual within their zone of proximal development and creating the support that also challenges students to take their learning beyond the classroom (Vygotsky, 1978). It aims to allow students to become the kind of learners who recognize and understand their learning preferences. Students become self-regulators of their own learning.
Wittrock (2010), argues that the generative learning model’s fundamental premise is that people tend to generate perceptions and meanings consistent with their prior learning. Thus, generative learning actively transforms incoming information into usable knowledge by mentally recognizing it and integrating it with prior knowledge, enabling learners to apply what they have learned to new situations (Fiorella & Mayer, 2015). Much of what we learn after our initial enculturation involves prior knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Enculturation happens through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have mastered a discourse (Gee, 2015). Thus, our acquisition and learning occur through various experiences mixed with the new learning to actively construct new meanings.

The mind is not a passive consumer of information but actively constructs its own interpretation of information and draws inferences from it (Freire, 1978; Tobias, 2010). One’s understanding of meaning becomes influenced by one’s situational context because what we come to make meaning of is influenced by our distinctive ways of being. Thus, generative learning depends on how much information is presented to learners and how learners try to understand it with their existing knowledge (Fiorella & Mayer, 2015). It is about what learners do and say and how they interact with the information in their situated contexts. Generative learning supports an understanding that involves a “process of generating and transferring meaning for stimuli and events from one’s background, attitudes, abilities, and experiences” (Fiorella & Mayer, 2015, p. 718). Learners’ ability to understand and communicate meaning effectively is supported and influenced by the experiences and knowledge of the learning situation.
Wittrock’s generative learning model is closely linked to Mayer’s model, which includes selecting, organizing, and integrating (SOI) and is similar to Kiewra’s framework of selecting, organizing, associating, and regulating (SOAR). Both Mayer’s and Kiewra’s models involve cognitive processes and the metacognitive processes of self-regulating. Similarly, Wittrock’s model depends on one’s ability to evaluate one’s own understanding of the material and select or adjust appropriate learning strategies (Fiorella & Mayer, 2015). It builds on the premise that meaningful learning consists of four main components—generation, motivation, attention, and memory (Wittrock, 2010). All three frameworks promote active learning, and as students become more cognitively engaged with information, the result is often a meaningful learning outcome or experience. These models promote the idea that improving students’ learning occurs through improving instructions using meaningful learning strategies. Thus, generative learning theory posits that meaningful learning depends on the learner engaging in appropriate cognitive processing during learning (Wittrock, 2010).

Additionally, eight learning strategies are shown to promote generative learning: summarizing, mapping, drawing, imagining, self-testing, self-explaining, teaching, and enacting (Fiorella & Mayer, 2015; Tobias, 2010). However, selecting the most appropriate strategy in a given situation depends on the learner's prior knowledge and the nature of the to-be-learned material for which our ability to process information is based, in part, on how much we know (Wittrock, 2010). The academic benefits are worth facilitating access to background knowledge as students acquire and learn new knowledge and skills. Consequently, the generative learning process values the learner's interaction as central to making meaning from new information by connecting prior
knowledge. Supporting learners in drawing on their linguistic repertoire is associated with the benefits of facilitated language learning, increased motivation, self-confidence, and critical home-school connections (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). Additionally, when teachers create an interpersonal space within the classroom environment that allows for students’ linguistic identities to enter, this opens up the possibility for collaborative engagement in learning that leads to cognitive development and academic achievement (Giampapa, 2010). Gunning (2018) notes linguistic and cognitive abilities seem to develop parallelly. Multilingual people can draw upon two or more language styles or varieties to express their thoughts and achieve specific goals (Yuan & Yang, 2020). This versatility in drawing upon two or more languages is a translanguaging instinct that allows people to draw on various resources in daily communication.

According to Gunning (2018), “Academic success is thus dependent on students’ ability to plan their time, organize and prioritize materials and information, distinguish main ideas from details, shift approaches flexibly, monitor their own progress, and reflect on their work” (p. 33). Generative learning practices may support teachers’ pedagogical approaches that not only sustain learners’ identities but allow them the application of meaning-making experiences beyond school. Learners develop a growth mindset in which their metacognitive skills support their lifelong success as independent and critical thinkers.

**Translanguaging as a Generative Literacy Practice**

When teachers enact translanguaging as a generative literacy practice, students can consciously use and build on their existing knowledge and experiences to make deeper meanings. As a generative practice, translanguaging pedagogies take the learner
beyond the linguistic systems by placing them at the heart of interaction. It considers learners’ connection of current knowledge and new experiences in constructing new understanding. (Fiorella & Mayer, 2015; Machado & Hartman, 2019; Yuan & Yang, 2020). It involves a process of knowledge co-construction that goes beyond languages to facilitate academic learning, personal development, and interests, creating a symbiotic relationship between language and content to form an organic whole (Yuan & Yang, 2020). It sustains and generates meaningful learning in complex and shifting schools and social environments. Often, attention is paid to what needs to be addressed for students instead of focusing on the abundance of cultural and linguistic resources students bring to school. Translanguaging pedagogies focus on how multilingual learners draw upon all of their languages to make and express meaning (Machado & Gonzalez, 2020; Pacheco & Miller, 2015). Thus, teachers can recognize the repertoire of linguistic practice students bring to school, and translanguaging allows for the use of individual multilingual, multimodal, and multisensory resources to make meaning in their situated social context.

Translanguaging pedagogies promote children’s language resources as fundamentally interconnected, include instruction that encourages children to use all their languages in learning, and is flexible to children’s language practices (Machado & Gonzalez, 2020). Similarly, translanguaging is about communication that centers on the natural communicative practices of multilingual people (Osorio, 2020). In a case study with emergent multilingual students, the teacher read multilingual texts aloud to integrate translanguaging pedagogy in the classroom (Osorio, 2020). Through discussions, the students could use and see the benefits of the languages present in the texts and fluidly transfer their meanings into classroom learning. Thus, the use of multilingual literature
facilitated students’ interactions and the fluid movements across their linguistic resources and language practices that specifically supported their meaning-making. Multilingual literature served as one effective translingual strategy that allowed students to connect prior experiences and background knowledge to new information in the literature (García & Kleifgen, 2020). These experiences enable students to enhance their comprehension of new concepts and the acquisition of new meanings in a supportive literacy space.

Furthermore, Rosenblatt (1978) posits that these chosen multilingual or multicultural texts act as mirrors and windows into students’ worlds. They represent various people, experiences, ways of being, and situations that resonate with students as they interact with them. Therefore, translanguaging supports the idea of teachers getting to know their students’ cultural and linguistic identities and interests to better inform their planning and teachings. Translingual pedagogies are not a one-size-fits-all practice but an individualized teaching process that harnesses students’ literate repertoires as a tool for expanding meaning-making through classroom literacy practices (Smith, 2021).

Additionally, translanguaging focuses on the actions of multilingual speakers, signers, readers, and writers, including the unbounded, dynamic, meaning-making, and fluid semiotic use of multilinguals’ entire linguistic repertoires (García & Kleifgen, 2019). In D’warte and Callow’s (2019) study that combined linguistic ethnography with design research, teachers and students were co-researchers of students’ language and literacy practices. Their findings revealed that positioning students as knowledge producers deepened both students’ and teachers’ understanding and awareness of students’ languages and the plurilingual practices they used to navigate their worlds. Yuan and Yang (2020) remind us that translanguaging practices can also empower
students to take charge of their academic learning and socialize themselves in the specific discourse community of their discipline. Additionally, the students’ opportunities for using their home languages in school increase their self-efficacy and ability to build on their own home language learning when they experience their linguistic resources being cultivated and expanded. Translanguaging approaches consider learners’ sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and multimodal dimensions of learning for a deeper meaning-making experience (García & Kleifgen, 2019).

In an ethnographic study by Daniel and Pacheco (2016), four teens with various language knowledge engaged in an ethnographic study. The patterns from the study showed that students actively used languages other than English as a meaning-making process. Subsequently, the results show that even when students’ first languages are not used as the main mode of instruction in schools, students still use their linguistic resources to communicate their thoughts, writing, and speech. Thus, when presented with new information, children draw on the social, emotional, and cultural roles they observe and experience in their homes and communities to construct meaning (Taylor & Leung, 2020). They bridge this new information with what is already known as a way to understand. Therefore, students navigate their experiences and knowledge in ways that support their meaning-making processes.

Furthermore, effective translanguaging practice depends on the educators’ intention and ability to integrate others’ languages into their own semiotic repertoire to inform translanguaging pedagogies and a deep understanding of how multilingual students draw from their linguistic resources to make meaning of their worlds (Yuan & Yang, 2020). However, the lack of teacher preparation in pedagogies that allow learners
to use their “identity kit” often results in excluding students from fully interacting in the learning experience (Gee, 2015, p. 4). Thus, for translanguaging pedagogies to work, it is recommended that the teacher position himself or herself as a vulnerable learner in the process (Garcia & O’Donnell-Allen, 2015) and learn alongside students while also modeling to them that their languages are valued resources in the classroom space. Yuan and Yang (2020) argue that teachers’ intention and ability to integrate others’ languages into their semiotic repertoires in dialogic meaning construction supports an effective translanguaging practice. Thus, if teachers encounter and experience translanguaging pedagogies early in their careers, it helps them to generate practical applications.

**Conclusion**

Gay (2018) reiterates that society’s dominant worldview of cultural norms is deeply ingrained in teachers’ instructional practices. To disrupt this cycle, teaching pedagogies must evolve to address the complexities of social inequalities for ethnic and social identities in students’ individuality. By capitalizing on the strengths students bring to school, teachers create learning experiences that hone, nurture, and sustain children’s “cultural capital” for students to achieve academic efficacy (Delpit, 1988, p. 198). These academic performances include enriched academic journeys that connect students’ identities, lived experiences, routines, values, and understandings as relevant, sustaining, and proactive learning experiences. Thus, it is time for teachers to begin recognizing these translinguaging and multilingual practices as common and realistic across multilingual students, help students value these linguistic practices, and leverage them across instruction to support students’ meaning-making repertoires (García & Kleifgen, 2019).
In this 21st century, students’ linguistic repertoires encompass various communicative and semiotic resources (D’warte & Callow, 2019). These plurilingual repertoires enable students to use languages and dialects with different people across myriad places and spaces. Translanguaging practices meaning-making pedagogies leverage instruction that helps students access background knowledge and develop metalinguistic awareness while creating a more inclusive classroom environment (Pacheco & Miller, 2015). Translanguaging is situated within the multilingual framework; thus, it brings multilingualism back into the multimodal research fold by accounting for all modes to be used as elements to make meaning (García & Kleifgen, 2019). In addition, allowing for translanguaging literacy practices in instruction, especially in students’ early language development, offers possibilities for promoting academic achievement and developing students’ proficiencies as strategic language users beyond the classroom (Pacheco & Miller, 2016).
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study examined four Belizean primary teachers’ multilingual pedagogies in language arts instruction. Constructionism underpinned my epistemological framework, and constructivism was the theoretical lens through which I constructed my research questions, collected the data, and analyzed my findings. The constructivist theory is the belief that each learner individually and socially constructs meaning as they learn (Hein, 1991). From a constructivist perspective, meaning and experiences are socially produced and reproduced.

Multilingualism, translanguaging, and the generative theories detailed in chapter two formed my disciplinary theoretical frameworks and guided the data analysis phase. *Multilingualism* is the presence of several languages and cultures in a social context by both individual and groups. Some scholars consider multilingualism as a natural state of humankind (Aronin, 2019; Romer, 2020). Language is a resource for meaning-making, and multilingualism focuses on the flexible use of languages situationally and
contextually by an individual (Cenoz, 2013). Translanguaging is a generative meaning-making practice of multilingual pedagogy in which educators see language as intertwined with many other semiotic resources in multilingual learners (García & Kleifgen, 2020). As an application of multilingual repertoire, translanguaging emphasizes learners’ fluidity in language use in which learners move across languages and in between using their full linguistic resources as one unitary repertoire (Vallejo & Dooly, 2019). It is also a cognitive or communicative linguistic practice that combines features of multiple languages, including translating, code-switching, code-mixing or meshing, and hybrid language (French, 2019). Grounded in the constructivist view of learning, the generative theory posits that learning is an active construction process based on an individual’s prior knowledge (Wittrock, 2010). Multilingual learners meaning-making is an attribute of their cultural and linguistic repertoires.

I begin this methodology section by stating the research questions, describing the case study research design and theoretical perspective, discussing the case boundaries, and exploring the researcher’s role. Then, I describe the sample and contexts, including the school and the local community. The other sections detail the data collection methods and limitations of the data collection process. A discussion of the data analysis, findings representation, the trustworthiness of the findings, and a description of each teacher’s portrait concludes the chapter.

**Research Design and Theoretical Perspective**

The following research questions guide this multiple case study:

What multilingual pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in the Language Arts classrooms?
a. What multilingual oral language pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in the Language Arts classrooms?

b. What multilingual writing pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in the Language Arts classrooms?

This study enabled me to explore and gain a deeper understanding of four primary teachers' instructional practices in multilingual contexts.

**Case Study and Constructivism**

This qualitative study is positioned as a case study. I situated this study’s epistemological framework in constructionism, which is the view that “all knowledge, all meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of the interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). My epistemological foundation of constructionism aligned with my theoretical stance of constructivism and a research purpose that explored four Belizean primary teachers’ multilingual pedagogies in language arts classrooms through a multilingual lens. I explored how their experiences, practices, teaching decisions, and interactions with students facilitated the generation of knowledge and meaning within the context of their classrooms (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). Therefore, constructionism and constructivism were the lenses through which I developed my questions, collected the relevant data, and analyzed the data.

I operated from the assumption that “one constructs knowledge rather than just taking in information, but as people experience the world and reflect upon those experiences, they build their own representations and incorporate new information in their already existing knowledge or schema” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 237). Multilingual
learners enter our classrooms with rich cultural and linguistic repertoires. As they generate meaning with new experiences and information to make connections, they merge their prior knowledge with new experiences. When bridged with new classroom experiences and teachings, this prior knowledge supports learners’ cognitive and social processing of new ideas and meanings (Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

Schwandt (1994) argues that constructivists are concerned with the production and organization of differences and asserts that one invents concepts, models, and schema to make sense of experiences. These constructions are continually tested and modified in light of new experiences. Constructivists believe that “a learner’s basis of meaning is found in his or her direct experiences with a dynamic and responsive world” (Quay, 2003, p. 2). Therefore, teachers in multilingual classrooms can support learners in harnessing their wealth of experiences as they explore new meanings through direct and active social interactions.

A qualitative case study calls for examining experiences that differ in how people construct knowledge, even concerning the same phenomenon (Stake, 2006). Case studies also ask questions such as why, what, and how as they provide the evidence supporting the most critical relationships under investigation (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). A case study builds on the assumption that knowledge is a two-way process and that there is not just one individual who is the keeper and dispenser of knowledge. Making meaning entails an interactive and iterative process among humans. Similarly, when learners incorporate their cultural and linguistic resources as they discover meanings, they also learn about and from others and thus generate deeper knowledge situationally and contextually.
Cases are the units of analysis predetermined during the design stage and form the basis for purposive sampling for the study (Patton, 2022).

Furthermore, case study reports tell stories, and it is through these stories that we get a deeper understanding of the case and provide a conclusion that enables the participants to describe their views of reality (Telles, 1997). The researcher develops a deeper understanding of participants’ behaviors, values, and beliefs through close collaboration (Baxter & Jack, 2008). According to Patton (2015), “A case is a methodological choice of what is to be studied” (p. 534). It is a research approach used to generate an in-depth, multi-layered understanding of a complex issue in its natural life context (Crowe et al., 2011). A case study is an appropriate methodology when an in-depth, holistic investigation is needed (Telles, 1997).

Furthermore, a multicase study allowed for examining how the phenomenon simultaneously performed in the different environments across classrooms and schools, emphasizing participants’ experiences with what is happening and how it is happening (Stake, 2006). In a multicase study, balance and variety of cases are important, and the relevance to the situation and the opportunity to learn about the phenomenon under investigation is also important (Stake, 2000). In this study, each case was relevant to the situation studied and provided opportunities to learn about the situation across contexts.

**Case Boundaries**

Each case had a pre-defined boundary that clarified the context, nature, and time covered by the case study; specific components lie within the boundaries of the case, while certain features lie outside of it (Crowe et al., 2011).
For this study, purposive sampling of cases tailored to the study created opportunities for an intensive study (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009; Stake, 2006). This study aimed for representation through a purposive sampling of schools from the Belize District. The schools were located on the north side of Belize City and had similar teacher and student demographics of diverse cultures and languages spoken among them. Additionally, the four teacher-participants from these two primary schools self-identified as teachers who use multilingual pedagogies in their language arts classrooms. Other boundaries placed on the cases included teachers teaching at the same teaching cycle, the fourth quarter of the year, and using the national teaching standards for language arts. Also, time boundaries were that the data collection processes occurred during the academic school year of Spring 2023 for both schools. Placing boundaries on a case helps determine what will and will not be studied in the research project and indicates the breadth and depth of the study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

To avoid any coercion of participants, I drew my purposive sampling from schools and teachers with whom I had no direct working relationships. I followed the appropriate steps to obtain IRB approval to protect the rights of my participants (see Appendix A).

