

**Beyond Monolingual Practices in a Multilingual Writing Context:
The role of Multilingual Practices in Sociocultural Dialoguing**

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Abstract

There is limited research exploring the acquisition of composition as a sociocultural practice in multilingual discourse. This study offers a different perspective of composition acquisition, focusing on composition as a sociocultural activity that is facilitated by multilingual discourse. It aimed at exploring how multilingual practices in sociocultural dialoguing may affect learners' acquisition of writing abilities. It draws on audio recorded and written excerpts data collected in 3rd grade (16-year-olds) composition class, and works with sociocultural discourse analysis to analyze peer-peer dialoguing and therefore explore how multilingual practices scaffold learners as they participate in composing. The results showed that multilingual practices based on sociocultural dialoguing played an important role in students' composition development. When students dialogue in response to composition issues, they bring in their sociocultural knowledge, identities, and experiences that may affect and enrich their composition. Theoretical and pedagogical implications for multilingualism and composition research are discussed.

Keywords: language acquisition - sociocultural discourse analysis – multilingualism – translanguaging - multilingual practices - sociocultural perspective - monolingual practices - multilingual writing context.

Resumen

Se registran pocas investigaciones sobre la adquisición de la habilidad de escritura como práctica sociocultural en el marco de un discurso plurilingüe. Este artículo ofrece una perspectiva novedosa sobre dicha adquisición, y aborda la escritura como una actividad sociocultural que se ve facilitada por el discurso plurilingüe. Busca explorar cómo las prácticas plurilingües en un diálogo sociocultural pueden llegar a impactar sobre la adquisición de la habilidad de la escritura. Se basa en datos obtenidos a través de grabaciones y fragmentos de textos producidos por un grupo de estudiantes de 16 años, y utiliza el análisis sociocultural del discurso para analizar los diálogos entre pares y explorar, de esa manera, las formas en que las prácticas plurilingües proveen un andamiaje en el proceso de escritura. Los resultados muestran que las prácticas basadas en diálogos socioculturales jugaron un papel importante en el desarrollo de dichas habilidades. Cuando los estudiantes conversan entre sí sobre cuestiones de composición, comparten sus identidades, su conocimiento y sus experiencias, lo que afecta y enriquece la escritura. Se debaten implicaciones pedagógicas y teóricas relativas a investigaciones sobre el plurilingüismo y la escritura.

Palabras claves: Adquisición del lenguaje - análisis sociocultural del discurso – plurilingüismo – translingüismo - prácticas plurilingües - perspectiva sociocultural - prácticas monolingües - contexto de escritura plurilingüe.

Introduction

Second Language Acquisition research (e.g., Norris & Ortega, 2009) has criticized traditional ways of conceptualizing and exploring second language writing development. It has focused on improving complexity, accuracy, fluency and textual products, moving away from considering the role of context and learner diversity in writing. Furthermore, much research into second language writing has focused on writing in terms of a discipline related practice (e.g., Morton, Storch, & Thompson, 2015; Prior & Bilbro, 2012; Seloni, 2008), competence of rhetorical knowledge (Seloni, 2014; Tardy, 2005), textual construction competence and syntactic complexity knowledge in writing (Abdelrahim & Abdelrahim, 2020; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2012). While studies of second language writing have investigated the nature of writing as either a discipline related practice or as a textual and rhetorical knowledge competence, there has been limited research on the nature of writing as a sociocultural practice from the perspective of multilingualism. Second language writing research has also neglected the sociocultural practices that multilingual students go through in writing within their multilingual classes.

A multilingual policy in higher education institutions can provide learners with opportunities that can positively affect their writing and also provide insights into how multilingual practices support second language writing. Students' multilingual practices, according to Saxena and Martin-Jones (2013), can enrich learning and writing through the incorporation of their knowledge of comparative linguistic features among different languages, their ability to conduct comparative cross-cultural practices and interpretation, the conceptual knowledge acquired from learning different languages, and their understanding of cultural practices. This paper claims that, at the level of pedagogy and of English language and writing instruction policies -where L2 learners and writing teachers apply this language policy in their writing classes-, multilingual practices can be used to support their writing.

