

Spontaneous Translating and Translanguaging in a Russian Language Classroom

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ABSTRACT

While translating and translanguaging, in the broad sense of using multiple languages side by side in a language teaching classroom (García and Li 2014), have received considerable scholarly attention, their mutual relationship has not yet been sufficiently theorized. In recent translanguaging research, carried out in language classrooms, translating and translanguaging are sometimes subsumed into the same practice, as translanguaging undermines the notion of different languages. The present article contributes to this endeavour through a study of translation and translanguaging practices in a Russian language classroom in Catalonia. Based on three examples where the teacher explains the meaning of Russian set phrases to the students through Catalan translations, we argue that translating and translanguaging should generally be maintained as separate concepts, but that in some cases they are a mutually embedded practice, as acts of translanguaging can complement translation through their creative potential. While traditionally, translation and translanguaging have been eschewed in language learning and teaching, we argue that as a combined practice they have a place in the classroom.

KEYWORDS: translanguaging, translation, Russian, language learning, set phrases

1. Introduction

Translanguaging has recently accumulated a sizeable body of research and is quickly becoming an object of study for a range of language scholars across disciplines, including in Translation Studies. As regards language teaching and learning, translation has long been used by some, while others are against its use in the classroom (see Cook 2010, for a survey of arguments). Translanguaging, in the broad sense of using multiple languages side by side in a language teaching classroom (García and Li 2014), whilst a more modern concept, has received a similar uptake: glorified by some, rejected by others (see García and Li 2014, for an overview). While theoretical contributions profess an intent to differentiate the two concepts (García et al. 2020), empirical or practice-oriented work tends to treat translation, when used in classrooms as a scaffolding technique, as a subcategory of translanguaging (Arocena-Egaña et al. 2015; García and Li 2018). Given the contact that both concepts have been having, empirical work is needed to strengthen theoretical and conceptual clarity of the two notions of translating and translanguaging, and to theorize how they are related to each other.

The article attempts to do so through an empirical study of adult learners of Russian in Catalonia. This language combination is interesting due to its typological distance to gauge the effectiveness of both translating and translanguaging techniques, and also because it is an understudied language pair. The object of investigation is specifically translating and translanguaging practices involved in the explanation of set phrases. Based on classroom observations, we argue that translating and translanguaging practices can overlap, for instance, in situations where cultural aspects are involved, but do not necessarily do so in all cases. It is thus important to maintain a theoretical distinction between the two concepts.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Translating and translanguaging in language learning

Cook's metaphorical comparison of translation as "the villain" (2010:9) perhaps best reflects scholars' criticism of translation as a method for language learning in the first half of the 20th century. For example, Gatenby (1948/1967) suggests that translation "should be avoided at all costs" pointing to the fact that "[i]t perpetuates the time-wasting habit of always associating

the new language with the old, and it actually hinders full comprehension” (Gatenby 1948/1967:69–70). A more or less similar view prevailed in Soviet pedagogical thought. The grammar-translation method, one of the most dominant methods when learning languages at Soviet schools, showed positive results in regard to learning grammar and vocabulary, but it was considered of little use in learning how to communicate and think in a foreign language (Belyaev 1965:16).

Empirical studies of the 80s-90s also showed controversial results concerning the role of translation in learning, considering “the nature of translation is frequently misunderstood, and its function in the learning process not specified” (Cordero 1984:352). In the survey conducted by Horwitz (1988) at the University of Texas, for example, when asked about their beliefs concerning language learning, respondents learning German and Spanish mostly agreed that “learning another language is merely a matter of translating from English” (Horwitz 1988:288), while students of French did not share this view. This might be attributed to different teaching strategies they had been exposed to. Those students who considered that translation is a method to learn language had obviously learned languages via translation. This shows that even though translation had been heavily criticized before, it was still implemented in language classrooms. As a case in point in the 1970s and 1980s, interest in translation started to revitalize in studies on language learning, coinciding with the time when pedagogical paradigms underwent significant reconsideration in regard to monolingualism, bilingualism and code-switching, which was followed by the advent of translanguaging. At that time, the main focus in scientific discourse in regard to translation was on its learning effects, the use of the first language in L2 classrooms, and learners’ attitudes to it, among others (Pym et al. 2013:14).