**Researcher’s Role**

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is reflexive about his/her voice and perspective as part of engaging with the data and interpreting the findings. Patton (2015) argues that a “credible voice conveys authenticity and trustworthiness; the inquirer's focus becomes a balance of understanding and depicting the world authentically in all its complexity while being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness”
(p. 604). Reflexivity allows the inquirer to be attentive to and conscious of the cultural, social, linguistic, and economic origins of one’s perspective, of the voices of the interviewees, and those to whom one reports (Patton, 2015). Reflexivity means examining what I know and how I know it (Patton, 2015). I used self-reflexivity questions to challenge myself as the researcher to be a learner and reflect on my “personal epistemologies” of how I understand knowledge and the construction of knowledge (Patton, 2015, p. 604). Thus, the following discussions used Patton’s (2015) suggested triangulated reflexive inquiry that includes three guiding questions relevant to my research and my analytical and reflexive consciousness:

**What do I know?** Vygotsky (1978) reminds us that human beings are social by nature and thus construct a deeper meaning of a phenomenon as we use our experiences and knowledge through interaction with others and the world. Language is one medium that facilitates the generation of meaning-making; therefore, the opening up of spaces that allow individuals with diverse linguistic identities to use their complete linguistic resources freely makes learning meaningful. Students thrive in environments that value each of their identities through inclusive and equitable teaching and learning practices (Osorio, 2020).

**How do I know what I know?** As a multilingual individual who speaks Kriol, Spanish, and English the interaction between my experiences, knowledge, and others helps shape my understanding and sense-making of the world. The experience of exploring my complete linguistic resources supported my academic, cognitive, and social growth. It facilitated my ability to become a strategic user of other languages, developing a metalinguistic awareness of languages.
What shapes and has shaped my perspective? As a culturally and linguistically diverse educator who taught and worked with students and families from similar backgrounds, I believe it is important for students to see and experience learning in an environment that is inclusive of every individual. As a result, students flourish and grow, motivated by the affirmation of their identities and respect for others. Their being in this world takes on an accepting and valued approach.

The teachers and students in our schools are culturally and linguistically diverse; thus, our classrooms may comprise at least six different languages and ethnicities. However, with English recognized as the language of instruction in Belizean schools (Ministry of Education, 2021), students and teachers need support to make meaning in a system that operates more from a monolingual approach. Our diverse cultures and languages bind us, for it connects us in some way or another. My cultural and linguistic identity connects me to the teacher-participants; however, my professional role may challenge how I am perceived, potentially as an authoritative figure or outsider. I viewed my role as an education officer as enforcing policies and practices.

When students and families see that their cultural and linguistic wealth is valued and respected, they may feel a stronger sense of belonging and develop a deeper need to strengthen those home-school relationships (García, 2017). A focus on multilingual pedagogies where students’ full linguistic resources are integrated into learning will support their success and ways of being in schools and beyond. When teachers welcome students’ full linguistic resources into the classrooms, it bridges prior knowledge with new connections for a fulfilling and sustaining learning experience (Osorio, 2020).
As I engage in self-reflexivity, I am reminded of my insider/outsider stance in the process and my own identity as a linguistically diverse individual. Patton (2015) reiterates that interrogating one’s perspective and experiences through a self-reflexive process helps acknowledge the ideas and skills the inquirer has brought to the study.

Thus, the importance of self-reflexivity allows for reflecting on my social positions and the knowledge I bring to the study, informing the reader of the limits to what I know.

**Context of the Study**

The Belize district accounts for 38% of the country’s population and is the most significant urban population, with over one-half of its people being of Creole descent and 34.5% being Mestizo (Census of Belize, 2010). The word Creole is used to indicate the ethnicity or culture, and Kriol is the language spoken by Belizean Creole people (National Kriol Council, 2024). Belize District also has the highest proportion of English speakers. Fifty-nine primary schools make up the Belize District, with 38 urban and 21 rural schools, an approximate enrolment of 14,804 students, and a rather equal number of males and females (Ministry of Education, 2022). About 869 primary school teachers are spread out across these 59 schools, with a student-teacher ratio of 18 to one (Ministry of Education, 2022).

The education process is organized into four levels: early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary (Ministry of Education, 2015). The mandatory school age is five to sixteen years. Students often start primary school at five years old. Primary schools provide basic education, generally organized as eight years of schooling. The class levels start at the Lower Primary grades that include Infant 1 (ages 5-6), Infant 2 (ages 6-7), and
Standard 1 (ages 7-8). The Middle Primary grades include Standard 2 (ages 8-9), Standard 3 (ages 9-10), and Standard 4 (ages 10-11). The Upper Primary levels include Standard 5 (ages 11-12) and Standard 6 (ages 12-13) (National Curriculum Framework, 2023). In the United States, these grades would be equivalent to kindergarten through seventh grade.

The schools are denominationally managed public schools. To protect the names of the schools, I used pseudonyms. The schools' names are Saint Teresa Primary School and Holy Gabriel Primary School. Saint Teresa Primary School has a population of approximately 625 students who come from across the city. It has 23 certified teachers. Its student ethnicities include Creole, Mestizo, Garifuna, East Indian, and Asian. The majority of its student population identifies as Creole.

Holy Gabriel Primary School has an enrolment of about 150 students who come from across the city. It has eight certified teachers. The ethnicities of its student population include Creole, Mestizo, Garifuna, East Indian, and Asian. Most of its student population identified with Creole and is followed closely by students who identified as Mestizo.

Both schools used the standards and outcomes in the national curriculum the Ministry of Education provided to plan their teaching. The national curriculum also provides suggested themes and topics teachers use to guide their planning and preparation. The school’s weekly and daily classroom instructions followed the suggested timetable provided by the Ministry of Education (see Appendix A). As a result, teachers are to teach reading fluency/phonics, comprehension, grammar and usage, and production during language arts classes. Production time includes the written component of language
arts; thus, students produced some written responses based on the week’s learning outcomes. For example, the following learning outcome was taken from a Standard 1 instructional plan.

LA 3.30 Write a paragraph describing a real-life person, object, event, place, experience, or interest (National Curriculum Standards, 2022).

Both schools used a block timetable in which Language Production was scheduled twice weekly for about one hour. However, the schools allow flexible schedules since the focus is on students’ learning development.

Methods

Participant Recruitment

The Chief Education Officer, who serves in the Ministry of Education as the head of all schools in Belize, permitted me to conduct this research in the two schools and work with the teachers involved. I recruited five female teachers for this study, but later one volunteer discontinued the study. In the end, I had four teachers who completed this study from two primary schools in the urban Belize District; these participants self-identified as teachers who used multilingual pedagogies in their language arts classrooms (see Table 1). In the recruitment email I sent to the schools; I invited teacher participants who believed they used multilingual pedagogies in their language arts classrooms (see Appendix B).

Table 1

An Overview of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Philosophical Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>She believed in making her instruction available to all students using different modes and forms through multilingual practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>She believed in modelling her language limitations by using her emergent Spanish in the classroom and letting students teach her and each other. She explored multimodal activities often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>She incorporated multimodal and culturally relevant literature and visuals in her teaching decisions to ensure that every student was able to make cultural and language connections to the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>She used her native language, Kriol, with English and various modalities to explain concepts because she believed that it allows students to embody their whole selves and not to feel limited or self-conscious.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All four teacher participants self-identified as Creole ethnicity, Kriol as their primary language and they describe English as their secondary language. They were all born and grew up in Belize City. The four teacher participants were sufficient for the study’s purpose because Stake (2006) stated that multicase studies may have fewer than four or more than fifteen cases. The benefits of multicase studies may be limited if fewer than four cases or more than ten are chosen.

As noted, I followed the pertinent steps to obtain IRB approval to protect the rights of my participants (see Appendix B). The appropriate steps were put in place to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the teacher participants. A portrait of each participant will be presented toward the end of the chapter.

**Data Collection and Sources**

One of the most critical tasks for multicase researchers is to show how the phenomenon appears in different contexts. The more qualitative the study is, the more
emphasis is placed on the people's experiences with the event (Stake, 2006). When doing a case study, sometimes the most direct answers come from observing the activity first-hand with each case (Stake, 2006). Case activities are expected to be influenced by context, so contexts need to be studied and described in depth. I carried out classroom observations accompanied by field notes and teaching artifacts in each teacher’s classroom (see Appendix C). I also conducted semi-structured and informal interviews to further explore and understand the teachers’ multilingual pedagogies in language arts and for further insights into their lived space. These data sources provided a thick and rich data collection. However, my primary data sources were focused on classroom observations and interviews. Table 2 provides an overview of the frequency of semi-structured and informal interviews and observations.

Table 2

*Data Sources and Collection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Structure/Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total Data Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teaching</td>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>To observe teaching in context for multilingual or translanguaging practices.</td>
<td>2 observations per teacher (40-60 minutes)</td>
<td>8 classroom observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended field notes</td>
<td></td>
<td>To clarify questions regarding teaching decisions, actions, and behaviors in context.</td>
<td>2 sets of field notes per teacher</td>
<td>8 sets of field notes total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source</td>
<td>Structure/Type</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Total Data Collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Informal Interviews</td>
<td>Discussion based on an exemplary lesson the teacher chose to share. The interview was to gain an understanding of the teaching decisions.</td>
<td>1 per teacher (20-30 minutes)</td>
<td>4 informal interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews</td>
<td>To explore what multilingual pedagogies the teachers used in Language Arts classrooms. To understand the how and the why for their teaching decisions.</td>
<td>4 semi-structured interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifacts</td>
<td>Lesson plans, teaching materials/aids</td>
<td>To gain insights into teachers’ planning and choice of teaching strategies, activities, and assessments for multilingual or translanguaging practices.</td>
<td>2 sets of lesson plans and accompanying lesson materials</td>
<td>8 sets of lesson plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observations with Field Notes.** The observations were scheduled according to the teachers’ Language Arts schedule and the time they taught Writing or Language Production. I observed each teacher’s language arts lessons on two different days to better understand their actions, processes, behaviors, and perspectives on multilingual and translanguaging practices. I recorded open-ended field notes, looking for actions, processes, and behaviors that included students' linguistic repertoires. Each observation lasted about forty minutes to an hour. I followed up on questions, clarifications about the observations, and any other information regarding teaching decisions, actions, and
behaviors in context at the end of the lessons. I studied teaching processes using the teaching artifacts for situations I could not observe first-hand.

**Semi-structured Interviews.** The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to stimulate a conversation and interaction between the teachers and myself to explore a deeper meaning surrounding their multilingual pedagogies. The goal was to explore what multilingual pedagogies the teachers used in Language Arts classrooms and understand the how and the why of their teaching decisions (see Table 3). I conducted one interview with each teacher, according to their availability, which lasted fifty to sixty minutes each. The aim was that during these interviews, the teachers’ lived meanings were immediately accessible in the situation, communicated not only by words but by the tone of their voices, gestures in the natural flow of a conversation, and expressions (Kvale, 1996).

Although semi-structured interviews have a series of topics and suggested questions to be covered, there remains an openness to changes in the sequence and form of questions to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the participants (Kvale, 1996). The key issues of the interview concerned what multilingual practices the teachers used, how they used those practices, and why they chose to use those practices in their teachings.

The questions were constructed using both a thematic and dynamic dimension. Dynamic dimensions are short, easy to understand, and devoid of academic language questions to promote positive interaction, keep the flow of the conversation going, and motivate participants to talk about their feelings. The thematic dimension relates to the topic of the interview, the theoretical conceptions at the root of an investigation, and the subsequent analysis (Kvale, 1996). I used these characteristics to develop generative questions to guide the interviews and obtain rich, thick, and descriptive data that helped.
answer my research questions. Table 3 represents a sample of the semi-structured interview questions.

**Table 3**

*Semi-structured Interview Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory Questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How long have you been teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How long have you been at this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about your cultural background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about your linguistic background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about your philosophy of teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How did you learn to read and write?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ What are some of your experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ What are your experiences with languages as a teacher?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ understanding of culturally relevant pedagogies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about your students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do you communicate with families who speak multiple languages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you know about the language policies of the Ministry of Education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Furthermore, how do you incorporate that into your instruction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does your school have its own language policies or practices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you think of those?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do those school practices influence your teachings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do you select themes and topics for instruction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What factors do you take into account?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Literacy Practices for Multilingual Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What languages do your students use in the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Informally or socially, with each other?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formally, in lessons or assignments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are your thoughts on allowing students to communicate orally in the classroom using their home language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have you had an assignment or activities in which students used their home language? Tell me about them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you use strategies catering to students’ linguistic backgrounds? Tell me about them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about a lesson you taught that used students’ multiple languages the best.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Pedagogies for Multilingual Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about the kinds of writing your students do in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What kinds of units of work do you focus on each year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are some of your key writing assignments or activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are your thoughts on allowing students to write using a variety of languages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What languages do your students use in their writing assignments or units of work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you use writing strategies catering to students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds? Tell me about them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about a writing lesson you taught that used students’ multiple languages the best.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Informal Interviews. In the informal interviews, I aimed to explore the teachers’ lesson plans and teaching decisions in an interaction between the teacher and myself. I asked the teachers to share a lesson they believed captured and included students’ culture and languages and that they felt was an exemplary teaching lesson that captured the essence of their multilingual and translanguaging practices. This lesson plan and interview was in addition to the two lessons I observed. During the data collection phase and at a time that was convenient for the teachers, we engaged in conversations about the lessons to understand the what, the why, and the how of their teaching decisions. I met with two teachers between their lunch breaks, and I met with the other two teachers in the evening after school. These interviews took twenty to thirty minutes. Table 4 represents a sample of the informal interview questions.

Table 4

Sample Informal Interview Questions

- Tell me about your selected lesson.
  - What are some of your strengths?
  - What areas would you improve?
- How did you go about planning for the lesson? (In selecting themes, strategies, assessments, etc.) Tell me more about your activities.
- How do you plan on sustaining written multilingual practices for your students?
  - Is there anything that you would do differently?
- How do you plan on sustaining oral multilingual practices for your students?
  - Is there anything that you would do differently?
- Is there anything that you would like to add about multilingual pedagogies?
**Teaching Artifacts.** Exploring other artifacts and documents, such as teachers’ lesson plans and activities, provided data triangulation to determine whether or not there was consistency in pedagogies across the data sources. It also provided insights into the linguistic and culturally diverse strategies teachers used in their classrooms. In total, I collected two sets of lesson plans from each teacher that they identified as exemplary and accompanying materials.

These artifacts provided data to explore how the student’s learning abilities and knowledge were considered in teachers’ decisions. They also enabled me to add a thicker, richer description of the teachers’ practices in my analysis and triangulate the use of relevant activities for sustaining multilingual learners’ experiences.

**Data Analysis**

According to Patton (2015), “Qualitative data analysis involves us not just in making sense of the world but in making sense of our relationship to the world and thus discovering things about ourselves, even as we discover things about some phenomenon of interest” (p. 521). I studied each case in terms of their situational practices that supported multilingual pedagogies. The use of thematic analysis helps to generate insights and interpretations that readers can use if they are contextually relevant. Using thematic analysis in a case study allows for “flexibility which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5). However, findings might not apply to wider populations or contexts.

I manually transcribed my interview recordings for each case and labeled them using pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. I organized all these data sets for each case, which included observations, interviews, and teaching artifacts. I manually
coded each data set for each case. Codes are “short words or phrases that symbolically assign a summative, salient essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute to a portion of language visual data” (Saldana, 2000, p. 6). For each case, I created open codes to analyze significant words or phrases that indicated the teachers’ behaviors, actions, knowledge, and beliefs about multilingual and translanguaging practices. During the coding process, I asked, what is this about? What does this data say about the research question for each data set? I created codes that answered the questions.

As I continued coding, I looked for cultural and linguistic interactions involving multilingualism or translanguaging. I looked for commonalities, differences, and any practices of significance, related to my research questions, in each case. I developed codes showing how each teacher implemented multilingual and/or translanguaging practices in language arts lessons. I also noted anything that was different and looked at how they helped informed my question. For instance, teachers had different formats for writing their lesson plans. I looked for ways teachers helped students to developed meanings. For example, I highlighted and developed interpretive codes for the data excerpts that reflected how teachers supported students as they generated meaning using multilingual and translangauing pedagogies. I developed codes showing how the teachers implemented those practices in language arts instruction.

After developing multiple codes, I looked for patterns among the codes about multilingual and translanguaging teachings. Patterns can be categorized by similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence, and causation (Saldana, 2000). I read and reread, attending to overlapping, regular, and irregular patterns. I examined how the teachers facilitate students’ meaning-making using multilingual pedagogies and why they
chose these multilingual practices. I was careful to keep my interpretations grounded in
the situational context of each classroom or lesson and the whole context of the case.

I used these patterns to develop categories. Categorization is a process that
enables data to be grouped, regrouped, segregated, and relinked to consolidate meaning
and explanation (Saldana, 2000). Although I derived multiple categories, identifying
verbatim excerpts from the data to support the categories shaped them even more. Some
categories contained clusters of coded data patterns that merited further refinement into
subcategories. I compared these subcategories to each other and consolidated them into
major categories that answered the research questions. Coding is a cyclic act (Saldana,
2006). I coded and recoded using first and second-cycle coding until I had a rich data
analysis and arrived at saturation, the point at which I was not developing any new codes
or categories. I completed this coding and categorizing process for each case to
understand the cases thoroughly so that I could then do the cross-case analysis.
(However, I do not present the individual case findings, because I chose to focus on
cross-case themes.) Table 5 provides an example of my individual case analysis process.

I conducted a cross-case analysis of the four cases. A cross-analysis finds what is
common across the cases and what is unique to each. It helps to aid in understanding the
study’s phenomenon as a meaningful whole (Stake, 2000). I looked for any evidence of
similarities or differences in teaching practices across the cases while still keeping their
contextual meanings. I clustered the major categories and looked at the relationship
between categories for each case. A theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, and
analytical reflection. It is “a phrase or sentence describing a more subtle and implied
process” (Saldana, 2000 p.13). I identified the most significant categories and
relationships for my question, which helped me begin to shape cross-case thematic patterns.