Linguistic diversity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is increasing, and many residents speak languages other than Arabic. Saudi educational institutions are now working with an increasing number of socio-culturally and linguistically diverse L2 learners. Despite this diversity, the formal language policy in Saudi schools is based on monolingualism: composition instruction, composition discussions, and language learning are based on traditional assumptions about learners' adherence to English-only policies and to a monolingual cultural homogeneity. Although educational institutions uphold a monolingual and monocultural paradigm, multilingual students exhibit various social backgrounds and cultural identities that can be used to enrich English learning in general and second language composition in particular. In monolingual English writing programs, multilingual students do not always interact positively in composing, and their level in writing needs to be improved. Instead of using cultural and social interactions to enrich and facilitate their writing, these multilingual learners often struggle to engage in monolingual writing lessons.

Reviewing previous research, it became obvious that there is limited information about L2 writing as a sociocultural activity and about the benefits of multilingual practices. This paper tries to fill this gap by exploring writing as a sociocultural practice and by presenting the use of multilingual practices (i.e., translanguaging) to facilitate learners' writing, which reflects their diverse sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds. It will show that these practices take place within a linguistically and culturally heterogeneous context where writing acts as a sociocultural activity. This study is against the use of monolingual writing practices and supports L2 learners' use of their multilingual translanguaging practices in their writing class to transfer and exchange their diverse sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds. Adopting a multilingual perspective and the sociocultural approach to writing, this study reports on the exploration of writing as a sociocultural practice which occurred within multilingual students' sociocultural discussions in their multilingual writing context, and explores the role of multilingual practices in facilitating sociocultural composition. Hence, this paper tries to find answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent did students use multilingual practices in their sociocultural dialoguing during composition?
2. Which functions do multilingual practices play in the facilitation of sociocultural composition?

Literature review

Sociocultural theory, which is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978), maintains that social interaction as the basis for knowledge creation. Social interaction plays a relevant role in shaping cognitive development (Mercer, 1995), which in turn contributes to the development of learners' writing. According to (Mercer, 1995), the social discussion creates an inter-thinking space among learners where they exchange their ideas. Neo-Vygotskian researchers (e.g., Wegerif, Mercer, & Dawes, 1999) have paid more attention to the vital role of the joint construction of knowledge in the classroom. They have also highlighted the importance of learners' engaging in cumulative and exploratory interaction/discussion to uncritically build ideas and acquire new knowledge.

Writing can become a sociocultural practice in multilingual classrooms, and multilingual translanguaging practices can play a vital role in the achievement of this objective. Mercer (2002) suggests that there should be a shared understanding among learners to make use of dialogical practices for joint thinking. In these dialogical practices, learners can use many helpful strategies such as questioning, recasting, interpreting, and elaborating. All in all, multilingualism can play a key role in enriching the sociocultural discourse where multilingual learners can build their joint sociocultural knowledge using multilingual translanguaging practices to enhance their writing.

Research has acknowledged the benefits of multilingualism for L2 learners. It contributes to learners' literacy development, intercultural sensitivity, creative thinking, and negotiation of meaning (García, 2009; Helot, 2012). Yet, learners can acquire these cognitive benefits in a social and cultural context accompanied by explicit instruction to facilitate knowledge transfer from their first language to the target language (García, 2009). Multilingual translanguaging practices, as a new approach triggered by the advent of multilingualism, rose against the use of monolingual English language instruction (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). They include the use of multilingual resources such as the use of translation (using parallel meaning), code switching (switching between different languages), and multimodal practices for the negotiation of meaning (Canagarajah, 2011b). They also involve processes through which multilingual learners engage with multiple meaning-making resources to understand human sociality and social relations (García & Wei, 2014). These practices create a social context within which multilingual learners consciously construct their sociocultural identities and values (Li, 2018) and integrate their identities, attitudes, personal experiences, and beliefs into one meaningful context (Li, 2011). That is to say, they are considered as practice and process, since they involve the dynamic and functional use of different languages and they are concerned with knowledge construction.