Translanguaging is nowadays generally viewed positively as a method for language learning (Piccardo 2013; Cenoz and Gorter 2020a, b), among other things, as a way “to break traditional boundaries” in a classroom (García and Li 2014:138). Translation is also acknowledged to be “a codebreaking process of acquisition” (Cook 2022:53). Both contribute to language learning since

conceptualisations such as ‘explicative translation’ (or ‘scaffolding’), ‘interior’ (or ‘mental’) translation, ‘linguaging’, ‘translinguaging’, ‘multilingualism’ and ‘plurilingualism’ are all processes that relate to using multiple languages in the classroom and which add new dimensions to translation in the language classroom and to bilingual education. (Pintado Gutiérrez 2018:10)

What is important in this sense is that translation and translinguaging were usually studied separately and regarded either as “epistemologically different” (García et al. 2020:85) or “simply constructs of a different order” (Baynham and Lee 2019:33). For the purposes of this article, we adopt the following operative definitions of translating and translinguaging as acts: we consider translating to be an act whereby discourse content in one language is expressed in another, while acts of translinguaging express discourse content drawing on several languages. Not divisible from this is the critical dimension of the two terms: translinguaging, and linguaging in general, have been theorized from the beginning as concepts that seek to undermine the very notion of separate languages as purely political concepts, seeking to argue that using language really means drawing on repertoires that can be assigned to a range of “named languages” (see Grin 2018). Translation, on the other hand, is an ancient concept whose definition, at least as far as interlingual translation is concerned, must assume separate languages to exist: by saying that there is a translation from Swahili to English, one reaffirms those two languages as languages, in the same way that saying that a Swahili speaker is learning English reaffirms the separate status of those languages.

Recent research started to look more closely at the points of convergence of the two practices (see below), in some cases to the effect that translinguaging is simply seen as a new term to capture the same underlying concept as translation (Blumczynski 2023). Some scholars have started to advocate the inclusion of translinguaging in translation studies to make it “become an object of study in its own right” as proposed in Laviosa (2018:197).

From early on, there have been attempts in translanguaging scholarship to subsume translation into translanguaging through the argument that all communication is somehow a form of translation. Makoni and Pennycook (2006) critique “pedagogical dictates” in language education that “eschewed” translation and argue that seeing language learning as “a form of translingual activism or transidiomatic practice” might achieve more dynamic effects (Makoni and Pennycook 2006:36). Their position is part of a larger critique of “meta-discursive regimes that divided languages into separable entities” (ibid.). Specifically, they reject the boundary between languages that, in their view, makes translation an issue when different languages are involved but not when the same language is involved.

This argument is not elaborated on through references to scholars who take such a position, and it would seem hard to maintain. Foundational work in Translation Studies as early as Jakobson (1959) saw intralingual translating as a central part of translation activity, and the presence of intersemiotic translating shows that translation was never taken to be restricted even to verbal languages. Later, critical revisions of Jakobson’s division maintained a category on translation within the same natural language (Toury 1986, Eco 2001). It can thus be argued that Translation Studies has always taken translation to be a concept that applies irrespective of the perspective one takes on the languages involved. However, since a key aspect of critical translanguaging scholarship is to challenge the notion of separate languages (Makoni and Pennycook 2006), it is easy to see how such scholarship would seek to undermine a notion such as translation, which is built on the very separation of languages between which it mediates. This is a key aspect: while translation is usually considered a bridging activity, it should not be misunderstood as meaning that it builds bridges between people, not between languages. The very job title of “Spanish-to-English translator” would be meaningless if translation did not separate languages.

What is needed, then, is further work that tries to disentangle the concepts of translation and translanguaging to see how they can be operationalized in applied language learning and teaching research. In the next section, we will provide a more detailed overview of existing research on intersections between translation and translanguaging.