I progressed toward identifying and forming the themes and conceptual meanings of the data using collated data excerpts. Saldana (2006) describes themes in qualitative inquiry as the researcher’s interpretations that summarize the beliefs about the data that answer the research questions. A thematic analysis aided in identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes developed from each case. The themes were illustrative of the analytical points I made about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research question and the research epistemology guided the analysis of my data and the way the themes were theorized across the cases. The “keyness of a theme” is whether it captures something important about the overall research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Furthermore, the research questions and purpose of the study drove my analysis and served to deepen and guide my understanding of the findings, which supported the development of the themes (Patton, 2015; Stake, 2006). At the end of the cross-case analysis process, four themes were shaped. Table 6 provides an example of this data analysis phase.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Excerpt</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Patterns of Codes: Initial Categories</th>
<th>Major Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students went on a nature walk. The objective was to observe various movements in the environment. One student said, “The man drove the car as it passed by.” The teacher wrote it on the chalkboard. (Rita-Observation)</td>
<td>Using nature walks</td>
<td>Multimodal activities in making connections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Sample of Individual Case Analysis - Codes & Categories
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Excerpt</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Patterns of Codes: Initial Categories</th>
<th>Major Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Reading does not necessarily mean only reading the words, but if that book has pictures, it can tell a story.” (Rita - Interview)</td>
<td>Signs and symbols to shape meaning</td>
<td>Uses of mediated tools as meaning-making</td>
<td>Multimodal pedagogies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students role-play given dialogues. (Rita - Lesson plan)</td>
<td>Using role-play to understand</td>
<td>Uses of various modalities for understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I did not know how to say the word. I said to the students: primer número no necesito, final numero necesito. Then the students looked at me and said, ‘teacher, atras.’” (Rita - Interview)</td>
<td>Modeling the use of students' home languages</td>
<td>Valuing multiple ways to make meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of support and practice with home and school languages are good because my Spanish speakers who are learning English would say, “Teacher quiero ir en el bathroom. It is basic that we can understand.” (Rita - Interview)</td>
<td>Building Inclusive Language Classroom</td>
<td>Acknowledging Safe, supportive, and Inclusive Learning Spaces</td>
<td>Translanguaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the learning stations, this one student talked about the observations to her peers using Spanish and English while she pointed to the materials to help her explain her ideas. (Rita - Observation)</td>
<td>Using home and school language for meaning</td>
<td>Moving fluidly between home and school language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I tried to balance my analysis and illustrative data excerpts to each theme consistent with the theoretical framework and the research questions. The thematic analysis enabled insight driven by my research question and theoretical assumptions as I made meaning of the patterned responses.

**Trustworthiness in the Data Analysis**

In qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to the question, “*Can the findings be trusted*” (Kortsjen & Moser, 2018, p.121)? Schwandt et.al (2007) described credibility and transferability as two of the four criteria of trustworthiness. For my study, I
established credibility by carefully organizing the data, using data triangulation, an audit trail of data analysis, and engaging in member-checking conversations with participants to discuss and clarify interpretations. After each data collection, I immediately organized data sets for each case that included semi-structured and informal interviews, observation field notes, and teaching artifacts. I labeled each data set using pseudonyms unique to each case. I did a manual transcription of each interview in each set. Using a manual process, I immediately coded the data in each data set.

Table 6

**Theme 2 Cross-case Analysis Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-case Patterns</th>
<th>Teachers/Cases</th>
<th>Data Excerpts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translanguaging during writing</td>
<td>Rita, Amber,</td>
<td>When writing, some of the students knew what they wanted to write, but they could only write it in Spanish, so we allowed them to use their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction</td>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>home language, and after that, it was translated for us. (Rita-Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When it comes to writing, this one child would write more Kriol. She would say, “Aquí, I’d get, something, or I would get something aqui” but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>we do not penalize them. (Amber-Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some students wrote Kriol and drew pictures to help demonstrate their ideas. For example, when the teacher gave them sentences to write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Gloria-Observation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The students will write the words in Spanish and English. They will draw pictures. (Rita, Martha-Lesson plans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraging students’ home and school</td>
<td>Rita, Martha,</td>
<td>When you have Spanish speakers, it is difficult to give instructions solely in English because you also want to get your message across to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages in the classroom</td>
<td>Amber, Gloria</td>
<td>each student, so I used English, Kriol, and Spanish. (Rita-Interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher approached this one student and explained the concept to him in his home language—Spanish. She reads, then she stops, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>explains… (Martha-Observation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students are expected to start with English, but if they need help saying it in English or understanding it, we break it down in Kriol. Then, we repeat it for the third time in English. It is like English, Kriol, English. (Amber-Interview)

The teacher uses Kriol as she brainstorms the title of the story … The teacher said, “When I break it down in Kriol you see that they hurry and do their work because they know what to do. (Gloria-Observation)

Our culture is everything. It does not matter if you are Hispanic or Creole. Everybody speaks and uses Kriol, Spanish, and English in my class. (Gloria-Interview)

During a class discussion, this one student explained the meaning of a new vocabulary word using his home language—Kriol while demonstrating using his hands. (Rita-Observation)

These two students sitting together were discussing what were the instructions in their home language—Spanish. One student began to draw and point out the drawings trying to explain the meaning of a concept to his peer. (Martha-Observation)

Whichever way students sound out the words and write them, I do not focus on their spelling but on the meaning of what they write. (Amber-Interview)

I do not speak Spanish fluently. I speak it to save my life. (Rita-Interview)

The teacher asked, el bote es…what did you say…The bote?” …with a questioning look on her face (Rita-Observation)

I told them you must try because your teacher cannot speak Spanish. However, I understand it. (Martha-Interview)

I think birthday da cumpleaños in Spanish. (I think the word birthday is cumpleaños in Spanish. (Gloria-Observation)

I used member checking with the teachers for each case. I met with each teacher four times: two interview sessions and two observations. We engaged in member checking of the data and my interpretations. When seeking clarification, I made a list of questions and ideas when I wanted or needed more explanations from the teachers, and I wrote notes of what we talked about during these follow-up sessions. The purpose of the member checking was to clarify interpretations after each observation with teachers and
cross-check my interpretations throughout. I discussed preliminary findings, clarified any new ideas, and added any further insights to the emerging findings (Saldana, 2006).

Furthermore, I used data triangulation to help establish the study’s credibility. Data triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources in time (Kortsjen & Moser, 2018). I used semi-structured and informal interviews at various points during the study. The observation and field notes were carried out using scheduled times on different days for each case. The analysis of the two lesson plans and teaching artifacts for each teacher added to data triangulation for those days when no observation visit happened and provided further insights into the teachers’ practices.

Another way I established trustworthiness was through dependability and confirmability providing an audit trail of my analysis process. An audit trail describes the research steps taken from the start of the research to the development and reporting of the findings (Kortsjen & Moser, 2018). I designed and discussed my study in a way that establishes transparency and consistency from start to finish. To improve trustworthiness, in this chapter I discussed my research design and methodology, which included an outline of my data collection and sources, and provided samples of my data analysis process. In Chapter 4, I share and discuss my findings with data support, and in Chapter 5, I provide a detailed discussion of the study’s implications and limitations enabling a more transparent process in the research.

Similarly, transferability is also a criterion for trustworthiness (Schwandt et.al, 2007). Transferability is the degree to which the results of the study can be transferred to other contexts or studies (Kortsjen & Moser, 2018). In Chapter 1, I described Belize’s cultural and linguistic context. Below in chapter 3, I described the teachers’ portraits to
depict their classroom contexts. A thick description of the study’s context helps readers establish the degree to which the study can be transferred to other contexts or settings.

**Limitations of the Study Design**

This study's design and methodology included limitations. The first challenge was the recruitment of participants. Conducting research in schools in Belize is not a common practice, so recruiting participants was difficult. For instance, I sent the Qualtrics recruitment survey to the two schools, but I got no response. I followed up with a phone call to the principal, and they recommended that hard copies of the survey be taken to the schools. I took copies of the surveys to the schools, and the principals distributed them to the teachers. After a few days, I went back to the schools as a follow-up and to collect the surveys. I recruited five teacher volunteers, but then one teacher discontinued the study. Therefore, I had four teachers who participated in the entire study.

There was also limited time for each observation -- not more than one hour for each. As a result of teachers’ schedules, some observations were shorter than others because the teacher may have had something else to address or other lessons to teach. In addition, the data collection phase occurred during the fourth teaching cycle of the school year, which is at the end of the academic year when schools are getting ready for their end of the year events. Sometimes, I would visit a school and there was another activity happening, so I would have to return another day.

Similarly, the two schools followed a block schedule, so they taught language arts at the same time every day. This schedule limited the number of observations I could do with each teacher. I was only able to conduct a total of two observations with each teacher during the data collection period, which was before the close of the school year.
Therefore, I believe that a longer duration for the study would have given me more time to observe the teachers and possibly more data variation.

Additionally, the limitations of a researcher’s subjectivity when interpreting the data and bringing one’s own perspectives and opinions to the data interpretation process were considered. I closely cross-checked the data from a variety of sources, and I tried to clearly describe the data collection and analysis procedures. Also, my self-reflexivity statements provided readers with my assumptions and beliefs so they could see how those may shape my interpretations (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, clarifying interpretations after each observation with teachers and cross-checking meanings during the interviews aided in developing findings that were trustworthy.

The potential for participants’ bias in which the teacher caters their actions to the lessons may have contributed to this study’s limitation. These four teachers self-identified as teachers who teach multilingual pedagogies in language arts classrooms. I asked the teachers to share an exemplary lesson plan they believed included multilingual practices. The lesson plans were heavily influenced by the national curriculum and standards, and some teaching standards may allow teachers to go in depth in their teaching multilingual practices or incorporate a range of practices, while other standards may limit their actions and decisions. For example, these can include many opportunities to use multilingual practices or none at all. I used data triangulation to include multiple data sources to understand the teacher’s pedagogical intentions, behaviors, context, purposes, and other teaching decisions and to cross-check the findings.

Although the transferability of this study is context-dependent, the use of thematic analysis helps to generate insights and interpretations that readers can use if they are
contextually relevant. Using thematic analysis in a case study allows for “flexibility which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5). However, findings might not apply to wider populations or contexts.

**Participant Portraits**

To provide insights into the four teachers’ classroom contexts and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the following participants’ portraits describe the teachers’ demographics, educational philosophies, personal and professional backgrounds, and experiences. The aim is to enlighten readers about the contexts in which these teachers use multilingual pedagogies that continue to develop language arts learning experiences for their students.

**Holy Gabriel Primary School**

With eight classrooms, a cafeteria, a library, and a basketball court situated right next to each other, the atmosphere at Holy Gabriel Primary School gave me a sense of a close-knit school community nestled in this quiet neighbourhood. The school has a student population of about 150 students from across the city. Their ethnicities include Creole and Mestizo students as the majority, followed by Garifuna, and a few East Indians and Asians. It has eight teaching staff with classes from Infant 1 to Standard 6 and one non-teaching principal. According to one of the teacher volunteers, when students come from other Central American countries to Belize, Holy Gabriel Primary School is recommended as a great school to enroll their children. The school is known to provide support and does its best job possible working with students whose home language is Spanish. This has contributed to the increased Mestizo population at their school. Rita and Martha were the two teacher volunteers from Holy Gabriel Primary
School who participated in this study. Their classrooms were situated on the ground floor of the two-story concrete building.

**Rita**

Upon my visits to Rita’s Standard 1 class, she always greeted me with a smile and had a particular space for me at the back of her classroom next to her desk. A well-decorated welcome chart was posted right on the classroom door with all the students’ names written on it. The seating arrangements included the desks and chairs organized in small groups. Rita’s students did not seem to be bothered at all by someone other than their teacher being in their classroom. They went about their usual routines.

Rita’s classroom was brightly coloured with freshly painted walls, lots of visuals, and some learning stations such as Literacy and Math areas. The visuals included a colourful word wall, class schedules, anchor charts for the different subject areas, and an alphabet chart with the letters written in English and Spanish. Placed at the front of the room next to the chalkboard was an incentive chart which included different levels of behavior modifications. Her manners chart, written in English and Spanish, and classroom rules were placed right next to the incentive chart. Other visuals written in both English and Spanish were the days of the week and the months of the year.

While Rita was teaching, she moved from the front of her room to the back and in between the groups ensuring that her students were on task. If she catches someone who may be struggling, she stops her lesson and spends time with that student. I noted how Rita allowed her students to use their home languages while responding to questions or sharing ideas.
Rita described herself as an outspoken and energetic Belizean woman. She has been teaching for over 23 years at various levels and has had the privilege of teaching all eight subject areas at the primary levels. She has been teaching at her current school since 2021 during COVID-19, where she first taught Standard 2 and now teaches Standard 1. Born and raised in Belize City, Rita described her cultural background and her identity as Creole ethnicity and Kriol as her home language. Her childhood and adulthood memories take her downtown to the southside and the northside of Belize City. Rita spent most of her educational journey in Belize City, starting with her primary school and moving on to secondary and tertiary levels. Rita has two bachelor’s degrees, one of which is in primary education.

When asked about what has kept her in this profession for so long and the decision to return to teaching, Rita reiterated her love for teaching. She proudly stated, “Teaching is a vocation, and you must love it to be in it.” She believes that it starts with the way she treats her students. She added that each student is catered for in her class according to the unique qualities and background they come with to school. Therefore, her teaching choices are based on the uniqueness of her students including their learning variabilities, interests, and styles. She said, “I have a responsibility to ensure that when these students leave my classroom, they can become successful in the other classes. It is my job to help shape who they become later in life by acknowledging their full abilities.

As Rita recollected her experiences of learning to read and write, her immediate response was to describe her parents’ support at home. The belief that strengthening early literacy skills supports a child’s learning and growth was evident in the various activities dictated to her by her parents. Her mother always encouraged colouring, so growing up,
Rita coloured a lot, and as an adult, she still loves colouring. Rita shared that during her teaching experiences, she learned that colouring helps to develop the strength in your muscles, which supports and nurtures emergent writers. She values the ability to read and write and ensures that her students get the same experiences.

**Martha**

Martha’s Standard Three classroom was situated in another building but not too far from Rita’s one. If you looked out Martha’s windows, you could see the bustling cars passing by. In Martha’s classroom, the seating arrangements were in pairs. There was an attractive welcome chart on her door with all the students’ names written on it. Her walls were decorated with various anchor charts placed at their designated subject areas such as Language Arts, Mathematics, Belizean Studies, Science & Technology, and Health Education. Some arts and crafts made by the students decorated the back of her room.

Her days of the week, months of the year, alphabets, and manners charts were written in both Spanish and English. Some were drawn in the shapes of flowers. She also had a word wall and a literacy area with a book of the week display. Martha’s class rules were placed right above her desk which she constantly reinforced; especially the rule that read-- Wait for your turn to speak. Martha assigned my seat right next to her desk. In one of her lessons, Martha used a video on descriptive writing as an introduction to engage her students in small group discussions.

Martha, a soft-spoken individual, describes her ethnicity as Creole and Spanish; however, Martha says, “We identify more with the Creole culture because our dad never taught us to speak Spanish. Kriol is my first language, but I understand a little bit of Spanish.” Born and raised in Belize City, Martha is a veteran teacher. She has been
teaching for 29 years at the primary and secondary levels. Her first teaching job was at a multigrade primary school, followed by a teacher of English Literature at the secondary level. She also taught English as a Second Language to Spanish speakers. Martha described her experiences as an English teacher, as a way of helping speakers of other languages to try and use new languages such as English. She admits that it is a difficult task, but she finds fulfillment in seeing her Spanish speakers exploring learning in a new language.

Martha completed two teaching degrees. She has been teaching at her current school for 13 years, where taught at the middle and upper classes in primary school. She now teaches Standard 3. Martha says she has a passion for serving and helping others and this has helped her to love teaching. Although learning comes naturally to Martha, she embraced her learning experiences as a privilege and has developed the belief that every student can learn; regardless of their language background. Thus, Martha creates a classroom climate where her students feel safe to use their home languages while also learning English.

When asked about her experiences with learning, seeing that school language differs from home language, Martha says, “From my language learning experiences and as a teacher, I believed that it is exposure to various languages. These exposures can be in the form of games, reading it, listening to it, and trying to speak it.” Martha reiterated that learning a new language is okay, but there must be a balance between home and school language. She explained, “If we use Kriol to teach a concept, we must do so too in English and if students do not understand, then we can go back to Kriol. It’s building students' awareness about the different languages.”
Saint Teresa Primary School

Laughter, music, singing, voices, students running, teachers walking in a hurry, cars going by, and birds chirping described the environment at Saint Teresa Primary School. It has a large student population of about six hundred and twenty-five students. It has twenty-three teachers, two vice principals, and one principal. Entering the gates of the school, you must be on the lookout for a student running, parents entering and exiting the school, or the water trucks replacing the empty water gallons in the classrooms. The students at Saint Teresa Primary come from across the city. Its student demographics included Creole, Spanish, Garifuna, East Indians, and Asians. The majority of the student population identified as Creole. Amber and Gloria were the two teacher volunteers from the school who participated in the study. Amber and Gloria’s classrooms were situated on the ground floor of the two-story concrete building with a small playground not too far away.

Amber

Amber’s Infant 2 classroom was in another building next to Gloria’s room. Amber’s classroom was very spacious and bright. I felt the fresh wind through her many windows all around the room. The seating arrangement was in small groups. After Amber introduced me to the class as a visitor, a student came over and began asking questions such as what I was doing in her class. The teacher reminded her about the class rule for staying in her seat, so she quickly went back and took her seat. Most of Amber’s charts around her room were made in the shape of a colourful sunflower including her alphabets, labelling of the corners, the manners chart, days of the week, and the months of the year. All the vocabulary the students learned including the new ones was placed in
front of the room on the whiteboard which according to Amber was used as a reference for students’ writings. The alphabet charts were also placed at the front of the class and were written in English and Spanish. I was assigned a seat next to the literacy area which was neatly organized and labelled according to reading levels. While teaching words with /ch/ sounds, Amber would move around her room observing and providing individual support to the students.