Second language research has acknowledged students' resistance to the use of monolingual orientations in language learning. French's (2016) case study showed that students resisted the use of monolingual orientation in spite of the school's dominant monolingual policy, and that they collaborated with one another using their home languages and lingua franca (i.e., "the common language of choice among speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds", Jenkins, 2009, p. 200). His study showed that multilingual resources facilitated students' content learning and language development. Second language research has also acknowledged the communicative and social functions of learners' first language. Neokleous's (2017) study analyzed learners' discourse and the results showed that they used their L1 to develop their second language oral output. Research has also shown that translanguaging, as a pedagogical practice, is very beneficial for second language learning. It facilitates cross-linguistic transfer, promotes collaborative learning, and develops L2 learners' critical understanding of other cultures (Bono & Stratilaki, 2009; French, 2016). It also enables teachers to promote social, cultural, and linguistic connections among students (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). In addition to this, it helps learners co-construct meaning (García & Wei, 2014),

supports their comprehension of complex texts and content, and expands their communicative repertoires (García, 2009).

Some studies tracked the development of writing at the level of textual product and the use of writing strategies, but they did not explore writing as a sociocultural activity that draws on L2 writers' social and cultural identities. In fact, there are very few empirical studies about the impact of multilingual translanguaging practices in writing programs. For example, Canagarajah (2011a) described the translanguaging strategies used by a Saudi Arabian undergraduate student in essay writing. Such strategies were the use of recontextualization, voice, interactional and textualization strategies. Velasco and García (2014) explored the use of translanguaging in the writing stages of planning, drafting, and producing written texts, and bilingual students' use of self-regulation to develop their academic writing. Their study analyzed bilingual students' written texts, and their findings showed that a translanguaging approach has the most potential, and that students' monolingual voice was developed in writing. In addition to this, Gorter and Cenoz (2010) and Blommaert (2008) also investigated the use of translanguaging in students' writing in general and in overcoming their problems in the written product in particular, and their findings showed that there was an improvement in students' writing at sentence level. All the studies mentioned above offer clear, robust, and experimental evidence of the beneficial use of multilingual translanguaging practices in terms of the textual product.

Although multilingual translanguaging practices have received increasing attention from researchers, they mainly focused on the exploration of knowledge acquisition and on perceptions about writing. Researchers have not yet investigated the nature of writing as a social and cultural practice within a multilingual context. Seloni (2014) investigated how multilingual students build knowledge in their second language academic writing, and his findings demonstrated a development in language use across multiple contexts. Morton et al. (2015) also explored multilingual students' diversity perceptions of academic writing as well as the multiplicity of resources they used. They found that multilingual students' considerable diversity supports their understanding of academic writing, and their findings suggested that social context is relevant for students' writing and that it extends beyond the formal and academic context. In addition to this, Tardy (2005) explored the role of multilingual practices in relation to writers' rhetorical knowledge. Findings showed that multilingual students' rhetorical knowledge becomes more sophisticated as they engage in high-stakes writing tasks, influenced by their mentoring, participation, and identity. In the same vein, Kobayashi and Rinnert (2012) examined the role of students' diverse L2 writing knowledge and experience in text construction, and how it contributes to writing development. Findings showed that novice writers depended on their first language knowledge, while experienced writers showed sophisticated knowledge of both languages. As students' writing knowledge repertoire expands, they choose the appropriate features from their repertoire to meet specific writing contexts. No doubt multilingual translanguaging practices have largely focused on developing knowledge about written texts.

Method

This paper employed sociocultural discourse analysis (Mercer, 2004) to examine multilingual students' multilingual translanguaging interactions and practices within writing lessons (i.e., individual speech acts that related to sociocultural content, languages used in translanguaging, and types of discussion in relation to the social and cultural aspects of content). Sociocultural discourse analysis focuses on the use of language in a social mode to construct knowledge. Accordingly, we made use of quantitative sociocultural discourse analysis to examine speech acts and to explore the role of learners' multilingual translanguaging practices to facilitate composition.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted in a private high school located in the governorate of Jeddah, northwest of Saudi Arabia. The subjects were 30 female students in their third year. They had a pre-intermediate level of English based on an in house placement test of English proficiency, and their average age was

16.6 years old. There were many students with linguistic, social and cultural diversity: 15 students were identified as culturally Arab (e.g., Sudanese, Tunisian, Egyptian, Jordanes, Syrian, and Yemen) and 15 students represent different cultures (e.g., Indonesian, Filipino, Nepali, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Hindi). About half of them spoke one or two home languages other than English and Arabic, including Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Urdu, French, Indonesian and Filipino. Arab speakers spoke two languages (e.g., English, French) other than Arabic. The participants were L2 learners with rich experiences about work, lives and culture. They all brought with them different cultural and social identities. For all of them English was the language of instruction. Although English is the preferred language of instruction in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this does not always prevent multilingual students from using and acquiring other languages to communicate.