2.2 Translation and translanguaging: connections

The (inter)connection between translanguaging and translating is not always explained sufficiently well in literature, and the reader might often be puzzled, finding this connection controversial. While some scholars differentiate between the two practices considering that “translanguaging is not simply the translation from one linguistic code into another” (Adler et al. 2023:138) which goes in line with Baker and Wright’s (2021) argument that “[t]he idea of translanguaging is that movement from one language to another involves much more than translation of words” (Baker and Wright 2021:298), others regard them as interrelated since “[t]ranslanguaging as a universal ability is a skill displayed in natural translation” (Laviosa 2018:184). If the first position advocates that translanguaging represents a more “complex” practice and thus crucially differs from translation, the latter holds that translanguaging is performed in translation, or at least one concept is inevitably subsumed in the other one. Such a position is taken in Baynham and Lee (2019) by stating that “translanguaging can be a way of understanding the moment-to-moment deployment of the multilingual repertoire in the activity of translating” (Baynham and Lee 2019:34). However, here the question arises of where the border between translanguaging and translating is, if there is one at all, and how the two are interrelated.

Answering this question is not as easy as it may seem at first glance. The confusion concerning the interrelationship between translanguaging and translating is readily apparent even in the work of some of the most prominent theoreticians/proponents of translanguaging, García and colleagues. For example, García and Sylvan (2011) state that “[t]ranslanguaging [...] includes translation” (García and Sylvan 2011:389), but they regard translating as a “simple” practice, thus putting translanguaging into a more privileged position. In another publication, however, García and Li (2014) refer to translanguaging card sort activities developed by Daria Witt, which provide different translation practices included in a classroom, but regard them as examples both of translanguaging and as something other than translating at the same time (García and Li 2014:123–4). For example, while the practice by which some key words introduced by the teacher at the beginning of the class are

translated by the students into their home languages is considered to be an example of translanguaging, practically the same practice, when a teacher translates her own words into another language, is not.

An even more intriguing position concerning translation is given in García et al. (2020). They argue that translation “acts as an *over-pass* between two or more languages, cultures, people or identities” that “connects, but keeps worlds and words separate” (García et al. 2020:85) thus acting as a guardian of colonial power differentials. In contrast, they present translanguaging as a decolonial concept, which “is positioned ... in the fluid *corriente* of practices that work within the entanglement of words and worlds” (ibid., italics added). They thus remain rather vague as regards a clear definition of the concept itself or of how it differs from translation, other than that it is somehow inside the fluidness between languages rather than connecting between them.

Moreover, taking into account the political and ideological stance of translanguaging (see e.g. Blackledge and Creese 2014; García and Li 2014), scholars have attempted to establish a semblance to translation arguing that “[t]ranslation not only reflects and transfers existing knowledge, but continuously creates new knowledge, thus revealing its often neglected political and ideological dimension” (Wolf 2011:20). Therefore, “the relationship between translation and translanguaging appears to have more of an enigmatic character” (Bazani 2019:10).

Another important connection between translating and translanguaging appears in regard to these two practices as cultural acts. For example, students who took part in the study by Laviosa (2018) pointed to this connection when applying translation and translanguaging in the class on poetry translation. Some of them noted that translation and translanguaging were of use for them to understand that language and culture are interconnected (Laviosa 2018: 195–6). However, the two practices seem to be regarded and kept separate in this study. A more elaborate account of what the relationship between translation and translanguaging is from Baynham and Lee (2019). They argue that, on the one hand, “the two may be considered

separate language contact phenomena” (Baynham and Lee 2019:53) and, on the other hand, the two are “mutually embedded” (Baynham and Lee 2019:40) due to “an overlapping region between nonsubstantive translation (cultural mediation, diffusion of symbols, transculturation) and translanguaging” (Baynham and Lee 2019:53). They state that

[y]et a translanguaging space emerges from different kinds of mediating procedures, including translation, transliteration, codeswitching/mixing, orthographic morphing, and so forth. Translation can therefore be seen as embedded within a translanguaging space, at the same time as it is composed of successive translanguaging moments. (Baynham and Lee 2019:40)

Developing the idea that translation and translanguaging intersect, the authors come to two concepts as a result of this intersection: “translation-in-translanguaging and translanguaging-in-translation” (Baynham and Lee 2019:40). As a case in point, the authors provide examples from Japanese kanji, where, to render foreign words, language users engage in a combination of translating and translanguaging: they translate part of a stem and add a Japanese suffix in what the authors call an act of “derivation-deviation” (Baynham and Lee 2019:36). This underlines the tension that is created when translation and translanguaging are juxtaposed, as “translanguaging strategically destabilizes language borders” while translation regards them “with absolute seriousness” (Baynham and Lee 2019:40–1).