Amber began her teaching career in 2017, and she has been at her current school for about five years. She started at the upper division and now teaches at the lower division. Her philosophical belief is that every student is unique in their abilities, language, and ethnicity. Amber says, “There is just not one way to learn so I select lots of visuals, media, tactile, audio, and other modes to make learning inclusive for my students.” Born and raised in Belize City, Amber identifies as a Creole, reiterating Kriol as her home language.

Amber completed all her education in Belize City, from primary school to university. She is a trained primary school teacher with a bachelor's degree in primary education. As Amber recollected her reading and writing experiences as a learner. One of her most memorable experiences was writing. Amber says, “I would scratch the papers my mother gave me to color, and she would get angry with me; however, little did my mom know that scratching was building my muscle memory as an emergent writer.” Amber reiterated that this is an example of the limited exposure to knowledge that helps inform our instructional practices and decisions as novice teachers. Hence, her reasons for using teaching practices that cater to all her students’ learning needs.
She also shared her writing challenges as she moved to higher levels, including connecting thoughts and words and putting them into written language. However, with additional support from her mother, peers, and teachers, she overcame and achieved English proficiency. Therefore, as a teacher, she ensures that all her students receive the language scaffold needed by using think-aloud in her one-to-one conferences and connections between spoken and written words.

Gloria

As I entered Gloria’s Infant 1 classroom for the first time, I was amazed at how she organized her students’ seating using small groups. When she introduced me to her class for the first time, the students seemed anxious to get out of their seats and come to greet me. But Gloria reminded them to stay in their space and welcomed me from their seats. Gloria’s classroom was print-rich with lots of vocabulary, stories written by the teachers, letters of the alphabet with pictures, a manners chart shaped like a sunflower, and a huge yellow background word wall. These were placed at the front of her classroom. She also had anchor charts for Mathematics and Health Education placed in their designated corners across the room.

She used songs to reinforce her class rules. If the students’ voices were too loud, she immediately started singing the cue song and their voices would be lowered. As Gloria taught her lessons, she reached over to observe what her students were doing because her classroom space was very tight. Often the students went to her when they had questions. As I observed Gloria for the first time, together with her students they used students’ home language, Kriol and English as they shared ideas and ask questions. My space in Gloria’s classroom was standing next to her desk.
Gloria is an energetic and vibrant teacher. She speaks rhythmically and does all her teachings with multimodal representation. She has 13 years of teaching experience at the preschool and primary levels and spent a few years as a remedial teacher for reading. Gloria has been teaching at her current school for six years. She has an associate degree in early childhood education, which aligns perfectly well with the lower level she teaches. She was born and raised in Belize City, and when asked about her identity, she did not hesitate to state, “I am Creole boldly! Kriol is my language. It is in my blood. Our blood.”

During Gloria’s teaching journey, she was an expressive arts teacher, and she spent a few years teaching teachers how to teach dance and drama in schools across Belize. As a result, Gloria’s teaching lessons included a variety of multimodal and multilingual activities that helped students construct meaningful knowledge. She reiterated her philosophy stating, “I used the constructivist method in my teachings, which include the teacher and the students scaffolding many ways and forms to make meaning of the known and the unknown.” Gloria reiterated that the Kriol blood runs through all of us so we cannot dismiss it during our teachings, rather we must connect it to English to improve our experiences.

Gloria reminisced on her reading and writing experiences as a learner and recalled one influential teacher teaching her to read and write using a lot of think-aloud. Gloria says, “These are the same methods I used with my students because they worked.” She has developed a joy in teaching children to read. She holds an annual reading camp in Belize City where school-age children are taught literacy skills.

Conclusion
Qualitative studies tend to evoke a case study. A case study is not a choice in methodology but a choice of what is to be studied (Patton, 2015). One of the primary purposes for understanding a case is to explore the particularity and uniqueness of each case. Hence, this multicase study aimed to investigate what pedagogical approaches teachers use in their language arts practices, understand why these practices are explored, and examine how they were used to support multilingual language arts instruction in the classrooms. Case study findings have implications both for theory development and theory testing, and it has the potential to deal with simple through complex situations by answering what and why type questions while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Thus, from a constructivist perspective, meaning and experiences are socially produced and reproduced. Translanguaging—a multilingual pedagogy—allowed for an analysis that emphasizes the semiotic repertoire of individuals as a resource for learning and extends that repertoire in various directions as they develop a new understanding (Pierson & Grapin, 2021). Furthermore, using thematic analysis to analyze the data helped develop patterns and themes for each case and across the cases that examined experiences, events, and meanings.

In Chapter 4, I present the findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings, its implications for teachers, and the study’s limitations.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

With our diverse Belizean classrooms due to the student's linguistic and cultural backgrounds, teachers need to find ways to meaningfully use the cultural and linguistic resources students bring to school in their teaching and learning decisions. The teachers who participated in this study used inclusive multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies that acknowledged and developed their students’ cultural and linguistic wealth. These pedagogies valued students’ literate identities and supported their meaning-making processes through language-teaching partnerships enacted with ethics of care. Furthermore, these approaches opened up learning spaces for students that included more active, inclusive, and authentic experiences that nurture students’ being in this world. Students grow and thrive academically and emotionally as their language and literate identities are considered valuable in the classroom (Krulatz & Iverson). As a result, the purpose of school exceeds just meeting national standards; rather, it impacts students’ well-being, developing their personal and societal lives.
Therefore, the four Belizean primary teachers in this study shifted their teaching roles by adapting multilingual pedagogies during their language arts lessons. They went beyond their usual teaching duties and created and sustained learning possibilities for their students.

To address my research questions, this chapter presents the key findings using four major themes illuminated from the data. The research questions that guided the data analysis phase and shaped my study are as follows:

What multilingual pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in the language arts classrooms?

a. What multilingual oral language pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in the language arts classrooms?

b. What multilingual writing pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers use in the language arts classrooms?

I developed four themes from across the data set following the data analysis process:

**Theme 1:** The teachers use multimodal pedagogies and activities by building a repertoire of sign systems and exploring language development through mediated tools to facilitate multilingual students’ meaning-making processes.

**Theme 2:** The teachers create safe translanguaging environments by valuing multiple forms of meaning-making, moving fluidly between home and school languages in the classroom, and drawing upon their own multilingual repertoires.

**Theme 3:** Through language teaching partnerships between students and between students and teachers, the teachers positioned students as agents of their own multilingual learning and each other’s language education.
Theme 4: The teachers enact inclusive multilingual practices with an ethic of care that includes responsibility for the student's emotional well-being and language growth.

In this chapter, I share the discussions of the findings for each theme, followed by a conclusion.

Theme 1: The teachers used multimodal pedagogies and activities by building a repertoire of sign systems and exploring language development through mediated tools to facilitate multilingual students' meaning-making processes.

Multimodal pedagogies recognize and encourage the use of a variety of modes, such as talking, writing, music, images, and a range of resources, including multilingual and multicultural ones that contribute to meaning-making (Archer, 2022; Boche et al., 2015). The teacher-participants used multimodal pedagogies through activities such as building a repertoire of sign systems and exploring language development through mediated tools to facilitate multilingual students’ meaning-making processes. They felt that their multilingual students benefited from multimodal and multiliteracy teachings because they allowed for a learning experience that was meaningful and engaging. It allowed their students to draw from their entire cultural and linguistic resources.

Building a repertoire of sign systems

Building a repertoire of sign systems in classrooms enriches the teaching and learning experiences as it recognizes and values the skills, funds of knowledge, and practices of teachers and students. In an interview, Rita, a Standard 1 teacher, shared her decisions to use various sign systems during her lessons. She stated, “When you have Spanish speakers, it is difficult to give instructions solely in English because you also
want to get your message across to each student, so we do our best in shifting our teachings to support these students.” During a classroom observation, Rita was teaching action words (verbs), so to begin her lesson, she took the students on a nature walk experience. The students talked about what was happening during their walk, such as what they observed or what was happening around them. Inside the classroom, she asked the students to share their experiences. Then, she wrote short sentences about her and her students’ experiences. However, as she wrote the sentences on the board, the students demonstrated the actions and other meanings of the sentences. For the word fly, one student said, “A bird flew over us.” All the students and the teacher pretended to be flying.

Next, Rita’s students watched a video about a local celebration in Belize. The students talked and wrote about what was happening in the video; for example, one student wrote about the people dancing. They were prompted to use illustrations as they wrote their sentences to help them contextualize and convey meanings. These experiences also supported students’ literacy development as they made the connection between oral language and written language because they talked about the words and then wrote about them. Similarly, Martha used oral rehearsal strategies to support students’ writing and multilingual development. In Martha’s interview, she said,

Hence, when students in my class come across some new information they do not understand, I encourage them to say the information aloud and then write it down in both their home and school languages. For example, students go from Spanish to English.
This experience also helped students’ metalinguistic awareness of both languages since they were trying to make sense of new information in a new language.

Thus, in these two multilingual classrooms, the teachers shifted their pedagogies and facilitated a symbolic system for the students to understand and amplify their language arts learning. Dyson (2013) called this shift in teaching returning back to the basics in students’ literacy growth because the teachers and students fluidly use symbolic representations to communicate. In an interview with Gloria, she shared how she weaved different mediated tools into her practices. She stated that when she does read aloud with her students, she does it like this, “Willy! unu neva hear bout dis big, black worm wey da, Willy?” (“Willy! Haven’t you all heard about this big, black worm named Willy?”) She says that when she used her home language, Kriol, during her read-aloud, the students seemed to process the meaning of information much more easily and had fun doing it. Gloria said she “used a combination of auditory cues (expression, intonation), facial expressions, and body gestures.” While observing Gloria, she used her native Kriol language to do a read-aloud of a short story. She used her home language along with body gestures as she read. She said, “See I become my authentic self at the moment using my Kriol language, and the students participated more in the lessons because they can relate.” The class participated in that lesson by drawing on their socio-linguistic repertoire as they responded and shared ideas.

Furthermore, the four teachers shared that reading not only means reading the written words but also includes images, auditory cues, gestures, visuals, and other sign representations added to the repertoire of resources for readers as they explore their meaning. For instance, across the four teachers’ lesson plans, they noted that their
students would be reading, writing, drawing, role-playing, and watching videos, which I interpreted as evidence of multimodal activities. In one of Rita’s lessons, she noted that students will role-play a story. As noted in Martha’s plan, students will stand when they hear an adjective from the story. I coded in Amber’s plan that students will watch a video about compound words, then they will play the game mingle. In Gloria’s introduction of her lesson, she wrote, students will say and spell vocabulary words and sing sight words.

While observing Amber’s lesson, she had one of her students lead the reading of words, followed by the students individually writing sentences and including drawings with their sentences. During Rita’s interview, she said, “Every time a text is read to my student, or information is taught to them, new meanings are constructed because each student brings their own interpretation, adding different sign systems to the teaching moments. At no point is the same information taught in the same way.” Likewise, Gloria added, “Each teaching time gives a student an aha moment because we as teachers always ensure that the information is not shared in the same way but we say it, we do it, we sing it, we show it, we dance it.” She further stated, “We do everything we can for our students to experience meaningful learning. They are child-friendly lessons.”

These teachers created a multimodal learning environment with a repertoire of sign systems and fostered communication paths for multilingual students.

On my first visit to these four teachers’ classrooms, there were visuals such as charts written in both English and Spanish including the alphabets, days of the week, months of the year, and their manners chart. There was a word wall in every class filled with words and pictures that the students were learning. There were lots of short stories posted in the language arts corner. During my observation of Gloria and Amber’s
classrooms, they began their lessons with students reading and spelling these words, followed by a read-aloud of the story for the week, and writing sentences using their weekly words or writing responses to questions from the story. As a result, these classroom pedagogies that welcomed the student's linguistic and cultural diversity allowed for equal participation because the students could use various linguistic resources that were unique to them.

**Theme 2: The teachers created safe translanguaging environments by valuing multiple forms of meaning-making, moving fluidly between home and school languages in the classroom, and drawing upon their own multilingual repertoires.**

Translanguaging practices recognize multilinguals’ entire linguistic repertoire and cultural wealth for both teachers and students by opening up spaces for alternative meaning-making focusing on the linguistics and semiotic practices that include their unbounded dynamic and fluid use (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Wei & García 2022). I found the teachers opened safe translanguaging spaces by valuing multiple forms of meaning-making, moving fluidly between home and school languages in the classroom, and drawing upon their own multilingual repertoires.

**Value multiple ways to make meaning**

In the interviews, the teachers acknowledged the diverse learners in their classroom and shared their vocation to ensure that their teaching decisions met the learning needs of every student. They agreed that when you have students whose first language is not English, it becomes difficult to teach only in English because they want to get their message across to every student. As a result, they concurred that they must find ways to help individual students become meaningfully engaged during class time. For
instance, Rita shared an experience during one of her math lessons as she taught her
Standard 1 students how to solve a problem. She said, “I was trying to explain the math
process in Spanish to the students, and I wanted to tell them that the first number in the
problem was not needed but that the second one was needed.” However, Rita explained
that she was unsure how to teach this concept fluently and accurately to her classroom of
multilingual learners. Pointing to the numbers on the chalkboard, she said, “primer
número no necesito” (first number is not needed). As Rita explained her procedures
during the interview, she demonstrated how she used her hands and other gestures to
point at the numbers, trying to explain and demonstrate the meaning of first or in front
and last or back to the students. Then Rita said the students looked at her and said to her,
“Teacher, atrás” (Teacher, back). “Yes,” said Rita, “we helped each other understand
what I was trying to explain without judgment by modeling my own emergent Spanish to
my students.”

Martha, a Standard Three teacher, spoke about her approaches to valuing multiple
ways to make meaning with her class. She stated,

I created a classroom environment that lets the students know it is okay to use all
their language and cultural resources whenever they choose. For example, I have
one student who speaks only Spanish, but I encouraged him to use other actions,
drawings, and anything else to help him communicate his message.

These two teachers and their students encouraged using languages and other
symbolic/sign system representations familiar to them in a supportive environment as
they tried to figure out the concepts they were learning.
Similarly, while I observed these four teachers, I saw them using their home languages, Spanish and Kriol along with gestures to share their ideas and explain concepts to their students. For example, in Gloria’s class, she was teaching rhyming words, and as she explained the concept of rhyming words, she said, “Dey have the same sound” (They have the same sound), using pictures to show to the students what she meant. Similarly, the four teachers’ classrooms supported a print-rich environment through an organized and functional library area that includes many reading and writing activities in some of the students’ home languages. There were some read-along Spanish storybooks in Rita’s class. According to Amber, “These visuals in my class act as prompts for my students when they engage in their writing tasks. They can look at them or refer to them to help them remember something.” In addition, both Amber’s and Gloria’s lesson plans included teaching routines that always started with reading and discussing the vocabulary on their word wall.

The teachers validated their students’ cultural and linguistic responses in the classrooms through their actions, behaviors, and teaching decisions, grounded in their philosophical beliefs reflected in their interviews, observations, and instructional plans. Gloria stated that the students often produced written work that included evidence of their home languages, but it made meaningful sense to them; for example, when some students produced written work, they incorporated some Kriol. During my time in her class, I saw students using words and phrases in their home language as they wrote. As she checked the students’ work, she turned to me and said, “As teachers, we must ensure that together with the students, we can make sense of what the students wrote, so I often conference
and dialogue with them in their home language to understand what they are trying to communicate.”

Additionally, these four teachers saw repetition as a “big thing” in their teaching decisions because they fostered deeper connections when students engaged in active and meaningful repetitions of concepts. The teachers ensured that repetitions happened daily by having students incorporate all their background knowledge and experiences, making connections to the big ideas and themes they were learning. Gloria said, “The students used all forms of meaning-making. We do dancing, role plays, and drawings, meshing our native languages with the school language. We include our complete selves. We do this every day over and over.”

Similarly, in Amber’s class, she often repeated multiple concepts of new vocabulary for her students so that when they engaged in writing, they interacted with multiple meanings of the words. For example, when her students learned about words with the /ch/ sounds, they used images, videos, their experiences, and existing knowledge of these new ideas through talks and demonstrations. In one of Amber’s observations, she was teaching the /th/ sound. She showed a video that reinforced the sound, the students played games as they spelled the words. Then they orally made sentences using the five words followed by writing their sentences. These words were placed on the class word wall. Amber said,

I built on various processes of meaning-making with my students through repetitions. This facilitated the participation of all my students to produce a final task because of the many forms we use to understand the same concepts repeatedly. Thus, even if the concepts of the words and the main ideas changed,
the students could produce some communicative and representative responses to the task.

Amber engaged her students in many activities that used students’ linguistic resources in repetitive forms.

Rita reiterated, “that meaningful practice is key. It helps our students build on their existing knowledge and experiences.” Therefore, all the teachers agreed that promoting learning opportunities for their multilingual students that optimized their cultural and linguistic resources helped them to create meaning in flexible and context-appropriate ways.

**Moving fluidly between home and school language in the classroom**

During the interviews with the teachers, they concurred that an essential aspect of students’ language arts lessons is using their background knowledge and experiences in new situations. For instance, the four teachers agreed that the student’s prior understanding and experiences are grounded in their home languages and evident in their communicative responses. Amber shared that she has a student whose native language is Spanish; therefore, when the student responds to her, she might use all three of her languages: her home language, Spanish, her community language, Kriol, and the classroom language, English. For example, during an observation, one of the student's written responses was, “aqui, I di get something.” (Here, I am getting something). As a result, Amber facilitated the transfer of prior concepts and skills, which brought together the students' home languages and information in the new academic language. This allows for increased literacy engagement and nurturing of their multilingual identity.
Furthermore, the four teachers reiterated that promoting an equal balance between using students’ home languages and the school language was essential. For example, the teachers stated they balance between Kriol and English and Spanish and English since the expectation is for all their students to learn. In Martha’s language arts lessons, she used a Spanish-English glossary of words and phrases and flashcards with illustrations to help the students conceptualize meanings. This activity helps to bring awareness to students about the written forms for the two languages, which can increase their multilingual competence. Enhancing their knowledge of Spanish and English in this way may help them to move fluidly between their home and school languages. During language arts class, Martha encouraged her students to refer to their glossaries, flashcards, and other contextual representations as they wrote their descriptive paragraphs. Martha reiterated, “Having students experience a balance of several languages makes a difference in their learning because they get to use all resources available to understand. We have more of the students’ attention through active participation,” she said. Thus, Martha’s teaching choice of using multilingual reference materials was an inclusive, cultural and linguistic practice that was more engaging for students.