Instruments

To carry out a qualitative sociocultural discourse analysis, the study used some instruments to answer the study questions, including audio-recorded tracks, writing samples and excerpts.

1. Audio-recorded tracks

To examine every sociocultural interaction in the multilingual writing class, it was necessary to use audio-recording tracks. The aim of using audio-recorded tracks was to analyze multilingual students' sociocultural discussion and to explore the role of multilingual translanguaging practices during their composition tasks. Thirty audio tracks were recorded. All multilingual participants provided their consent to be recorded.

2. Writing samples and excerpts

Writing samples and excerpts were collected. Inviting participants to include their sociocultural discussions and multilingual practices in their writing was an unconventional method to enrich their writing. Writing samples and excerpts not only reflected multilinguals' sociocultural identities but also attested to their use of multilingual translanguaging practices.

Data Collection

The data for this study is formed by audio-recorded discussions, writing samples, and excerpts. The writing sessions were held three days per week, and included the discussion of different topics and also writing about them. In each session, students were divided into groups and they conducted discussions using multilingual translanguaging practices to facilitate composition. The discussion sessions addressed a wide array of general topics of interest, including festivals and national days, marriage traditions, dowry system, caste system, popular dishes, gender discrimination, women's rights to participate in community activities, greetings in different countries, and ways of dressing. The audio-recorded discussions were fully transcribed and examined to explore the role of multilingual translanguaging practices in facilitating writing as a sociocultural activity in multilingual discourse. The dataset comprises a total of 30 essays composed by students, along with 30 audio tapes of the discussions conducted during the writing.

Data Analysis

To analyze every sociocultural discussion in the writing sessions, sociocultural discourse analysis was used. The study used the software Adobe Premiere as a helpful tool for coding and synchronizing 30 audio-tracks. Then, the researcher used MaxQDATA software to transcribe, translate, and code the data. The instances of translanguaging were then analyzed and discussion topics were outlined. Three volunteer researchers, with 89% of inter-coder reliability, listened to students' audio-tracks and tagged their discussions with coding system for the following categories:

- Content/theme –the sociocultural content and its relevance. That is to say, the topic discussed and its relatedness to the content, whether it is off/on-task in relation to ongoing sociocultural discussions.
- Languages: other languages used in their sociocultural discussions.
- Joint Intellectual Action - how learners acknowledge and respond to their peers' thoughts through the use of multilingual translanguaging practices with a view to promoting a shared understanding.

Based on research on coding classroom dialogue (e.g., Hennessy et al., 2016), our coding process was followed by an analysis of individual speech acts --the speaker's utterances, including function of speech, types of languages used in translanguaging, and type of discussion whether it is related to social and cultural aspects of the content. Hence, our sample included a total of 10 sociocultural topics and 2215 speech acts and excerpts. Results were qualitatively analyzed.

Results

The study results explored (1) the use of multilingual practices by multilingual writers during their composing; and (2) the functions of multilingual translanguaging practices in facilitating sociocultural composition.

The first research question addressed the extent to which multilingual students use multilingual practices in their discussion during writing. In this respect, the study examined the languages used in their sociocultural discussions counting the frequencies of the speech acts in the languages in which sociocultural translanguaging practices occurred. In sociocultural discussions, Arabic was the dominant language. The percentage of Arabic is 25.10% (see results in table 1). Arabic is followed by Mixed (20.31%) speech acts (i.e., mixed languages, translanguaging to facilitate meaning). English speech acts (14.44%) are in the third position. Other languages used when translanguaging in sociocultural discussions amount to small percentages. The results in table 2 also show the extent to which multilingual students engage with sociocultural discussions when they are using multilingual practices and translanguaging in their discussion. In addition to this, the results clearly show that multilingual students engaged in on-writing task discussions (sociocultural managerial) using various languages in translanguaging, which amounts to 89% of the speech acts. Furthermore, no languages were predominantly used in off-task sociocultural discussions, while others were clearly used in on-task sociocultural discussions to promote the exchange of sociocultural content during their composition.