Baynham and Lee (2019) also draw on Jakobson’s (1959) classification of different types of translation and “provisionally” adapt the same categories interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic for translanguaging which Jakobson used for translation. The first one “corresponds with that form of translanguaging which draws on different languages available in the repertoire”, the second “corresponds with that form of translanguaging that draws on different registers and varieties, dialects for example, within what is commonly construed as the ‘same’ language” and the third one “corresponds with that form of translanguaging that draws on different semiotics” (Baynham and Lee 2019:22). They further call them *interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic translanguaging*. They extend this classification

by adding *interdiscursive translanguaging* and *translanguaging at the language-body interface* (Baynham and Lee 2019:24).

The literature on translanguaging and translation reviewed above shows that the interrelation between translanguaging and translation takes a more complex form than might be thought. However, there is still a need to look at this interrelation from a critical point of view, providing a deeper analysis of this interrelation, possible overlaps and differences between the two practices in the context of a language classroom. This study tries to look upon this issue by analyzing the practices of translanguaging and translating in a Russian language classroom when teaching and learning Russian set phrases, which have not yet been considered in studies on translanguaging, as far as we are aware. The next section provides a detailed description of the method of the study.

3. Method

The data presented in this paper comes from an 8-month study which started in October 2021 and finished in April 2022. It was set in a Russian language classroom of one of the official language schools (*escola oficial d'idiomes*) in Catalonia. The focus of the study was on how adult learners of the B1 level Russian language course (4 males and 2 females) and their teacher, who agreed to participate in this study on condition of anonymity (for this reason, they are referred to using pseudonyms), deployed translanguaging practices in the class. All the participants are Catalan and Spanish bilinguals. The students' competence in Russian as they indicated in the online questionnaire about their linguistic profile before the study varies from A2 to B1 level according to CEFR (Council of Europe 2001). The teacher, Aina, is an experienced teacher of the Russian language with competence in Russian as C1–C2. The majority of the participants have a pretty high competence in English. Additional languages they know include French, Italian, Polish and Arabic. Their more detailed profiles are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' profiles

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Languages
Aina	F	45	Catalan-Spanish bilingual, Russian (C1–C2), English (B2), Polish (A2), French (level not indicated)
Rosa	F	32	Catalan-Spanish bilingual, English (B2), French (B2), Russian (B1)
Anna	F	22	Catalan-Spanish bilingual, English (C1), Russian (level not indicated)
Jaume	M	49	Catalan-Spanish bilingual, English (C1), French (B1), Italian (A2), Russian (B1)
Omar	M	18	Catalan-Spanish bilingual, Arabic (heritage learner), Russian (heritage learner)
Felip	M	49	Catalan-Spanish bilingual, English (B1), French (A2), Russian (A2)
Carles	M	24	Catalan-Spanish bilingual, English (C1), Russian (A2)

What is worth mentioning is that the participants of the study did not get any training on translanguaging since the focus of the study is spontaneous translanguaging occurring in natural settings of a language classroom. During the study, 9 sessions of about 2 hours each were audio recorded and observed. The 9 sessions were transcribed and the transcripts were proofread by a Catalan and Spanish native speaker. Further, the transcripts served as a source of material concerning occurrences of spontaneous translanguaging in the class. For this study, three extracts containing examples of translating and translanguaging practices applied when discussing Russian set phrases were selected for analysis. Since set phrases represent cultural units, the intersection between translating and translanguaging might be more evident. Each extract was carefully read and analyzed for the use of translating and translanguaging practices in the explanation of the meaning of Russian set phrases. The results of the analysis are presented in the next section.

Additionally, several follow-up verbal reports with the students and one with the teacher were recorded to gauge the effectiveness of the use of translanguaging perceived by the participants

of the study. The verbal reports with the students confirmed common sense assumptions that it is easier for them to use their mother tongue, but they did not comment in depth on the creative potential of the use of different languages in the classroom. The interview with the teacher revealed that she finds translation useful to explain grammar and vocabulary, but does not mention translanguaging as a tool in the classroom. Thus, we will not draw on the verbal reports and interview with the participants in the analysis. For future studies, it might be useful to briefly introduce the concept of translanguaging before conducting an interview to increase usefulness of the interviews.