However, all the teachers reiterated the need to strike a balance among the usages of the languages in their classrooms. For example, Amber described one of her lessons by sharing that the lessons begin with English. However, if the students cannot say it, do it, or make sense of the information in English, she “breaks down” the concepts using interactive and child-friendly activities in Kriol. Next, Amber repeats her teachings to the students using English. She added, “The purpose is to ensure that the students are making sense of the information or making their own meaning.” The teachers described this
home and school language practice as an English-to-Kriol and Kriol-to-English teaching strategy. This strategy was observed in the four teacher’s classroom where they used Spanish and Kriol along with pictures, role plays or some other forms as they taught and facilitated teaching and learning activities. Therefore, enabling learning experiences where students move fluidly between home and school languages deepens and extends their language learning. This promotes and increases active student participation, a sense of belonging, and learners’ responsibility.

Subsequently, when engaging students in writing, the teachers observed that their students struggled with responding in English. Hence, they allowed the students to draw on their linguistic backgrounds to communicate their ideas. In Rita’s class, the students often used words or phrases from their home language to balance their ideas when writing. For example, in an interview with Rita, she said that some of her students knew what they wanted to say and write but could only do so in their home language. She allowed her students to complete the task in Spanish, and then the students translated the information to her.

After a gallery walk in Rita’s class that I observed, the students were tasked to write about what they saw, and because they were learning about nouns in that language class, one student wrote, *El bote es negro (The boat is black).* The teacher approached this student at his seat and asked the student to read it to her in Spanish. Then, the teacher reread it and translated it into English. Together with the students, they read the sentence's Spanish and English forms. Likewise, a common practice in Amber’s Language Arts lesson was sitting one-on-one with her Infant 1 students to formulate their sentences. For example, while observing this one student continued to write using Kriol
and Amber let the student wrote her ideas. Then she went to the student and guided her into filling in any missing words or phrases. Amber said, “it is not to close students out, but to have every student involved in the lessons by helping them to balance their home language resources with the language of school and bringing them into one lived experience.”

**Acknowledge their own multilingual identities and language-teaching limitations**

Furthermore, the teachers acknowledged their own multilingual identities and language-teaching limitations through demonstrations and modeling of their daily instructional practices. In her interview, Gloria frequently used Kriol during her teachings because when she taught in Kriol, her students processed the information more quickly than when she used only English. Moreover, Gloria said,

I am the one who speaks Kriol. Sometimes, the students stop me and say,

“Teacher, can you please repeat?” because I am going off in the lesson using my home language. I practice following the themes and topics I am teaching because some lessons are more meaningful and child-friendly when they happen in Kriol. These lessons support students' active engagement where they can be themselves because they are participating with me in my Kriol language.

In her firm voice, Gloria reminded me, “I am a Kriol, and Kriol is in my blood. We can better relate to it.” As I observed one of Gloria’s lessons, I noted how she constantly switched from Kriol to English, and then she would weave in one word in Spanish as she did a read-aloud for her class. I watched her reading a short story about Birthdays. As she explained, she said, “I think birthday da cumpleaños in Spanish.” She looked at me and said, “I *d* try my Spanish.” (I am trying my Spanish).
Similarly, in their interviews, Rita and Martha also acknowledged that they could not speak Spanish fluently but understood and spoke it to save their lives. Rita said, “If I have to say it in Spanish, then I will try. I observed and noted how Rita used words and phrases in Spanish along with actions to explain a concept in Mathematics. As for Martha, she does not only use actions along with her words and phrases in Spanish, but she shows the students pictures on her computer to support her explanation of the word rain. In my observations of these three teachers, they spoke Spanish using words and phrases supported by a variety of modes during their teachings. Martha stated that the students understood and could communicate with us, but it is evident that they, like us, are more at ease when we can all freely access and use our home languages in class. However, as I looked at Amber’s data sets, I noted that she did not make any reference to Spanish as one of her language limitations.

Rita, Gloria, and Martha’s affirmation of their own multilingual identities and their acknowledgment of their own language limitations promoted a learning environment free from linguistic and historical barriers for both teachers and students. Their beliefs and actions helped in fostering and enriching safe language learning experiences for teachers and students.

**Theme 3: Through language teaching partnerships between students and between students and teachers, the teachers positioned students as agents of their own multilingual learning and each other’s language education.**

The teachers extended their teachings through partnerships with their students and between students; as a result, teaching and learning became a collective endeavour and not an individual or hierarchical one; instead, the teachers and students sustained a
language learning partnership. The teachers positioned students as agents of their own multilingual learning and each other’s language learning, with both playing an active role in the process.

The teachers, cognizant of their school’s demographics, acknowledged the multilingual learners in each classroom by sharing their “teacher roles” with their students. During my initial interview with the teachers, they reminded me that with all the different cultures and languages in their classrooms, as Amber noted, “we need to cater to the diverse learners in our classrooms.” Thus, they go beyond and try creative strategies that allow every student to learn. This was also evident when Gloria added, “Every year, we get students with different cultures and language backgrounds, and we need to find ways to reach all of them, so I have them assist each me and each other.” Likewise, Martha shared, “My teaching activities are focused on students’ understanding as much as possible, so I sometimes have my Spanish-speaking students act as translators for their peers who speak only Spanish.” Rita echoed, “We get students with different culture and language backgrounds, so we encouraged different ways for those students to participate in the lessons. For example, I look to them to help me explain things I cannot say in Spanish.” Data gathered from the classroom observations and field notes highlighted a common feature of all their classrooms. For instance, the teachers intentionally selected seating arrangements in all classrooms that promoted and fostered partnerships between teachers and students and between students and students, with students strategically grouped in small groups or pairs. The teachers agreed that these seating arrangements helped to promote meaningful talk between their students. For example, in Gloria’s class, she said,
These groups often changed so that my students could support and collaborate with others at different times. They do not remain in the same group for the entire year. As a result, my students socialized, learned, and partnered with everyone in class. They helped each other.

During an observation in Gloria’s class, the students were instructed to write sentences using the teacher determined vocabulary. One student in one of the groups wrote the word *the* using the Kriol version, spelling it as *di*, in one of his sentences. His classmate leaned over, looked at his sentences, and said, “Look, you spelled it in Kriol. Come let me show you,” he wrote it out again for his peer, still using Kriol. The teacher came over and explained to the group that the student was using his home language in the process. Then, she had the student orally share with the group the sentence he wrote in his home language to convey the meaning to the other students. Similarly, in the other teachers’ classes, they agreed that it is expected to allow students who speak only Spanish to pair with those who speak both Spanish and English. This peer support strategy was evident in Martha and Rita’s lesson plans, where they wrote, *the students would be paired according to their language similarity*. Through a partnership, students exchanged information as they tried to understand the new information.

Furthermore, Gloria’s students engaged in small group discussions about their vocabulary during language arts lessons. These words were *sloth, three, thin, cloth, bath, path*, and *moth*. For the word *path*, using his body to demonstrate, one student shared in his home language Kriol, “Ih da wa curvy way wey yu go tru,” (It is a curvy way that you go through). Immediately, another student turned towards this student and used his hands to make a curvy path, as if trying to ensure the other students understood, and repeated,
“Yes, it goes like this.” Gloria acknowledged the students’ partnership in translating for each other during the lesson by thanking both students for participating and sharing.

Likewise, in an interview with Rita, she said,

I encouraged lots of peer sharing and peer support in my class due to the diverse linguistic population of my students. Those students who speak and understand English act as a support for their peers. We allow them to help us.

This peer support strategy was evident during an observation in Rita’s class with one student immediately translating his peer’s response from Spanish to English. I sensed an automatic response without wait time or the Spanish speaking student asking. It was as if his peer knew what his role was as a multilingual member of the community. Similarly, Martha echoed, “We learned from our students, and they learned from each other because those students who speak and understand all the languages in the class assisted those students who need help.” She believed that this approach empowered students to be actively engaged and share the responsibility for their education and the education of their peers. Also evident in Martha’s classroom, this one student seemed to be struggling to read the assigned story from his reader, so one of the students silently moved next to him and began reading the story. She asked him questions in Spanish, and he responded in Spanish too. Then, the student went back to her seat. In her interview, Rita shared and confirmed similar practices. She said, “At this school, we do lots of peer support.” In the two lesson plans she shared, it was evident that she planned for pair-share, and peer support. The idea of pair-share was supported by my visit to her class when she was asking questions about a story after a read aloud. Each student turned to their peer to their
right and talked about the answers before they had opportunities to share aloud with the class.

Furthermore, Gloria shared that she intentionally planned lessons that promoted student-to-student interactions in small groups and pairs. For example, in one of her language arts classes I observed, she placed the students in small groups. Then, she gave the students word cards and instructed them to form sentences using the word cards. The students talked with each other about what sentences they should form and whether these sentences made sense. They made several sentences by moving the cards around and collaboratively added new words when they wanted to extend new meanings. She also indicated her plans for grouping in the lesson plans by writing, “group students in four or placed students in groups of fours” when they would engage in an activity.

Similarly, during an observation of one of Rita’s language lessons, she created a learning station with lots of interactive materials such as word cards, books, games, and some stationery. In groups, the students visited these stations and talked about what was happening; they immediately used their home languages to communicate. Some students took up leadership roles and explained their ideas to their peers using at least three languages--Kriol, Spanish, and English. This strategy enabled a collaborative process through which all students contribute to their learning experiences through multilingual support.

The four teachers agreed that extending partnership roles to the students created a community of teachers and learners who each took ownership of their own multilingual learning and the language learning of others, situating themselves as agents of the experience. They promoted a supportive, co-learning environment with shared authority.
and teaching responsibility among students and teachers and students as language teachers and learning partners.

**Theme 4: The teachers enacted inclusive multilingual practices with an ethic of care that included responsibility for the student's emotional well-being and language growth.**

Using inclusive multilingual practices with an ethic of care that included responsibility for their students' emotional well-being and language growth, the teachers exhibited fundamental characteristics such as modeling, dialogue, practice, and affirmation in their teaching decisions. The teachers and students nurtured a trusting learning space where students' language learning and growth framed their understanding and meaning-making.

The teachers affirmed and modeled inclusive multilingual practices in every lesson. As noted in my observations with all four teachers, they did not only use English to explain information, but they integrated the home languages and other background information as they taught. Martha used videos that were related to the topic she was talking about. One video I saw included cultures and languages similar to her student’s backgrounds. As I observed Rita, she used many culturally relevant stories and natural objects as examples when talking about a concept. Rita took her students into their environment as a way to make connections. I saw Gloria use role plays to explain concepts to her students using gestures and music. Amber included tactile and visual activities for students to practice after a lesson, including pictures that incorporated things from students’ backgrounds. Gloria and Amber wrote short stories for their students,
using them as the student’s stories for the week. Amber reminded me that her class has students whose home languages include Spanish, Kriol, and English. She stated,

If I chose to teach my students only in English, I would cater to a portion of my class. Those students who are not fluent English speakers will not be included in the lesson and discussion. These students may believe that the teacher does not like them because she chose not to teach in their language or explain the information to them using their home languages. She chooses an English-only form of instruction.

As a result, Amber believed that this decision limited those students’ cognitive abilities and also caused the students to experience emotional neglect in the classroom.

Amber also added that should she choose to teach in only one language, other students in the class may interpret her actions as unethical among each other; as a result of her decision to select a specific language for instruction, only a specific group of students understood. Amber stated those other students would observe how she excluded some of their peers from the lesson. Thus, these students are left to work alone with minimum teacher support and care. She reminded me that her classroom is about inclusiveness and welcoming all students’ linguistic and cultural resources into the classroom. Amber reiterated, “As a teacher, being a good role model is about demonstrating and modeling care and empathy for all my students through my teaching decisions.” I observed how she taught her lesson with an awareness of the diverse student population by saying to this one student, “It is okay, you can tell me in whichever way you like.” She demonstrated value and respect for her students and validated their sense of belonging in her class.
Similarly, in an interview with Martha, she added that she has one student whose home language is Spanish and needed additional support when expressing himself. He often found it difficult to communicate orally and in written responses. However, she did not pressure him to answer in class quickly but gave him a lot of wait time. If she saw that he needed that support, she said to him, “Come on, let us say it together in Spanish.” Martha said, “If I hear him say it in Spanish, then I know that he is making some meaning. It confirmed that he is actively engaged and understanding. However, if he does not participate at all, it will worry me.” Martha added,

I do not want to be guessing if the student has made sense of the information or not. I wanted confirmation that he understood and made meaning of these new concepts. I wanted him to feel comfortable and included as he actively engaged in my class.

Martha’s classroom space allowed the student to know that he was valued, and his voice mattered with no borders. As noted in one of my observations, how she went over to this one student and talked through the instructions for an activity with him. It seemed to be something that she does often with her students by approaching them and spending a few minutes with each one. She embraced the cultural and linguistic diversity of her students and used them as a touching stone for learning to flourish. As a result, students can develop and grow holistically in a caring environment, a characteristic that impacts students as lifelong individuals.

Additionally, Gloria used Kriol to help “break down” the concepts she teaches to her students. According to Gloria, when she used an English-only form of instruction, she could tell from the looks on her student's faces that they had no idea what she was saying.
Gloria said, “They look lost,” and made a confused facial gesture. However, she said, “I wanted my students to feel that sense of belonging in my class. I wanted to affirm their identities, so I find ways for every one of my students to become engaged when I teach.” While I observed Gloria’s class, she used Kriol and English and other gestures whenever she explained, read, or communicated with her students. She also indicated in her philosophy, that being sensitive to her student’s needs, she helps model to them how to develop compassion for oneself and towards each other. Amber also concurred by adding,

I modeled for my students that we are a community of caring and trusting learners using strategies that meet their diverse interests and abilities. As a result, when my students communicate back to me, they do so with ease; it comes naturally to them to use the mode they feel most comfortable with in our class.

The teaching decisions in these teachers’ classrooms go beyond the written curriculum. Instead, their teachings focus on shaping the learning lives of their students from an affective stance as well.

During an interview with Amber about her writing lessons, she shared that she does not penalize her students for their version of spelling in their writings. First, she confirmed with the students that they were okay with what they wrote. For example, I observed how she does this by asking the students questions such as, are you finished with your work? Are you okay with what you have so far? Next, she talked with the students about what they had written. She said, “I try to help my students make meaning of their final work. If I saw something that needed revising, I modeled and demonstrated to the students how to say it and write it so that it made sense.” Most importantly, Amber
stated, “I refrained from using negative comments to my students during the conference such as, this is wrong. This is not how you do it.” She reiterated,

These negative comments break students down rather than build them up. Each of my students is unique, and as a teacher, I try to cater to and around each student to meet their learning needs through my teaching beliefs and practices.

As noted in Amber’s philosophy, she grounded her teaching decisions in fostering ethical relationships with her students.

Subsequently, Rita echoes that when students entered her class, she saw that they had challenges communicating using written language in English. Therefore, in her writing class, she encouraged those students to use their home language. Rita said, “The goal is to remove the barriers that limit our students’ learning experiences, such as communicating using English only. My responsibility is to find methods for inclusion so that students feel and experience inclusive learning and caring opportunities.” As noted in my observations in Rita’s class she often does nature walks, play games such as role plays to get all the students involved. Rita’s goal is always to include all her students while she teaches. In Rita’s philosophy she talked about the way we educate children helps to shape who they become in life; therefore, she does the best possible to ensure she includes the diverse backgrounds of her students in her daily lessons and activities. As a result, her choices in her actions, attitudes, behaviors, and teaching choices include every student.

Similarly, during Martha’s interview, she stated that she also used many ways for her students to actively participate during her writing lessons. For example, she consistently supported her students in communicating using the languages they are better
with, including their home languages and school language. She stated, “I let my students feel at ease to try and use the multiple languages they know by letting them experience that it is okay if you make mistakes.” I observed that when Martha’s students may omit words and phrases as they communicated using their choices of languages, such as English, she helped them shape the meaning they were trying to convey. Martha said,

I do this because I am aware that English is not their first language; however, I want all my students to understand and participate in my classes. I want them to feel that they belong to this classroom and this school.

In describing her teaching philosophy, Martha stated, “My first teaching experiences working with students with different learning needs and abilities helped me to stay in teaching because I want to help shape students’ lives.” As an experienced teacher, Martha reminded me that her teaching decisions go beyond curriculum standards to include the modeling of care to her students.

Additionally, the four teachers designed and managed their classrooms with care and attention. Upon entering each of their rooms, I was greeted by the decorated welcome charts that included the student’s names. The students’ birthdays are posted on an area in the room along with many charts and other labels adding to an inclusive climate of learning. It was evident that they encouraged the students to use their class routines and procedures, whether it was going to the bathroom, or following the routine for speaking in the class. Their incentive charts posted at the front of the rooms included reminders of what were acceptable classroom behaviours such as please and thank you.

These teachers’ awareness of the multilingual identities that shaped their classrooms prompts them not only to adjust their teaching styles but to do so with ethics
of care that include practices where every student meaningfully participates in a supportive learning space.

**Conclusion**

The teachers' awareness of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population they taught encouraged and motivated them to constantly explore teaching pedagogies that ensured every student experienced inclusive learning opportunities even beyond their classrooms. They harnessed all the assets that the students brought to school and used them as a springboard to engage students in meaningful learning. For example, through multimodal pedagogies and activities such as building a repertoire of sign systems and enabling students to explore language development using mediated tools, the students used their full cultural and linguistic wealth to make meaning of new information. The teachers formed and shaped a classroom of learning with students who valued and respected one’s identity without any teaching and learning boundaries. Similarly, by nurturing and sustaining a safe translanguaging classroom space through multiple forms of meaning-making, moving fluidly between home and school languages in the classroom, and drawing upon their own multilingual repertoires, teachers, and students constructed and generated new meanings of concepts and ideas.