Table 1. Frequencies of Languages used in the Translanguaging of Sociocultural Discussions.

languages	frequencies	Percentage
Arabic	556	25.10
Mixed	450	20.31
English	320	14.44
Hindi, Malayalam	175	7.90
Pakistani	192	8.66
Bangladeshi	180	8.12
Filipino	110	4.96
French	80	3.61
Indonesian	152	6.86
Total	2215	100

Table 2. Types of Discussion by Multilingual Students.

Language	Off-task	On-task		Total
		Social-discussion	cultural-discussion	
Arabic	56	234	266	556
Mixed	30	199	221	450
English	22	136	162	320
Hindi, Malayalam	26	62	87	175
Pakistani	23	84	85	192
Bangladeshi	31	60	89	180
Filipino	18	36	56	110
French	15	22	43	80
Indonesian	21	59	72	152
Total	242	892	1081	2215
Percentage	10.9	40.3	48.8	100

To answer the second research question (Which functions do multilingual practices in sociocultural discussions assume for facilitating a sociocultural composition?), we analyzed the speech acts within sociocultural discussions where multilingual practices aimed at facilitating composition. We quantified the frequencies and the percentage of the type of speech acts used in sociocultural discussions in order to determine the various purposes that multilingual practices can assume. Table 3 shows a predominance of the speech acts 'Interpreting/translating' (12.7 %) which are used in mixed languages occurrences. The use of 'Interpreting/translating' via Arabic and the other languages, as well as the use of 'Comparing' (12.3 %) clearly reflect the striking use of translanguaging practices in sociocultural discussions during their composition. Also, the speech acts 'Contrasting information' (11.3%) and 'Answering questions' (10.7 %) about the sociocultural aspects are frequent in translanguaging practices. Furthermore, in these multilingual sociocultural discussions, 'Recasting information in another language (9.7%), 'Confirming the information' (5.1%), 'Negotiating of the meaning' of sociocultural aspects (4.7%), and other speech acts were also frequent.

Table 3. Frequencies of speech acts in multilingual sociocultural discussion scenes.

Speech act	frequencies	percentage
Asking	121	5.4
Answering	238	10.7
Comparing	273	12.3
Contrasting	251	11.3

Correcting	115	5.2
Interpreting/translating	281	12.7
Identifying	117	5.2
Confirming	113	5.1
Informing	85	3.8
Discussing	65	2.9
Agreeing	52	2.3
Disagreeing	33	1.4
Recasting	215	9.7
Justifying	63	2.8
Negotiating meaning	105	4.7
Matching	56	2.5
Classifying	37	1.6
Total	2215	100

We also conducted an in-depth analysis of students' writing samples to explore the development of their writing. Analyzing 1080 writing samples (12 sessions per month x 30 N of students=360 x 36 all sessions) of multilingual students who engaged in on-task writing related to social and cultural aspects, we found that students used multilingual translanguaging practices to approach composition. Students' writing showed that sociocultural dialoguing was clearly conveyed into their writing. The overall sociocultural on-task writing was about 84%; 43.9 % was about cultural aspects of multilingual students' lives, and 40.8 about the social aspects of multilingual students' lives. The results also showed that 15.3 % of the writing did not approach any sociocultural aspects of students' lives, and therefore it was classified as off-task writing.