4. Analysis

Observations of the Russian language classroom where data were collected show that a translanguaging space created there facilitated the involvement of other languages than Russian. Translation and translanguaging practices were frequently applied, especially when working on vocabulary. Translation was needed to clarify the meaning of individual words, phrases or even an entire text in some cases. What is worth mentioning here is that translation of general vocabulary was not difficult for students and was usually based on previously acquired knowledge. They easily translated Russian words or expressions into Catalan, the language most frequently drawn on in the classroom after Russian. When the students did not know some words, they checked them in online sources. However, the case of set phrases did not often get special attention or translation was not sufficient to explain their metaphoric meaning and the cultural background they carried as the three examples given below demonstrate.

4.1 First example (“Хочешь жить - умей вертеться”)

In the middle of the class devoted to shopping, the teacher asked the students to listen to a song related to the topic. The song *Плачу* by the music band *Leningrad* represents a kind of satire of the modern model of behavior in society, when a person (in the song this is a young woman), despite financial difficulties, spends money on new clothes. In the beginning, the students listened to the song and filled the gaps in the text with words. Then they looked for unknown words in pairs and finally the entire group discussed the words with the teacher. All

the participants translated words from Russian into Catalan and drew on Catalan when commenting some phrases. The song mentions the expression “*Хочешь жить - умей вертеться*” (“*It's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease*”, “*Only the fast survive*”, “*Fast footwork is the key to success in life*”) which is a set phrase (catchphrase) often used in colloquial speech to emphasize that in order to achieve something, you need to work. The teacher underlines in Russian that “*Хочешь жить - умей вертеться - это выражение, это фразеология*” (“*Хочешь жить - умей вертеться: this is an expression, this is phraseology*”). Then she draws on Catalan as shown in Excerpt 1 (translation into English supplied in all excerpts):

Excerpt 1

- Aina: *Хочешь жить - умей вертеться - это выражение, это фразеология. És una frase feta.*
Да? **Si vols viure, espavila't.** Вертеться **has de saber com espavilar-te.**
[*It's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. This is an expression, this is phraseology. It's an idiom.*
Yes? If you want to live, wake up. Move it, you have to know how to wake up.]
- Omar: **Moure.**
[*Move.*]
- Aina: **Moure, exacte.** Да? Хм. Женская такая доля.
[*Move, exactly. Yes? It's a woman's fate.*]

What happens here is that Aina, turning to Catalan and resorting to translation, wants to emphasize that the phrase *Хочешь жить - умей вертеться* is a set phrase, which presumably aids students to remember it or at least draw their attention to it. The literal translation of the set phrase into Catalan intends to catch the literal meaning of the phrase. However, this particular case does not give the impression that translation really helps to reveal the underlying meaning. Additional explanation of the set phrase or alluding to a phrase equivalent in Catalan through translanguaging might have served better for the students to understand the set phrase.

This example shows that the literal translation of a set expression, of course, makes sense to some extent, but does not fulfill the entire function in the transfer of both the cultural component of the phrase and its metaphorical meaning. Translanguaging may have helped do this. At the very least, if the discussion in this case had taken place regarding similar or equivalent expressions in Catalan, Spanish or any other languages in their linguistic repertoire, it would be clear that students understand the meaning of the phrase and can relate it to the equivalent in their native languages.

4.2 Second example (“Я не настолько богат, чтобы покупать дешевые вещи”)

At the end of the same class, students listened to the audio twice and then read the text based on the audio dealing with the problems of modern society in relation to consumerism. According to it, people produce too many low-quality clothes that wear out quickly and end up in landfills, thus polluting the planet. The main idea of this was that when buying something, a person should think about the environmental impact. When listening to the audio and reading the text afterwards, the students had to answer the questions related to the information presented in the audio. During the discussion of the answers and unknown words, the teacher asked whether all the words were clear. Jaume wanted to clarify the word *богатый* (*rich*) and a phrase *насолько богат* (*rich enough*), the beginning of a quote mentioned in the audio in which a young man talking about consumerism cites Nathan Rothschild “*Я не настолько богат, чтобы покупать дешевые вещи*” (“*I’m not rich enough to buy cheap things.*”) which is frequently used in everyday Russian to refer to a more reasonable approach when buying things.