Additionally, the teachers went beyond just teaching students. They developed relationships by partnering with their students as agents of their learning. They realized that they were not just tasked to teach students but to help them develop and grow long after they leave their classrooms and schools. Thus, the teachers stepped back from their usual authoritative roles and extended co-partnership to students and among students,
where they helped students become agents of their learning growth and that of their peers. The teachers and students cultivated a meaning-making space that was supportive and tolerant of each other’s cultural and linguistic assets. These teachers affirmed and reiterated that their inclusive multilingual teaching stances were built on an ethic of care that considers students’ emotional well-being of their entire school experiences critical to students’ success long after they leave school. Therefore, teachers’ teaching decisions made these educational milestones in students’ lives meaningful by welcoming the “whole child” into their school experiences.
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides further insights into the study’s findings by discussing them with related scholarly literature. With a qualitative study methodology, I examined four teachers’ teaching multilingual literacy practices in language arts instruction. I collected data through interviews, lesson plan artifacts, and classroom observations as my main sources for each case. My findings explored four themes developed from across the data. In addition, I discuss implications for future research, teachers, and teacher educators and conclude by considering additional limitations of this study and offering a closing summary.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Scholarly Literature

The four teachers in this study used multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies throughout their language arts instruction to support their student’s learning. Through these pedagogies, they facilitated multiple learning experiences inclusive of their student’s diverse needs. I discussed each of the findings and their relation to literature.
The teachers used multimodal pedagogies and activities by building a repertoire of sign systems and exploring language development through mediated tools to facilitate multilingual students’ meaning-making processes. Multimodal pedagogies recognize the use of a range of modes, including gestures, symbols, spatial, and visual modes, and a range of resources, including multilingual, experiential, embodied, and technologically enriched resources, to support students’ literate identities (Archer, 2022; Mills, 2011). The four teachers, cognizant of their students’ abilities, used many modes and forms as part of their lessons to help them explain new concepts and ideas. For instance, as noted in their lessons, oral/spoken language was always followed by written language, which included pictures and illustrations. Similarly, as I watched one of Gloria’s lessons, I saw how she used actions, showed pictures, and incorporated the students’ home language as she did a read-aloud to help her students understand the main concept of the story.

Meaning-making happens in many forms, and when teachers integrate multilingual pedagogies into their teachings, they create an environment that is inclusive of students’ unique abilities (Cope et al., 2018). Martha introduced with a video on the topic followed by the students writing and drawing their responses to the questions. Some students had the choice to write the Spanish and English forms for some words. She chose to include at least two forms of activities to help her students communicate meanings effectively. As noted in NCTE (2021), the more ways teachers teach using strategies catering to students’ abilities and skills, the more ways they can reach out to every student and hone their ability to learn.

Similarly, in Rita’s class, to generate new information during one of her language arts lessons, she facilitated students’ use of multiple sign systems. During their nature
walk, the students observed things happening, and upon their return to the classroom, they used movements and drawings to discuss the concepts of action words (verbs). She helped her students to make connections using different activities that were familiar to them; as a result, her students were more engaged because they incorporated several abilities. Using multimodal pedagogies, teachers can support students as active partners in the teaching and learning process through scaffolding and fostering their cultural and linguistic abilities (Boche et al., 2015; Fisher et al., 2020).

Additionally, literacy is no longer bound to just reading and writing, but rather, literacy extends to a combination of sounds, images, arts, movements, and other representational modes that all contribute to meaning-making and representations (Boche et al., 2015; Smith, 2021). Together with the support of multimodal activities, the teachers facilitated literacy experiences for students that bridge their background knowledge with the new information to enhance understanding. Thus, teaching using multimodal pedagogies support students’ literate identities as they use various modes to hone in their funds of knowledge and to make sense of the new information while sustaining authentic learning experiences (Cabual, 2021). In this study, the four primary teachers used a combination of auditory cues (expression, intonation), facial expressions, body gestures, and other visual representations in their teachings. Heath (1982) called this way of doing literacy the “protean shape of literacy events in which oral and written literacies are intertwined and shifted by other modes in mutual elaboration” (as cited in García and Kleigen, 2019, p. 558). These teachers used various modes and other embodied forms during their language lessons to help students explore their full multilingual resources enabling students to conceptualized new ideas in various ways that
is unique to them using their prior experiences. Thus, Sundari (2020) claimed that in language classrooms, where the students and the teachers are influenced by similar language, interests, and other characteristics, they can shape classrooms with similar literacy goals in which the experiences are unique to each one.

The findings also showed that the teachers create safe translanguaging environments by valuing multiple forms of meaning making, moving fluidly between home and school languages in the classroom, and drawing upon their own multilingual repertoires. Pedagogies that support multilingual students in using their full linguistic repertoire as a resource for learning and extending that repertoire in various directions create versatile and safe multilingual spaces as students develop new understandings (Pierson & Grapin, 2021). These four primary teachers build on their students’ existing knowledge and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. For instance, if a student used his/her home language, they showed appreciation and extended on what the student was saying through conversations or questions. Translanguaging privileges the meaning-making process of multilinguals as they leverage their linguistic and multimodal repertoires in spontaneous and momentary actions and performances with people, objects, places, and spaces (García & Kleifgen, 2019). I observed that when Gloria’s students produced or responded using texts, signs, and symbols that unified their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, she also dialogued with them to support their responses. Teachings that use translanguaging pedagogies encourage and support multilingual students to deploy their full repertoire of linguistic and semiotic resources in constructing disciplinary meaning (Wei & García, 2022). Similarly, Martha made her students write using both Spanish and English responses to connect their oral and written language use.
When the students are working in groups, Rita encouraged them to use their home and/or school language to help them in their discussions. Amber helps to translate words from Spanish and Kriol to English for those students who need it to help them conceptualize any new information. These findings further suggest that the teachers adopted translanguaging positions in their teachings that were specific to their multilingual classrooms. The teachers appreciated their students’ linguistic competence on their own terms (García & Kleifgen, 2019; Machado & Hartman, 2019).

These teachers also drew upon their multilingual repertoires to create safe translanguaging environments. Rita acknowledged that the teachers at her school could not speak Spanish fluently, but they understood and spoke it just well enough. During their teachings, the teachers leveraged their Spanish using a few words and phrases paired with gestures and signs with an attempt to convey meanings and to interact with their students. These teachers demonstrated their teaching vulnerability and took a stance to learn alongside their students. Their teaching actions placed them as learners of a language, like a reflection of their students’ realities. Teachers’ experiences of engaging in translanguaging helped them to understand their own language and literacy journeys, becoming familiar with translanguaging and realizing that is what all their students are doing, thus shaping a trusting translanguaging space (España et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Martha stated, “The students understood us and could communicate with us, but it is evident that they, like us, are more at ease when we can all freely access our home languages in class.” When teachers facilitate their learning environment in a way that allows for the fluidity in language use, they open the space to more student agency to interrogate traditional language practices that impede students’ education,
transforming traditional standards and curricula into a pedagogy that liberates students’ language to think, imagine, feel, and learn (García & Kleifgen, 2019).

Furthermore, the teachers in this study positioned students as agents of their own multilingual learning and each other’s language education through language teaching partnerships between students and between students and teachers. As cited by Jensen and Bennett (2015), partnership is about repositioning the way that students can contribute to the teaching and learning through including and valuing their perspectives and experiences and by students taking a more active role and leading activities in relationship with each other and teachers. These four teachers agreed that they also get their messages across to their students through teaching partnerships between students and teachers in their class. This enabled students to select their own paths for constructing knowledge, attitudes of cooperation, and partnership; they also began taking on a more active role, becoming more engaged with learning as they developed a greater sense of responsibility (Center for Engagement Learning, 2024; Rusk, 2019). For instance, the teachers stated that they encouraged their students to support each other, whether translating a response for their peers or demonstrating a concept to each other using their home languages. As noted in an observation in Gloria’s class, this one student turned towards his peer, looked in his book and identified a word written in Kriol. He read the word in Kriol and told his peer what the word was in English. Therefore, through partnership, students and teachers valued inclusivity in students’ linguistic repertoires and empowered students to share responsibility and authority for learning transforming students’ position in the classroom and inquiry process (Felten et al., 2013). The teacher and students recognized each other’s competencies by building on them to create a
supportive community of learners. Volman and ‘t Glide (2021) also argued that building on students’ funds of knowledge acquired in their families, communities, and peer groups enhances their school engagement and supports their academic learning. Thus, the teachers in this study with their students help, contextualized learning and language development through shared practices using each other's lived experiences.

The findings also illuminated the teachers enacted inclusive multilingual practices with an ethic of care that included responsibility for their students’ emotional well-being and language growth. Pedagogies that respond to students’ abilities and needs, bound with a classroom climate in which caring can flourish, support their academic growth (Aslanian, 2022). Caring can be defined as a “set of relational practices that foster mutual recognition and realization, growth, development, empowerment, protection, and human community, culture, and possibility; thus, caring occurs within relationships” (Owens & Ennis, 2005, p. 393). Amber stated that she valued her students’ cultural and linguistic diversity. As a result, she carefully selected teaching practices that catered to all her students. Her lesson plans included evidence of how she used concepts, ideas, and other teaching decisions that did not marginalize students but welcomed her students’ cultural and linguistic wealth. An ethic of care includes teachers focusing their teachings and attention to the needs of all their students (Noddings, 2005). Amber stated that she did not want any of her students to experience emotional neglect in her class; as a result, her ethic of care and teaching choices facilitated a developmental pathway for every student’s emotional and academic growth. Gilligan (2011) states that an ethic of care directs our attention to the need for responsiveness in paying attention and listening, ensuring we are all connected in some way.
While observing a lesson in Amber’s class, the students responded to questions from their weekly assigned story. Amber wrote the students’ responses on the whiteboard, repeating the sentences aloud as she wrote them. This one student shared his response, but he used *gimme*, which is Kriol for *give me* written in English. Amber repeated the exact words the students said, and as she got to the word, she said to them, “This would be the way the word is spelled in Kriol, and here is how we spell it in English.” Therefore, she modeled and fostered relationships that empowered her students and motivated them to excel while supporting a sense of linguistic agency within the immediate process and in the broader setting (Jensen & Bennett, 2016). Through her actions, she demonstrated acceptance of the student’s linguistic needs in using Kriol to help him participate in the lesson. As noted by Noddings (2015), the ethic of care is needs-based; thus, the one caring in the situation is attentive to whatever needs are expressed and tries to respond positively. Thus, teachers’ responses to students’ learning needs occur in a manner that is mindful and respectful of sustaining a positive relationship. As a result, students developed ownership and value for their learning and extended their own meaning-making through relationships with other (Keeling, 2014).

In my discussion, I looked at many similarities across the cases. I also found that oral and written language were significant to the four teachers. Their routines often included saying it, followed by writing it. This was evident in their lesson plans, the observations, and what they talked about during the interviews. However, I also noted that the teachers in this study demonstrated and talked about how they valued multiple forms to make meaning with their students in a safe translanguaging environment; for instance, having their students use their home language or the teacher using Kriol to get a
concept across. These activities and strategies were not stated in the lesson plans they shared with me. However, Spanish and English are a part of the curriculum, so I would see some alignment with what they were saying and doing, but this was not the same for Kriol. When Kriol was used, it included mostly oral language and not written. It appears that the teachers are doing what they believed students need for them to develop in their learning even if it means going against the one way only ideology.

**Limitations of the Study**

Three primary limitations influenced the generalization or transferability of these results including the sampling of the participants, teachers’ instructional schedules, and the study duration. The four participants were from two schools on the north side of Belize City. The schools selected to participate in the research were based on their accessibility and safety to the researcher. Although this narrowed access to the recruitment of participants from a broader range of schools across the Belize District, the demographics in languages and cultures are similar for schools. The four participants met the research criteria. The main criteria for recruitment were those teachers who used multilingual pedagogies in their language arts classrooms. However, extending the recruitment of participants from schools across Belize City may have added to the findings. It would have also allowed other teachers to highlight their teaching practices and share them with the broader education community. However, focusing on teachers who felt they were using multilingual pedagogies allowed me to study what they were doing well rather than addressing what was missing or exclusionary language practices that may have occurred.
Furthermore, both schools use a block schedule. As a result, the teachers all taught language arts at the exact time every day, so I could only observe one class a day, which limited the number of observations I could conduct. They also reserved a day from their language arts schedule for assessments. As a result, these factors influenced and guided my on-site observation visits with the participants. However, on those days when I could not visit with the teachers, they shared sample lessons and other handouts to provide an idea of the teaching and learning activities for that time. Also, other factors that at times influenced the classroom observations included planned school activities and personal teacher matters. If I collected data over a longer period of time, or if I focused on one teacher for a month, and then the next teacher for the second month more observations could have happened with the teachers. The idea of recording the lessons was also discussed with the teachers, but they agreed that it may have added to their additional teachers’ tasks, especially in these large classrooms. Nevertheless, with the rich and thick collection of other data, including interviews and teaching artifacts, sufficient data was collected to answer the research questions.

Additionally, the entire data collection phase was eight teaching weeks. This is the fourth teaching cycle in the school year using teaching standards for cycle four only. This limited my observations of teachings done using the other three cycles of standards. Thus, carrying out the study during a different teaching cycle and at different times of the school year may have provided additional data because the teachers used different curriculum teaching standards for language arts. Although the data collection could have started a few weeks before the end of the third teaching cycle, the teachers agreed that starting earlier would not fit into their schedules. As a result, a more extended
data collection period with different teaching standards would have probably yielded additional findings.

Likewise, if language arts instruction were scheduled at a different time at the schools, it would have increased the time spent observing and with the teachers. The observation included taking field notes which can be intense and demanding. As a result of the limitations on the time spent during observations, extending the study's time could have filled this gap. Additionally, extending the duration of the study would have yielded a more in-depth understanding of each case as a unit or a single case study (Stake, 2006).

Future studies that included teachers from across Belize could provide these teacher educators with the opportunity for a critical reflexive experience. Critical reflexive experiences enable teachers to integrate theoretical knowledge into their practice and examine their experiences and actions (Körkkö, 2021). As a result, teachers examine their pedagogical practices. This, in turn, will also help teachers appreciate unrecognized opportunities for professional learning (Tour et.al, 2023). Teachers could also engage in their own reflexive stance about their cultural and linguistic identities. Similarly, the cultural and linguistic population across Belize constitutes other ethnicities, including Garifuna, Mopan, and Kekchi Maya; thus, a study in these broader contexts may contribute to additional or new findings in the field.

However, this was a multicase study. Therefore, when educators consider the generalization and transferability of this multicase study, they should consider the primary limitations discussed and whether or not their own teaching contexts are similar enough to the teacher participants to be transferable.

**Implications for Future Research**
This qualitative study investigated what multilingual pedagogies did Belizean primary teachers used in the language arts classrooms. However, after arriving at sufficient findings and drawing a conclusion for this study, questions remained about linguistically inclusive pedagogies. Thus, opportunities exist for fellow scholars interested in pursuing future research in a similar field. For instance, this study was conducted during language arts lessons. However, language is a resource for making meaning; therefore, the question of what multilingual practices the teachers used in other content areas to support, translanguaging, and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies remains an area to be studied.

Additionally, I aimed to investigate teachers' multilingual pedagogies in language arts instruction. Similarly, other research could extend this study in areas such as spending more time in one classroom across the day in an ethnographic manner. Although an ethnography would require more extended time with the participants, it would allow for exploring more observation dynamics and spending more time with the participants in their lived setting.

Researchers could also look at teachers’ practices in other language contexts within the country where students’ and teachers’ home languages slightly vary compared to the teachers in the urban Belize District. The language and cultural backgrounds of teachers and students in Belize City are predominantly Kriol, English, and Spanish. However, in other areas of Belize, the students' and teachers’ language and cultural backgrounds include Garifuna, Kechi, and Mopan Maya. Thus, investigating what practices these teachers used could provide educators with a wider knowledge of pedagogies and inform future educational policies and decisions.
This study investigated teachers’ multilingual pedagogies in language arts classrooms; however, another future research that would help move the field forward is a study focusing on students’ experiences using multilingual pedagogies in language arts classrooms. Scholars could investigate questions such as what the experience would look and feel like for students. How do teachers support or develop students as multilingual learners? These questions can inform and guide future studies in the area of multilingual learners’ experiences.

Therefore, this study can be interpreted as the first step in the research on investigating what multilingual pedagogies primary teachers in Belize used during language arts instruction. Future scholars interested in the field should consider the implications discussed to help explore and forward the study.

**Implications for Teachers and Teacher Educators**

The findings suggested that the teachers used multimodal and translanguaging pedagogies and language teaching partnerships in their language arts lessons. They enacted inclusive multilingual practices with ethics of care for students’ emotional well-being. Thus, the following recommendations could support teachers who want to integrate more multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies in their teachings.

Teachers need a repertoire of multimodal pedagogies that foster a third learning space for students to connect their out-of-school practices, capitalize on their funds of knowledge, and cater to their cultural and linguistic identities (Fei & Weimin, 2020). As a result, students explore active meaning-making in various modes, including visual, spatial, gestural, and aural, that are increasingly situational and contextual to them.

Multimodal teachings allow flexible, responsive, and transformative practices (Cope
et.al, 2018). This approach differs from the traditional classroom monomodal tools or monolingual ideologies that often result in exclusion or placing of boundaries on multilingual learners’ representations in their educational experiences.