Table 4. Writing excerpts of Sociocultural Writing Tasks per language

Languages	Off-writing task	On-writing task		Total
		Social	cultural	
Arabic+ English	26	82	87	195
English+ Hindi, Malayalam+Arabic	22	74	76	172
Pakistani+Arabic	31	69	80	180
Filipino+English	18	41	51	110
Bangali+ English+Arabic	24	75	76	175
French+Arabic	21	48	49	118

Indonesian+English	23	52	55	130
Total	165	441	474	1080
Percentage	15.3	40.8	43.9	100

At the end of the study, students' initial writing samples were compared to their final writing samples to examine the extent to which students expressed and reflected on sociocultural aspects in their writing and whether their content was enriched. At the beginning of the study, students' writing had not provided sufficient explanation or adequate support for content and ideas related to sociocultural aspects. At the end of the study, students showed a high capacity for reflecting on others' sociocultural aspects, and the content of their writing was enriched with the use of multilingual translanguaging practices. Excerpt 1 (see appendix A) is an example of students' writing produced through the discussion conducted among some students (i.e., Arab; Bangladeshi, Hindi, Nepali, Filipino Pakistani, students). It can be seen from Excerpt 1 that multilingual students addressed the traditions of marriage. In this Excerpt, it is possible to observe a predominance of on-task discussion of social aspects of multilingual learners' lives. The students negotiated such aspects to convey meaning via comparing and contrasting their information in an uncritical way. In their writing, knowledge is jointly constructed as previously exchanged in their sociocultural discussion. The students also used similar multilingual practices to enrich the content of their writing. They succeeded in interpreting, questioning, comparing, identifying, and contrasting others' ideas as expressed in their previously constructed set of sociocultural discussions.

Discussion

The first research question addressed the extent to which multilingual students with different sociocultural identities, experiences, and knowledge used multilingual practices in their discussions during composition. Expressing social and cultural aspects of their experience was of central importance to their discussions and to their writing. To this end, they engaged in multilingual practices to attain a joint intellectual understanding. The employment of multilingual practices has been fully supported by Benson (2013) and Blackledge and Creese (2010), who claimed that multilingual resources should purposefully be introduced in classroom practices. Using their home languages and mixed languages, interpreting, recasting key information and negotiating meaning were useful multilingual practices to approach sociocultural discussions and to enrich their composition. This complements Saxena and Martin-Jones' view (2013) that students' multilingual practices can enrich their learning, their writing and their ability to conduct comparative cross-cultural practices. The results clearly showed that multilingual students increasingly engaged in on-task writing discussions through translanguaging practices. Those results show that educational institutions in general and writing programs in particular need to reconsider the use of a monolingual English approach dominant in many writing classes. According to de Jong and Freeman Field (2010), engaging students in multilingual practices offers an opportunity to rethink dominant practices of institutions and teachers. The findings of this study also complement the Social Turn Approach which shows that learners' use of their first language allows them to construct meaning and to communicate ideas (Preece, 2020). Hence, it is important for learners to use their first language resources to enhance their knowledge (Auerbach, 1993).

Our second research question addressed the functions of multilingual translanguaging practices in sociocultural discussions at the moment of facilitating sociocultural writing. The results showed that the multilingual students' speech acts within their discussion shared their sociocultural aspects constructively not critically. Multilingual translanguaging practices were used by students as scaffolds for meaning-making and to build a joint understanding of sociocultural aspects with the aim of

becoming thoughtful writers. In addition to this, they promoted the communal construction of sociocultural knowledge by means of dialogic and dialectic practices, which also played a central role in enhancing learners' composition. This complements Mercer's (2002) claim that there should be a shared understanding to promote dialogical practices among learners to advance towards joint thinking. Writing, according to Prior (2006), should involve dialogic processes of invention. The findings also complement García and Li's (2014) view that translanguaging practices are considered an instance of co-learning which helps second language learners to co-construct their knowledge. Therefore, it became clear that the practices of multilingual students play an important role in the "complex web of interactions" (Pomerantz and Kearney, 2012, p. 222), especially in sociocultural interactions that facilitate learners' composition. It is now evident that when multilingual learners jointly construct their sociocultural knowledge to improve their writing, they employ multilingual translanguaging practices to accomplish various functions, such as:

- Identify and describing sociocultural knowledge
- Interpret/translate others' information
- Recast others' information
- Negotiate others' meaning
- Show disagreement/ agreement with others' meaning
- Compare and contrasting others' sociocultural aspects
- Discuss different sociocultural aspects.
- Match similar sociocultural aspects between communities.
- Classify specific aspects into social and cultural aspects.
- Asking and answering about others' sociocultural aspects.