Excerpt 2

Aina: Хм. Хорошо. Все понятно? Есть слова, которые вы не поняли? Или все понятно?
[*Hm. Okay. Everything is clear? Are there any words that you haven’t understood? Or e v erything is clear?*]

Jaume: Богат. Насолько, настолько богат.

Evgeniia Bisiada and Mario Bisiada, Spontaneous Translating and Translanguaging in a Russian Language Classroom, 1–23

- [Rich. So, so rich]
- Aina: Богатый, богатый человек.
[A rich, rich person.]
- Jaume: Богатый, богатый.
[Rich, rich.]
- Aina: Да, богатый – это богатый.
[Yeah, rich is rich.]
- Jaume: Sí.
[Yeah.]
- Aina: Ты знаешь. Бедный и богатый человек. Богатый человек – это человек, у которого много денег.
[You know. A poor and a rich man. A rich man is a man who has got a lot of money.]
- Jaume: Ah, vale.
[Ah, OK.]
- Aina: Как *Росшильд. Да? Как раз Ротшильд. Вам не говорила мама: «У меня нет...»
[Like *Roschild. Yeah? Just like Rothschild. Your mother has not told you: "I haven't got..."]
- Felip: Да, да.
[Yes, yes.]
- Aina: «Кармана Ротшильда», да?
[“Rothschild's pocket”. Yeah?]
- Felip: Да, да. Это сказала мама.
[Yes, yes. This is what [my] mother said.]
- Aina: Моя мама всегда говорила. Нет, вам не говорили?
[My mother always said [that]. No, they did not tell you?]
- Anna: [inaudible].
- Aina: “У меня нет кармана Ротшильда”, когда я просила: «Ну, купи мне это, купи мне это», она мне говорила: «**No tinc la butxaca de Rothschild, yo**».
[“I haven't got Rothschild's pocket” when I asked: “Well, buy me this, buy me this,” she told me: “I don't have Rothschild's pocket, I.”]
- Jaume: У меня нет...
[I haven't got...]
- Aina: Кармана. Ну, это перевод такой у них. Да?
[Pocket. Well, it's their translation. Yes?]
- Felip: **Butxaca, butxaca de Rothschild.**
[Pocket, Rothschild's pocket.]

As seen in Excerpt 2, the teacher explained the phrase *богатый человек* (*a rich man*) providing its definition in Russian and then she alluded to the Catalan set phrase which was used by her mother when Aina was a child. At the beginning, the teacher gives this set phrase translated into Russian. Felip reacts to it, confirming that he heard such an expression from his mother too. Then the teacher translates it into Catalan so that everyone could understand its meaning. Felip also repeats this expression in Catalan. What is interesting about this example is that Rothschild's name is referred to both in Catalan and Russian set phrases. In contrast to the previous example, here we have not just a literal translation, but also a sense equivalent in Catalan, though in this particular example the two happen to almost coincide. Thus, in this case, resorting to translanguaging does not only illustrate the set phrase, but also attempts to build up intercultural connections. At least one student, Felip, reacted to it. It might be the case that not all the students were aware of the Catalan set phrase due to the age gap between Felip, who is a bit older than the teacher, as well as Jaume, and the rest of the class who are much younger.

4.3 Third example (“Сажа бела”)

At one of the lessons, students watched an episode from the famous film *Brother*, in which the song *Крылья* (*Wings*) by the group *Nautilus-Pompilus* was played. The teacher wanted the students to find unfamiliar words in the lyrics of the song in online dictionaries. After several minutes of search they discussed these words in group. Then the students listened to the song twice and put the verbs from the song in the correct form. This was followed by students reading the text of the song aloud one by one, while the teacher corrected the students in some cases regarding the placement of stress and the pronunciation of individual words. Reading the song aloud created a situation where, in addition to the Russian language, Catalan was also involved with a small inclusion of Spanish words (not shown in the excerpt below). The translanguaging space seemed to favor the understanding of the content of the song. The translation of the song itself could potentially help students once again understand the meaning of both individual lexical units and the entire text of the song as a whole. The teacher emphasized that the students themselves should understand what this song is about. She also

pointed out the philosophical nature of the song and the historical context that the song came out during the years of the Chechen war. However, she clarified that she was not sure about this. Perhaps her interpretation could have resonated with students if they had known about that period of Russian history.