In addition, creating a safe translanguaging learning space that values multiple forms of meaning-making minimize viewing students who may be new to a language or concepts as having something missing, but rather, students’ linguistics and semiotic identities become valuable assets during learning opportunities. A translanguaging environment enables teachers to provide opportunities for students to use their entire cultural, linguistic, and multimodal repertoire in a unified way for communicative interactions and representations, with the students’ semiotic meaning-making resources acting together in the process (España et.al, 2019). Translanguaging spaces allow teachers to unify students’ cultural and linguistic resources without boundaries as they move flexibly across their home and school languages, generating and making meaning.

Furthermore, teachers can position students as agents of their own multilingual learning and each other’s language education. They can do this by extending language teaching partnerships between students and between students and teachers. For instance, teachers can engage students in explaining to their peers and modeling concepts that share similar meanings using languages and experiences that enhance each other’s understanding. Teachers may allow students to act as a resource where they demonstrate and model culturally and linguistically relevant concepts to aid in meaning-making. This can allow students to view their education differently, take a more active role, become more engaged with their learning, and develop a greater sense of responsibility (Cook-
Sather & Alter, 2011). Students also develop a sense of belonging, self-affirmation, and empowerment in shared authority.

To summarize, the teachers in this study used the following multilingual pedagogies to teach language arts:

- Using their own emergent multilingual skills to convey content.
- Fostering peer-teaching among students across multiple languages.
- Incorporating multimodal representations of content in modes such as kinaesthetic, visual, and auditory.
- Designing activities based on student’s learning needs including language and background knowledge.
  - The students use their linguistic resources in their oral and written responses
  - Using introductory activities that include the student’s prior experiences
- Creating safe and supportive classroom spaces that capitalize on students’ multilingualism.
  - Using a school language - to home language - to school language strategy
  - Fostering teacher-student relationship across multiple languages

In addition to enacting multilingual pedagogies, teachers ought to do so within an ethic of care that includes responsibility for the student’s emotional well-being and language growth. Teachers can demonstrate ethics of care in their practices by seeing themselves as responsible for empowering their students (Owen & Ennis, 2005). The caring ethic suggests that teachers approach students’ needs from the subjective perspective of “I must do something” rather than from an objective stance of “Something
must be done” (Noddings, 1992, as cited in Owen & Emmis, 2005, p. 393). As a result, teachers can model, dialogue, practice, and confirm these ethics of care activities in their teaching practices.

Teachers now have access to some ways they can support their multilingual practices in language arts lessons. Every teaching decision and action teachers make daily influences students’ cognitive and emotional development and growth. Using multilingual pedagogies, teachers can facilitate learning experiences that are inclusive, engaging, and relevant to students.

**Conclusions and Takeaways**

This study investigated what multilingual pedagogies Belizean primary teachers used in language arts classrooms. The four teachers enacted inclusive multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies through activities that valued their students' multiple meaning-making processes. They built a repertoire of sign systems and explored language development through mediated tools to facilitate multilingual students' engagement. These teachers shifted their teaching practices and pushed back on the norm of monolingual and monomodal ideas to provide equal and inclusive learning opportunities for every student. They took a teaching stance centered on students’ learning, adapting practices that met each student's needs. Thus, their practices allowed students to move fluidly between their home and school languages in the classroom and draw upon their own multilingual repertoires to make sense of their new learning. Instruction that draws upon students' home practices promotes a smooth transition between home and school, fostering emotional and cognitive stability (UNESCO, 2011). Students appreciate and sustain deeper learning.
With the removal of standardized tests to measure schools’ performance, teachers now have the autonomy to focus on what all their students need to become successful. For instance, the four teachers who participated in this study chose to provide the support needed to develop their students’ learning by using multilingual pedagogies. It is timely that we acknowledge our diverse student population using pedagogies that help in educating the whole child. It is time we bring these practices to the open as valuable, research-supported practices that administrators and teachers should use and claim.

Language is a resource for making meaning (Daniel & Pacheco, 2016). Students in our Belizean primary schools possess a repertoire of cultural and linguistic wealth. Thus, it becomes the role of teachers and educators to welcome our students’ rich cultural assets into the classroom. When teachers embrace the whole child as an asset for learning, they foster and facilitate an environment for growth and development. Linguistically inclusive pedagogies support students' proficiencies in multiple languages, build their metalinguistic awareness, and strengthen their literate identities through meaningful experiences. They develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for self-affirmation and others, which goes beyond national curriculum standards and policies.
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

Instructional Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KLA</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Hrs/Wk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Language</td>
<td>English (Reading Fluency and Accuracy/Phonics, Comprehension, Production, Grammar and Usage)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Mathematics</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Civic Education and History</td>
<td>Belizean Studies (other language included w/in curriculum)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Expressive Arts</td>
<td>Expressive Arts (music, dance, crafts, drama)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Physical Education and Wellness</td>
<td>P. E.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health Education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Leadership/Religion</td>
<td>Religion/Life Skills</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B
Consent Forms and Recruitment Email

School of Teaching, Learning, & Educational Sciences
CONSENT FORM
Writing Pedagogy in a Multilingual Context

Key Information

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore writing practices in a multilingual context. I would like to investigate, what pedagogical approaches primary teachers use to promote and develop students’ multilingual identities in writing instruction?

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a series of classroom observations for 12-16 weeks during writing instruction. I will observe your classroom writing practices, gather field notes, and any shared artifacts from your teachings including samples of your unit plans and lesson plans, and students’ activities. You will also be asked to participate in two semi-structured interviews not lasting more than 60 minutes and some ongoing formal interviews not lasting more than 10-15 minutes. Your interviews will be audio recorded.

How much time will I need to contribute?

This study will take place over the 2022-2023 school year for 12-16 weeks. If you agree to participate in the study, you will engage in 1-2 weekly classroom observations for the duration of the study, 2 semi-structured interviews not more than 60 minutes, and some ongoing informal interviews to clarify any teaching decisions.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

What are the risks? No known risks associated with this project are more significant than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

The loss of confidentiality is a potential risk.

What are the benefits? The possible benefits of participating in this study will be the experiences of examining writing practices from a multilingual approach and reflecting on ways these writing practices support students’ identities. Through interviews, participants will explore their learning experiences and explore how it helps to shape their teaching approaches. This study will help educators sustain students’ multilingual identities through generative literacy practices.

Approved: 03/15/2023
Protocol #: 1838-23-34
What Steps Are Being Taken to Reduce the Risk of Coronavirus Infection?

The following steps are being taken to address the risk of coronavirus infection:

Screening: Researchers and participants who show potential symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc.) will NOT participate in this study at this time.

Physical distancing: Whenever possible, we will maintain at least 6 feet of distance between persons while conducting the study.

Mask/Covering: The researcher will wear a mask at all times. I will do everything I can to keep from spreading the virus and following the school and national guidelines.

Handwashing: Researchers and participants will wash their hands before and after the interviews or use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Disinfecting materials: When feasible, researchers will clean and disinfect surfaces between participants, using an EPA-registered disinfectant or a bleach solution (5 tablespoons of regular bleach per gallon of water) for hard materials and by laundering soft materials. Disinfected materials will be handled using gloves, paper towels, plastic wrap, or storage bags to reduce the chance of re-contamination of materials.

Is there any compensation for participating? There is no compensation for participating in the study, other than the potential benefits of examining writing practices from a sociocultural and sociolinguistic lens.

Background Information

You are invited to be in a research study about writing pedagogies in a multilingual context. You were selected because your currently used writing practices that promote and develop students’ multilingual identities. I asked that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

This study is being conducted by:

Odalia Caliz (Principal Investigator)
School of Teaching, Learning, and Educational Sciences
Oklahoma State University
ocaliz@okstate.edu
Cell: 603-7220

Dr. Jenn Sanders (Advisor)
School of Teaching, Learning, & Educational Sciences
Oklahoma State University
jenn.sanders10@okstate.edu
Cell: (405) 338-8080
Confidentiality

The interviews will be audio-recorded. They will be initially transcribed by the researchers. All data will be stored in a password-protected computer. The data will only be accessed by the researchers.

I would like to use your real name in any data reports or publications. Since I am focusing on teachers and their practices, using your real name for publications will bring positive recognition to your work. However, you have the option to use a pseudonym for any publications, if you prefer.

You will have the opportunity to read the final draft of any manuscripts to be published to ensure that you feel you are fairly represented. However, the ultimate analysis, findings, and presentation of the data will be the sole responsibility of the research team. The results of this research will be presented at conferences, shared in other professional arenas, and will be submitted to professional journals.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time. The alternative is to not participate. During the interviews, you can skip any questions that make you uncomfortable and can stop the interview at any time.

Contacts and Questions

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research participants at Oklahoma State University has reviewed and approved this study. If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact the Principal Investigator at 603-7220, ocaliz@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer or would simply like to speak with someone other than the research team about concerns regarding this study, please contact the IRB at (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

You will be emailed a copy of this information to keep for your records.
Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have my questions answered. If you agree to participate in this research study, please click the corresponding boxes below to indicate your consent:

Indicate Yes or No:

I volunteer to participate in this research study:
   ___Yes    ___No

I give consent to be audio-taped during this study?
   ___Yes    ___No

I give consent for my real name and identity to be used in written materials resulting from this study. (If not, we will assign a pseudonym for you):
   ___Yes    ___No

I give consent to be contacted for follow-up in this study:
   ___Yes    ___No

Date: __________

My signature below indicates I have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I know that I can stop participation at any time, without penalty.

____________________________________
Writing Pedagogy in a Multilingual Context

Email Recruitment Letter

Researchers’ Sending Email Address:

Odelia Caliz - ocaliz@okstate.edu

Subject Line: Invitation to Participate in a Study about Multilingual Writing Practices

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for participating in a 12-16 weeks study about your teaching approaches that promote and develop students’ multilingual identities in writing instructions.

I anticipate that the research activities would require no more than 1-2 hours weekly of your time over the 12-16 weeks of the study. It would include participating in 1-2 semi-structured interviews and possibly sharing some artifacts of your teaching.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please read the information in this Consent Form using the link below and fill it out if you want to volunteer.

Link for Consent Form: [https://okstatechec.es1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6zlhd8vxxrTEuUJs](https://okstatechec.es1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6zlhd8vxxrTEuUJs)

If you do not want to receive further emails about this opportunity, please reply with “Opt Out” in the subject line.

If you have questions about the study, please email me!

I hope your school year has been great so far and hope to hear from you soon.

Odelia Caliz
Expedited Letter of Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 03/15/2023
Application Number: IRB-23-74
Proposal Title: Writing Pedagogy in a Multilingual Context: Sustaining Identities through Generative Literacy Practices
Principal Investigator: Odella Caiz
Co-Investigator(s): Jenn Sanders
Faculty Adviser: 
Project Coordinator: 
Research Assistant(s): 
Processed as: Expedited
Expedited Category: 
Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved
Approval Date: 03/15/2023

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent, and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRB/Manager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:
1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a status report to the IRB when requested
3. Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
4. Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the OSU IRB and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
5. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I write in support of the research that Ms. Odelia Caliz proposes to conduct as part of a requirement to complete her degree at Oklahoma State University.

I hereby grant permission to Ms. Odelia Caliz to conduct the research on “Writing Pedagogy in a Multilingual Context: Sustaining Identities through Generative Literacy Practices” under the following protocols:

1. The data provided shall not be changed or tampered with in any way.
2. Access to these data shall be for the purposes of analysis, planning, and conducting research.
3. The information is not to be misused in any way.
4. Confidentiality of any personal information must be maintained.
5. No confidential information is to be divulged to anyone who is not authorized to access this information.
6. Any information derived from the data which may be published or generally circulated shall not identify or reveal the confidential information of any individual or schools.

Kindly extend every courtesy to Ms. Odelia Caliz in this endeavour.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Gengora (Ms.)
Chief Education Officer
APPENDIX C

Samples of Data Collection Sources - Semi-structured Interviews

The date is 09/04/2023 the time is 10:34 a.m.

Interviewer: Alright RJ. Good morning. How are you doing? Is there anything that you would like to ask before we begin?... PAUSE....
Participant RJ: Good morning. No. I am fine and ready to do this. Smile 😊
Interviewer: Okay let us begin. So, How long have you been teaching?
Participant RJ: (Sitting in a relaxed position in her chair around her desk). If I had been consistent this would have been 23 years.
Interviewer: Twenty-three years, if you would have been consistent. Okay... PAUSE... At the primary levels?
Participant RJ: At the primary level. However, recently I just got back into the classroom about 2 years ago.
Interviewer: Aww, I see. Did you always teach this level, Standard 1?
Participant RJ: I taught all levels except Std. 6 and Infant 1. I have also taught all subject areas.
Interviewer: How long have you been teaching at this school?
Participant RJ: I have been at this school for three years; since 2021. I started during COVID and I have had Standard 1 class since September of last year. I started with Standard 2 and I recently have Standard 1.
Interviewer: Wow! You have taught nearly all levels. So tell me about your cultural background. What would you say is your identity?
Participant RJ: Um... I am of Creole descent culturally. Um, I was raised in southside Belize City primarily in downtown Belize City and later on in my teenage years, I moved on to the north side of Belize City-Belama where in my late teenage years into my adulthood and then I moved back into the city as an adult.
Interviewer: Okay, so you went to school in the city too.
Participant RJ: Oh yes! I did all my primary school and high school years in the city.
Interviewer: What about your teaching? You have quite a lot of years. Tell me about your reasons for staying so long in the profession.
Participant R1: I have been teaching since 2008 at Wesley Lower School and I taught there for five...six years. Fortunately and unfortunately, when I left I was not teaching but then I completed my Associate's and Bachelor's degree in Primary Education. During that time, I went to SJCIC and I did my Associate in Primary Ed. I immediately moved on in 2010 where I moved on to UB where I completed my Bachelor in Primary Ed. and I completed that December of 2012. Um and interestingly enough um, did my internship at Heavenly Primary and continued teaching immediately after at Heavenly Primary in 2012. Um, I left teaching in 2014 to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Law. I came back in 2017 and I worked at the Ministry of Education from 2017 to 2018- August. And I had one other job in between that was not related to teaching per se. It still had to do with Education but not directly in the education field and it was during the pandemic that I decided to come back into a classroom. And I am here. (smile)

Interviewer: That is quite a long time. Um...what makes you stay in this field? What is your philosophy of teaching?

Participant R1: I believe that teaching is not a profession for me but more so a vocation. You have to love it to be in it especially if you leaving and coming back leaving and coming back. I am of the belief that educating these young minds to create a better future not just for ourselves but for our country is right because I always think that we are the ones that shape these young minds or create the monsters out there so if we can make the difference in one little one life I
believe we have accomplished something.

Interviewer: And your years in the profession are a testimony to that. You have vast experience and qualifications in the field. Tell me, how did you learn to read and write?

Participant R1: Interesting. I think my first encounter with reading and writing was at home. My parents instilled that it was important for us to learn these skills even before we went on to school. One of the things that my mother would always encourage was coloring. As a child I colored and up to now I still love coloring, right? One of the things that I later learned is that coloring helps to develop the strength of the muscles in your hands. When it comes to writing, where reading was concerned, everything around me was read. As a teacher in a classroom, I believe that everything in your classroom must be read or able to be read by a child so it must be attractive. I like bright things so the coloring brings out the bright colors. I enjoy the bright colors. It leads you into reading. Actually, reading it might sound weird because reading is not just about words. I could read a picture with no words alright so it depends on how we classify learning to read.

Interviewer: That is true. When it comes to language as a language teacher, what are some of your experiences with the variety of languages in your classroom?

Participant R1: Every afternoon in my classroom for the first fifteen minutes, when the bell rings we do DROP-Drop Everything And Read. While I may have some students who cannot read, they will read a book and I said that reading does not necessarily mean only reading the words but if that book has pictures it can tell a story. Not because it is not a story from the book. It means it is not a story. It is your story and the interpretation of what you see in those pictures may actually give you an idea about children because you have never seen the book before. Because it was never read in that particular way. Um, so reading in the language setting is interesting. Today we did sentence scrambling. One student revealed the sentence differently from another. You would think that there is only one right way to do something and there are others. You also find that in Math because also believe that if you can read you can do any subject, right? Um, you asked about the different languages and I believe that language has to do with not necessarily the subject Language Arts but also with the spoken word of children and not just the subject Language Arts. Not all of them have um... English is their first language too. I have children from different backgrounds in my classroom, in particular the Spanish influence. These children come to us with Spanish being their first language spoken in the home. And as a result of that, I do not speak Spanish fluently. I speak it to save my life. However, I have other Spanish-speaking students in the class who speak English and Spanish. As a result of that, I do peer helping peer share. I recall last year in my classroom, I was doing a Math problem and I was trying to translate it for the students in Spanish because I used the words she was able to tell me exactly what I needed to say because she was a Spanish speaker. I did not know how to say the word so what I said was "pajama numero vaca color". I figured what she was pointing to the words, giving or trying to explain the instructions to the student. A1 said, "gial numero vaca color" (pointing on her desk). The students looked at me and said, "hoagie". Right. I learned also from these children as well as they learned from me so it's a learning experience for both of us. There is a lot of effort that children need to make and sometimes it is a difficult task.
it's a learning experience when it comes to language and speaking to students who do not speak the same language that you do. Repetition is a big thing because when you are consistent and you have them being consistent with certain things they eventually get it. Because now I have some of the Spanish speakers who I have from the beginning of the year now come to you and say, "May I go to the bathroom in English?" So, Um...it is a learning experience for the teacher and children.

Interviewer: How do you communicate with the families?

Participant R1: Interesting because I believe that more so that the families communicate with the teacher and...um what you would find is that even though the child may not speak English the parent also may have that situation but they find other members that speak English to translate to them—right. We have a lot of...Pause. I would want to say intermingling within the school as it relates to parents sharing with other parents here. Because one may say okay my child goes to that school and a child just came from Honduras and because her friend's child comes to this school she was like maybe I could get him into that school for you but he only speaks Spanish okay but that's not a problem we can get help you translate. That is one of the things we notice happens here and we encourage it. We have a chat group that if a parent may say something in Spanish there is also a parent who may be able to clarify something for them in English or in their spoken language.