This study has tried to explore writing as a sociocultural practice within a multilingual writing discourse which incorporates rich social and cultural experiences of multilingual learners. The writing samples, collected over three months, showed that students' higher engagement in on-task writing was due to their use of multilingual translanguaging practices during their sociocultural dialoguing. Students' writing drafts showed that sociocultural dialoguing was clearly converted into written ideas. Sociocultural diversity was also evident in students' final writing samples. Their written samples traversed the sociocultural boundaries between their languages and included rich information from a wider range of cultures. In this regard, the social exploration of the meaning of cultural boundaries and of how they are realized is considered an important factor in the promotion of language learning in general and of composition in particular (McNamara, 2013). In addition to this, facilitating interpersonal relations (Leki, 2007) within multilingual contexts, where learners have an opportunity to engage and to value linguistic and cultural diversity (Helot, 2012), could enhance learners' composition. All in all, this study suggests that the sociocultural context mediated by multilingual translanguaging practices, which evolves from multilingualism, could have the potential to enhance students' composition.

Conclusions

Although the policy of many educational institutions is still largely shaped by English monolingual assumptions, it is challenging and valuable to change this policy to generalize the use of a multilingual policy to approach composition programs. The current study presents a challenging step to move from the existing monolingual policy towards multilingual practices so as to engage students in revealing their sociocultural identities, experiences, and knowledge, and to enhance their composition.

As the society of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to become more linguistically, socially, and culturally diverse, it is important to develop an understanding of the interplay of social, cultural, and linguistic dimensions that contribute to writing enhancement. This study is currently presenting research that takes a somewhat wider approach to writing as a sociocultural practice. Such

practice is founded on a sociocultural theory of learning that emphasizes the construction of meaning within social and cultural relationships. It pivots on multilingualism and offers a different perspective of writing, moving away from the traditional focus on writing as a disciplinary process, towards focusing on writing as a sociocultural activity.

We have pointed out the factors that contributed to the improvement of students' writing. One of the main factors was the influence of students' social and cultural identity (i.e., their sociocultural beliefs and attitudes) on their writing. It became crystal clear that writing, culture and sociality are inextricably linked in the improvement of multilingual students' writing. Another factor that contributed to the improvement of writing is the use of multilingual translanguaging practices to easily convey sociocultural aspects in writing. Students' written excerpts showed that participants used multilingual translanguaging practices to convey their sociocultural identities in their writing and consequently contributed to the making of writing a sociocultural activity carried out in multilingual discourses.

The present study acknowledges some limitations that may be addressed in future research. First, due to restrictions related to the nature of the place in which the study was conducted, we included only a sample of female multilingual writers. Future studies can engage male participants, although previous research did not mention any differences between the two genders. Second, the present study focused on expository writing. Future research could consider addressing critical writing for students to express their points of view towards unacceptable sociocultural aspects of some communities. Third, the sample was small. Future research will be conducted on a larger population.

This study offers theoretical and pedagogical implications for multilingualism and writing research. On the pedagogical level, although students reveal a high capacity to engage in multilingual practices to talk about social and cultural dimensions of their lives, teachers and higher education institutions may show a limited understanding of the potential effect of multilingual practices in multilingual writing contexts. Hence, professional development programs should be conducted to prepare teachers to address their students' linguistic and cultural diversity. Allowing students to engage in tasks that challenges them to share understanding and to attain sociocultural cohesion will consequently develop their writing. It has become crystal clear to us that writing and culture and sociality are inextricably linked at the moment of improving multilingual students' writing, so teachers should draw on writers' multilingualism in their writing contexts and use the rich context of multilingual learners to support their writing. It is important for writing teachers to integrate multilingual translanguaging practices into their writing contexts to trigger their benefits on students' writing as a socio-cultural practice. It is obvious that multilingual practices are more available and easily implemented in multilingual discourse than in monolingual classes, where resources become less available. Hence, multilingual educational institutions need to change their monolingual policies in their writing programs and provide teachers with updates about this new perspective of writing for them to move away from their old writing practices.