In general, the very title of the song is metaphorical, which can be interpreted in different ways from the image of a girl/young woman who lost something (in the lyrics of the song, these are her wings), which was very important to her, to the image of Russia, which at that time was experiencing transition from one political and ideological system to another, and so on. This metaphorical meaning of the song received no interest from the students and was not commented further by the teacher. Interestingly, the Russian expression "сажа бела" was also mentioned in the lyrics of the song and was translated by the teacher literally as Excerpt 3 shows:

Excerpt 3

- Jaume Оказывается, что сильный...
- [reading]: [It turns out that the strong...]
- Aina: Сильный [correcting the pronunciation].
 [The strong] [correcting the pronunciation].
- Jaume: **És que...I aquesta és** [inaudible], [laughing]
 [It's that... And this is it...] [inaudible], [laughing]
- Aina: Кто написал? Жрет, жрет. Жрать, да.. Хм. Но это потому что не знаете. Да? Очень часто, когда не знаешь слово, ты его не слышишь. Да? Правда? Жрать, жрет слабых.
 [Who has written? [He] eats, eats. Eat, yes.. Hmm. But that's because you don't know. Yes? Very often, when you don't know a word, you don't hear it. Yes? Is it true? Eat, [he] eats the weak.]
- Jaume Слабых. Доказывать, что...
- [reading]: [The weak. To prove that...]
- Aina: Доказывать [correcting the pronunciation].
 [To prove [correcting the pronunciation].]
- Jaume Доказывать, что сажа белый.

[reading]: *[To prove that soot is white.]*

Aina: Бела [correcting]. **Demostrar que el fort es menja els dèbils.** Сильный жрет слабого.

Demostrar que la cendra és blanca. Сажа бела. Карлас.

[White [correcting]. To prove that the strong eats the weak. The strong eats the weak. To prove that ash is white. Soot is white, Carles.]

Carles Мы все потеряли.

[reading]: *[We all have lost].*

Aina: Потеряли [correcting].

[Lost] [correcting]

Carles Что-то.

[reading]: *[Something.]*

Aina: Что-то.

[Something.]

Carles Что-то на этой безумной войне. Кстати, где твои крылья?

[reading]: *[Something in this crazy war. By the way, where are your wings?]*

Aina: Крылья.

[Wings.]

Carles Крылья, которые так нравились, нравились мне.

[reading]: *[Wings which I liked so much, I liked]*

Aina: Мы все потеряли что-то. Что-то? Потеряли что-то... **Què vol dir** что-то? **Una cosa**

Tots hem perdut alguna cosa en aquesta guerra. Безумная **és com..**

[We all have lost something. Something? Have lost something... What does it mean something? A thing... We all have lost some thing in this war. Crazy is like...]

Felip: **Sense sentit..**

[Without sense.]

Aina: **Exacte.** Очень хорошо. Хм. Наверно, я не знаю, но это время чеченской войны. **era l'època de la guerra txetxena. No sé si és... que hi ha alguna cosa més,** Роза.

[Exactly. Very well. Hm. Maybe, I don't know, but this is the time of the Chechnya war, it was the epoque of Chechnya war. I don't know if it's... that there is something else. Rosa.]

This set phrase is often used as a playful and ironic response to the question “Как дела?” (“How are you?”) – “Как сажа бела” (“Could be better / Don’t ask / lit. Like soot is white”). In the song it was meant that the character had to prove that *сажа бела* (soot is white) which in itself is unattainable, but on the other hand he speaks of some kind of conflict in society

due to losses of the war. The teacher translated the song lines from Russian into Catalan to provide students with its meaning and then repeats once more the set phrase *сажа бела* in Russian. Although translation was needed to comprehend the song and repeat or learn some vocabulary, it is completely unclear whether the meaning of the set phrase was understood by the students since no discussion or questions followed the song translation. Translation seems to serve to transmit the meaning of the lyrics of the song but it does not seem to be sufficient to understand its metaphoric meaning. At least the students did not express any ideas about it.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The three examples analysed above show that the use of another language than the target language in the classroom is exploited by the teacher to get students to understand the meaning of Russian set phrases, and it is the use of another language that has a clear pedagogical effect. Having established that, the next question is about the exact difference between translation and translanguaging.