Interviewer: I like that. What about the language policy of the Ministry of Education? Are you familiar with their language policy?

Participant R1: I am not familiar with their policy but when you say language policy can you explain a lot more?

Interviewer: Policies regarding how instruction must be done in schools. The kinds of language used during teaching and learning.

Participant R1: Oh! When it comes to that instruction must be spoken in English...right...so I believe that is the policy of the Ministry of Education. All instructions must be taught in English. It is evident in our daily instructions when we teach.

Interviewer: What about the school? Does it have any flexibility regarding the use of languages?

Participant R1: I don't know that it is rigid to the policy that is taken that you must speak only English. Like I said at times when you have Spanish speakers it is difficult to give instructions solely in English because you also want to get your message across to each and every student that you have and um...Pause...We have a very flexible administration that works with us in cases like these because we would bring it to the Principal's attention and he would see how best
we can work with these students and how best we can bring these instructions across to them, right? So while he encourages us to do instructions in English it is also challenging when you have a Spanish influx within your entire school because if you walk around each class you will find at least 40-50% of the students are Spanish speakers.

Interviewer: And what would you say is the other percentage of students?

Participant R1: The demographics of the other percentage are more so a mixture of Creole, Garifuna, um things like that. We even have a few Asians, not a lot we have a few of them. Um, so it is interesting, but like I said the peer helping, these students help us a lot.

Interviewer: So how do you select topics for instruction?

Participant R1: One of the things that my school encourages is competency-based learning right? CBE helps because not everything in a class is chalk and talk. Do you remember that method? where you sit down and you just write. Children are learning in different ways and because they learn in different ways even a Spanish speaker can go on a nature walk and come back and write a story about everything they saw simply because they understood that concept. I could be teaching natural resources and we play a simple game of river bank. The natural is the grass and the mammal resource is cement. So we jump on the grass, um, for the river, we jump on the cement for the bank. So Children understand different concepts despite the spoken language that should be the “policy of the ministry” as well as encouraged in the school.

Interviewer: Oh yes. I noticed and I am learning that your students are allowed to incorporate their home language in the classroom.

Participant R1: Yes, that is right.

Interviewer: Can the students also use their home language during writing? Or are the students allowed to incorporate their home language in oral communication only?

Participant R1: Interestingly you say that fortunately and unfortunately the set of children that I have here are technically Standard 1 students but they missed two years of formal school due to the pandemic which was the foundation in writing per se so that would encourage the English writing. However, in my previous years at Standard Two when doing writing some of the students knew what they wanted to write but because they were Spanish speakers they could only write it in Spanish and we allowed them to do so in Spanish and thereafter it was translated to us.

Interviewer: Great, so tell me more about how that works at this level.

Participant R1: Yes, but at this level I think it is still difficult for them to actually write it in Spanish so English is also encouraged at the lower levels.

Interviewer: So at the lower levels using English is encouraged and at the Middle and Upper levels using their home language is supported. Why is that?
Participant R1: That is correct. You see sometimes they do not start at the school at the Infant levels so we may take Spanish speakers at all levels so let’s say that a child comes into our school at Standard 2 and that child only speaks Spanish and we are teaching something in English that is required to write and that child says to us, Miss I know that answer but I can only write it in Spanish: We encouraged that because the idea is not to close the child out because the child cannot speak English and write it in English. So you still want that child to express him/herself as to get the work done. I would use the term so “by any means necessary” to best aid and assist that child in whatever they are doing.

Interviewer: That is excellent. Are there any other strategies and practices we may be missing?

Participant R1: It is not just writing that teaches students to go from point A to point B because I could recall different celebrations throughout the year. Last year in particular we the teachers learned to sing the ‘Our Father’ in Garifuna and at our conference this year our national district conference for the entire Methodist across the Caribbean, our school staff was selected to sing the ‘Our Father’ in Garifuna. We try to teach the children these other language and we do teach Spanish in the classroom so Spanish is on our timetable although we do not go in-depth with it at this level we teach the children a little bit of Spanish as well.

Interviewer: You do lots of orals.

Participant R1: Right a lot of oral at this level.

Interviewer: Is it just at this level? Why?

Participant R1: Not necessarily, we do lots of oral up to Standard Six because practicing practice is what makes perfect, and like I said consistency with repetition helps students to learn and like I told you my Spanish speakers are speaking English. I guess basic that you can understand right...teacher I finish, teacher may I go to the bathroom...you know and listening, hearing pronunciation and all of that helps you to learn while it might just be what is written written does not bring out necessarily speaking we incorporate all the language skills so that students can produce.

Interviewer: I like the way of thinking. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your teaching practices?

Participant R1: No I do not believe that is about it.

Interviewer: I noticed that your units of work are in alignment with the Ministry of Education Curriculum.

Participant R1: Yes, it includes our outcomes, units, themes, and topics.

Interviewer: I want to thank you for your time. Enjoy the rest of your day.
Informal Interview

The date is 20/06/2023. The time is 10:40 a.m.

Interviewer: Good morning, how are you? Let us talk about the lessons you shared. Tell me about them and your reasons for selecting those lessons.

Participant R1: One of the lessons I shared would like to talk about is on alphabetical sequencing. I was randomly selected to be supervised by an Officer from the Ministry of Education. That was one of the exemplary lessons I sent to you. I believe that is the alphabetical sequencing lesson. You would realize what you think is a great lesson by the receptiveness you get from the students and whether or not they grasp the concepts of what was being delivered on that day. And it does not necessarily mean that it was a handwritten assessment. The assessment was more interesting because the Supervisor did not realize something until after the lesson was over.

Interviewer: So the students' level of engagement helped in determining the selection for those lessons. Tell me more about how that works for you.

Participant R1: Right and also the comments from the Supervisor. She commented and complimented me on my previous knowledge that was included in my lesson. She has observed for a while that a lot of teachers do not put previous knowledge for children in their lesson plans. She also noticed that I included differentiated learning activities. She noticed that I have a set of slow students in hand and for that particular lesson while we were doing sequencing, I recall using a color wheel, where the slow learners would color the wheel based on alphabetical order. Where does the entire lesson we did was done. We were doing sequencing in the class and she observed that I used the students' names in the class. But when I called Tamary one student said that I missed a name. The student said Rota and so the Supervisor observed and commented that the students displayed some kind of previous knowledge of sequencing for them to come up with the observation that Rota comes before Tamary. Another example, was two boys in my class whose names are John so do you know which comes first? So what happens when you put them in a line? When the students got to their names they looked at the last letters in their names which is the letter n and then they moved over to the first letter in their last names. One is Jacobs and the other is Lemon. So they went on and out the one with Jacobs before the L in Lemon. That was
one of the activities in the lesson when it comes to sequencing. This was just the introduction and the development of the lesson.

**Interviewer:** That was a good observation and reflection. What about the assessment?

**Participant R1:** The actual assessment for this lesson was to put the pictures of the story in a particular order and they were to present it to the class. I have four groups in my class. Three groups put it in an order that I was putting it in and one put it in an order with a justification. One that I did not know or even think about. One group places it in an order with a justification for it. One of the pictures I can recall was that they saw the picture as coming back home from school. I just saw it as just going to school and you come home and do your homework. But they

use it to get back home on the bus and then get to doing homework. So in evaluating you would be able to appreciate that people or children see things differently but they are still able to grasp a concept. Once they grasp that concept they are able to differentiate and explain differences as it relates to certain things in the way they see it. Their levels of engagement are important in ensuring that they connect previous background knowledge with new information to make sense.

**Interviewer:** I like that to make sense. Tell me more about how you differentiate or make sense in your language classes.

**Participant R1:** I think that differentiation is across the board. However, when it comes to

to language arts and the level of books, one of the things we do every afternoon is read. All my students read. I have been observing that reading has picked up in my class. One of the Standard 6 teachers last week said to me, "All you children read like that?" And I responded and said, not all but we are getting there. I believe in meeting the children at their capacity. If you can only read one book and I can read only half of the book then I won’t give you the whole book to read. That is where the difference comes in. For example, I won’t give John a book like Finn Feather. I will give him a book like The Kite. The teacher shows the books where you have the smaller words and the words are repetitive, so when it comes to differentiated learning you would see that the repetitions can help. When things are repeated for students it helps them to learn.

**Interviewer:** You differentiate according to various levels. What about when students must respond to you? How is that done?

**Participant R1:** I used the HRC phonics book for the ones that are not at the levels of differentiation as yet. There is sequencing in that book at a lower level so I would use that book for them so they can get the concept. The biggest thing is getting the concept and once you get
Interviewer: I see that you do a lot of reading aloud as a whole class and individually. Why is that?

Participant R1: I read for the students with emphasis and for those who need it. I read for the entire class and you would know who is listening and once the child is able to understand you would know that they were listening as opposed to one that is not.

Odelia: That's a very good approach. Is there anything else that you would like to add when it comes to developing and promoting your students' diverse backgrounds?

Participant R1: Yes, one of the things we have had is the language barrier as it relates to the Spanish lexicon within the school so one of the things I used as peer help since I have some Spanish speakers in here who speak English and Spanish and the new ones that come in only speak Spanish and those children assist. It is interesting because while they assist might not necessarily mean that those children progress in writing. One of the things we need to work on is bridging the gap between the physically written work and the language barrier. A child who is able to translate what the teacher says verbally does not mean that the child does well with the written language. There remains a gap. The child can do it orally but not written. There remains a disparity. That comes because of the disconnection with the languages. For example, I have one of my students a text just to say random sight words. One of the Spanish speakers and he can say the word but he says soc instead of sock and ask instead of asking.

Interviewer: And what about when he writes it?

Participant R1: He spells and writes it correctly most of the time. But if you ask him to say it, would still say soc or ask and because of the pronunciation and the language barrier. And even sometimes if he is writing it he does not write it correctly because of his pronunciation. You would see him put h because of the sound h and the j.

Interviewer: What about those students whose home language is Kriol?

Participant R1: That is not an issue for students whose home language is Kriol. The biggest challenge is due to the pandemic and these children not being in formal school. Technically some of these children are Infant One children. Some of these students did not go to preschool and as a result, one of the biggest challenges is them holding a pencil. They do not have fine motor skills so you would find out that their penmanship needs improvement.

Interviewer: Is there any other writing that the students do that we may have missed besides the usual classroom writing?
Participant R1: It is difficult because like I said students are getting there. They want competency. Based at this level but the students competency at this level is not there because of the gap between Infant One and Standard One due to the pandemic. Being at the competency students should be in writing is a little challenging so while they should have been writing two paragraphs with multiple sentences students are not at their competency in writing as yet. They are still just writing one paragraph a week compared to two or three paragraphs. There remain a lot of challenges with their competency in writing instruction. They are just not there. We only have so many hours in a day. One of the other challenges is that we have many Spanish-speaking parents and students translate for their parents when their parents come. The conversation is in Spanish.

Interviewer: So do you think that some flexibility in scheduling may help?

Participant R1: I think that the three Rs are what is needed right now—reading, writing, and arithmetic are important in the time, especially after a long pandemic. The secondary subjects will come eventually when these students are back on track. They do not need the other subjects, especially in a school like ours. We have children from all walks of life and it is bringing them up to speed. If we can get our students to do basic reading, writing, and math then they will progress in any subject. If they can read, then they can read anything and then they can write anything. If they cannot read then they cannot do anything. You cannot do any secondary subject and then they cannot write. I think that the abridge curriculum would be better at this time, unlike the competency-based curriculum. Those curricula help us to help students connect what they are learning and bridge the gap. They also took away the spiral curriculum which actually shows how the child progresses and goes up. But because they want full competency based it took away those components that if you missed a component here you do not catch it to connect. You do not get to connect as you move up. There is no connection with this new curriculum. The spiral has been taken away and the abridge we used for one year and now we are at a competency-based and it does not give support to the fact that these children last two years of school whether they were online or not. The biggest challenge we are having as teachers is if you teach something today and it is not practical these children forget easily.

Interviewer: I see. Their levels of engagement are important.

Participant R1: Yes, if not then they do not remember anything.

Interviewer: I want to thank you again for your time and wonderful insights.

Participant R1: You are welcome.
Observation Field Notes #1

It is a brightly colored room (the teacher loves bright colors). There are many visuals on the wall such as a word wall with the vocabulary students are learning for the week, centers/ Language Center, Math Center, a Library Area, and the teacher’s desk located at the back of the room. Students are seated in small groups according to their diverse first languages. This is done for peer share support. Some charts are written in both English and Spanish such as the days of the week, months of the year.

The teacher provided the topic and orally gave some examples. Title: Things Happening Around Us-to brainstorm ideas. Then she took the students on a nature walk to observe actions that were happening. The students responded in English, such as e.g., The birds are flying. Inside the classroom, the teacher did a web of phrases around the topic, e.g., Car driving, a student who recently relocated from Central America responded, El bus es grande. Other students gave real responses and the teacher wrote them on the chalkboard. The teacher checked students’ work and provided feedback such as a great job, or pointed out which words required a spelling check. The teacher moved around the room. Students were to write 4 sentences that showed actions based on their nature walk. Some students wrote sentences using the same phrases as the teacher. (The teacher gave students a choice to use sentence frames).

Personal reflections on the observations.

The idea of taking students on a nature walk around their environment was a brainstorming strategy that connected students to a real-life experience. The use of the sentence frames as a support for students helped those students who struggle with writing. Some time was spent focusing on penmanship because it is an overall need.

Questions about observations.

How will the teacher address the writing needs of the new student who seems to be more comfortable communicating orally in their home language?

Summary of overall research questions and observation.

The teacher allowed students to explore whatever language they felt comfortable to use during their responses. Some students responded in Spanish and their peers translated for them and for the teacher to understand. Other students responded in English.
Observation Field Notes #2

What happened? Observations using sensory- fications, behaviors

The classroom is arranged with similar seating arrangements.

The topic was summarizing. The teacher brainstormed the definition of a summary through oral discussion. Next, in small groups, the students visited two learning stations. They were to observe their physical layout, and then the students watched a video that also explained the definition of a summary. The teacher asked questions to discuss and clarify a whole class the definition for a summary. To connect the students’ observations at the station with the definition for a summary, the students were asked to share their observations of the two stations. Then the teacher reminded the students that a summary is similar to what students saw at the stations because it is what is evident. It is not your opinion but based on evidence. Next, the teacher did a read-aloud followed by independent reading of a short story selected from a text in the library. The title of the story was An Unlikely Hero. The students wrote a summary of the story. The teacher provided a sample graphic organizer for those struggling writers. The teacher moved around the room helping those students to form their sentences. Students were reminded to use the vocabulary on the word wall.

Personal reflections on the observations.
Using the stations to help the students understand the definition of a summary was a creative way to start the lesson. Students had to move around the room in small groups. The students actively engaged in conversations as they shared ideas. They talked to each other and collaborated during their observations. The activity promoted talk among the students.

Graphic organizer is a great way to support students who struggle. Selecting stories that students are familiar with helps build understanding and support their responses.

Questions about observations.
Maybe the students could have used the graphic organizer at the beginning to outline their observations as a way to encourage all students’ engagement.

Summary of overall research questions and observation.
Promoting collaboration among students gives them time to talk with each other in the language that they feel most comfortable with. It sets a positive tone for the lesson.
Sample Lesson #1

Topic: Reading-Vocabulary
Sub-Topic: Sight words
Learning Outcome: LA 1.29 Individually read aloud or recite a familiar short story, poem, or non-fiction text. Note Variant spelling patterns for Standard 1 include igh (light); ur,- cure, ear (hear/bear), ere (there), are (scare), ai, oor, aw, au (caught), ore, ea (meal/bread), ph, wh, kn, igh, ough, ch (choir), si (vision), ti (station)

Materials: Flash Cards, Sentence Strips, songs, charts, pictures, video presentation, etc.

Introduction:
- Students play the game “I Have, Who Has” using the list of sight words.
- The teacher listens and provides feedback if necessary.

Development:
The teacher uses charts to familiarize students with given sight words.
- Students read aloud sight words from a chart.
- Students in pairs visit stations around the class collecting items needed to spell or illustrate selected sight words.
- Students in pairs present the spelling or illustration of the words selected.
- The teacher monitors and provides feedback.

Closure:
The class sings along to a poem. The teacher asks students to share any other two or more word meanings.

Conclusion: Students complete the activity by filling in missing letters to spell ur words.
Sample Lesson #2

Topic: Writing
Sub-Topic: Paragraph Writing

Learning Outcomes
LA 3.30 Write a paragraph describing a real-life person, object, event, place, experience or interest.

Introduction:
Students partake in matching sentences written on flashcards to a picture or idea that matches on the board. Teacher monitors provide feedback.

Development:
- The teacher opens up the lesson by reviewing the parts of a sentence.
- Students play a brief round of Sentence or Not a Sentence.
- Read a sentence or a phrase that is not a sentence. If you read a sentence, students should put their hands on their heads. If you read a phrase that is not a sentence, students should put their hands in the air. Go through several examples of each to get students thinking about the importance of complete sentences.
- Ask students: If letters are the smallest element of writing, then words, then sentences, what comes next?
- Watch the video lesson Paragraph Writing for Kids, pausing to explain or ask questions.
- Show students your poster-sized hamburger organizer. Ask students to share their ideas about what might go in each section of the organizer.
- The teacher explains the purpose of this lesson, which is for them to write a paragraph. Allow students to help choose a subject for the paragraph you will write together, such as a recent school event, popular game/movie, or favorite class activity.
- The teacher and students brainstorm and write a short paragraph on the topic they chose.
- Have students read aloud the paragraph.
- The teacher listens and provides feedback.

Closure:
- Students match parts of a paragraph to a sample on a chart. Class discussion. The teacher monitors and provides feedback.
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