On the theoretical level, this study draws on the importance of sociocultural factors in the improvement of multilingual learners' writing and on challenging the use of a monolingual paradigm. Future research could shed light on other psycholinguistic factors that may affect writing. New trends in multilingualism and SLA research have focused on considering just one linguistic repertoire, without considering the wide social repertoire of multilingual learners. The current study provides new insights, not only into cognitive implications but also into the social and cultural dimensions of learners' writing. Future research could explore multilingual learners' social repertoire, which can contribute to a better understanding of multilingual writers. What is more, many multilingual learners have rich trajectories due to their wide experiences in different situations inside and outside the classroom, and these trajectories have been ignored by multilingual and writing research; now we are certain that those experiences can positively influence English learning in general and writing in particular. Future research could explore the alternative trajectories of multilingual learners that may influence their writing. This study approaches writing as a social semiotic activity in which meaning

is constructed through a sociocultural interaction. Future research could also explore learners' constructed meanings through a systemic functional linguistic approach (as in Abdelrahim, 2020), so they can clearly express a wider range of their diverse identities.

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Appendix (A) Writing Excerpt

Excerpt 1

Arab students

بالنسبة للزواج في الدول العربية ، يقوم العريس بدفع "مهر" للعروس لشراء ما يلزمها للاستعداد للزواج (مثل- شراء الذهب، الملابس،.... إلخ) ويكون العريس مسئول مسؤولية كاملة عن بناء بيت الزوجية، ويوجد عقد قبل للزواج.

In Arab countries, marriage has some traditions. The groom pays 'Mahar' for the bride.

Mahar=مهر = much money is paid for the bride to buy clothes and gold for her marriage.

The groom assumes a full responsibility for preparing the house and the bride does not pay anything.

There is a marriage contract.

Bengali student

বিবাহ কনের পরিবার স্পনসর করে। কনে বরকে টাকা দেয়।

খাবার ও পানীয় বরের পরিবার স্পনসর করে। বিয়ের কোনও চুক্তি নেই

The wedding is sponsored by the family of the bride.

The bride pays money to the groom. There is no marriage contract

The Walima (= food and drinks of the wedding ceremony) is sponsored by the groom's family.

عروسة تدفع كل شيء. ما في عقود زواج

Nepali student

त्यहाँ विवाह को लागी कुनै सम्झौता छैन दुलहीले दुलहालाई पैसा दिन्छे विवाह दुलहीको परिवार द्वारा प्रायोजित हो।

The bride pays money to the groom.

The wedding is sponsored by the family of the bride.

Indian student (speaks Malayalam മലയാളം)

ചിലർ സ്ത്രീധനം കൂടാതെ വിവാഹം കഴിച്ചു സ്ത്രീധനവും ലഭ്യമാണ്
ചില ആളുകൾ വിവാഹത്തിനായി ഒരു കരാർ ഉണ്ടാക്കുന്നു
ചില ആളുകൾ വിവാഹ കരാർ ഉണ്ടാക്കാതെ വിവാഹം കഴിച്ചു

Some people got married without dowry. Dowry is also available and

Mahar is available.

Some people got married without making a contract of marriage

هناك تنوع في الهند. البعض يتزوج بدون مهر للعروس والبعض يدفع. بعض الناس يكتبون عقد للزواج والبعض لا

Pakistani student (speaks Urdu)

دلہن کو بہت مالدار جہیز کی ضرورت ہے۔ دلہن کے والد جہیز لاتے ہیں۔ دولہا کو دولہا کو بہت مہنگے زیورات اور کپڑے
دینا ضروری ہے۔ دلہن کے والد تحائف رکھتے ہیں

The bride needs a very rich dowry. The bride's father brings the dowry.

The groom must give very expensive jewelry and clothes to the groom. The gifts are kept by bride's father.

تجهيز العروسه يكلف كثير من المال، كما يقدم العريس هدايا باهظه الثمن

A Filipino student

Ngayon, ang kasintahan at ikakasal ay lumahok sa pagbabayad ng gastos sa seremonya ng kasal.
Noong nakaraan, binabayaran ng ikakasal ang lahat ng gastos sa seremonya ng kasal.

In the past, the groom was paying all the cost of the marriage ceremony.

Nowadays, the groom and the bride participate in paying the cost of the marriage ceremony