As discussed above, some authors equate translation and translanguaging so that repetition of a phrase or sentence in another language is regarded as a case of translanguaging whose function is to reinforce or clarify the meaning (e.g. Baker and Wright 2021:112). Thus, all the three excerpts we have analysed above would represent translanguaging since the teacher repeats the Russian set phrases in Catalan to clarify their meaning to the students. Other authors consider translating and translanguaging as separate in multiple publications on translanguaging as mentioned above. In this view, all the excerpts analysed above would not be considered as examples of translanguaging, but of translation.

We believe that, in our case, repetition is not an instance of translanguaging but one of translation, even though in the examples given in Baker and Wright (2021:112) this term is avoided. We favour the position expressed in Baynham and Lee (2019) because it provides a more nuanced differentiation between translation and translanguaging. Applying this view to our data, we can assume that the only example of when translating from one language into another actually also plays the role of translanguaging in our sample is Excerpt 2. Here, the

teacher's phrase "I don't have Rothschild's purse" exhibits creative potential, forming a bridge between two cultures by invoking a phrase that is known by one older student and thereby explaining the meaning of the Russian set phrase. It is thus an example of how translation and translanguaging are mutually embedded even as they exist as separate concepts. Excerpts 1 and 3 are different because they are simply acts of word-by-word translation with no deviation from the original set phrase.

Radical positions on translanguaging seem to make the concept of translation superfluous, as all communication somehow involves several languages, especially if we understand "languages" in the Bakhtinian sense, that is, not restricted to national languages but in the broad sense, including idiolects, sociolects, jargons, dialects, etc. At the same time, a range of critics depreciates translanguaging as simply a new coinage for an existing concept (Blumczynski 2023) or even as an "[ally] of linguistic imperialism and linguistic injustice" (Grin 2018:260). We believe that it is important to maintain and theorize translation and translanguaging each as concepts in their own right. As we argued above, Makoni & Pennycook's (2006) suggestion that "all communication involves translation" (p. 36) is not new or extraordinary, but has always been held by translation scholars. At the same time, though they specifically claim that their view "does not dissolve translation into a meaningless activity" (2007:36), it is hard to see any other outcome of a consequent application of their rejection of separate languages, as is often the case with positions that reject languages as separable entities from a translanguaging perspective. If there are no separate languages, and communication is always also translation, then translation would lose its value as a concept because there is no longer any need to distinguish translating from general language activity. Or, as put by Baynham & Lee (2019:41), "whereas the irreconcilability of languages represents the central problem of translation, translanguaging subsists on such irreconcilability, turning it into a site of creative and critical potentialities". One pedagogical implication this study possibly addresses is that drawing exclusively on translation when introducing Russian set phrases in a classroom can create the risk of confusion among students learning them and their metaphorical meanings. Translanguaging can serve as a better means to capture the meaning of a set phrase through establishing a link

between cultures. The examples discussed above can also warn teachers to introduce set phrases carefully, balancing between translation and translanguaging in order to explain thoroughly the meaning hidden behind set phrases. The use of translation or translanguaging, or a combination of the two in some cases, should be preplanned to create a sufficiently good basis to teach and learn set phrases which are necessary to master a language at high levels.

To sum up, the nature of the relationship between translating and translanguaging should be further investigated to arrive at a more nuanced picture of their relationship as mutually embedded and as sites of creative possibilities. We also believe it is necessary to empirically apply the concept of translanguaging to actual data and classroom situations to drag it out of its existence in so far predominantly theoretical and ideological circumstances and give it more weight as a tool to explain discursive reality, as we have attempted in this article. We have argued that translation and translanguaging should be considered separate concepts as their nature is fundamentally different, but we also believe they exist in a common space and can often exhibit overlapping characteristics.

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