Chapter 13 The role of translanguaging in ELF advice sessions for asylum seekers

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Abstract

This chapter explores the role of translanguaging in ELF advice practices at a UK charity supporting refugees and asylum seekers. Previous research has highlighted how multilingualism is an essential aspect of ELF (Jenkins 2015) and the role of multilingual resources has received increased attention in the latest conceptualizations and linguistic analysis. However, the contribution and nature of multilingualism in relation to ELF need to be further investigated. This study addresses the role of translanguaging in ELF high stakes environments, such as advice services for refugees and asylum seekers.

In this chapter, I first explore the notion of translanguaging, and then explain the linguistic ethnographic approach taken to collect and analyze the data. The qualitative analysis of the data shows the complexity of advice practices in relation to the use of multilingual resources in ELF, and demonstrates how translanguaging can be used for at least three functions, i.e. pedagogical, explanatory and interpersonal.

Keywords: advice services; ELF, multilingualism; translanguaging; translanguaging functions; migrants; asylum seekers

1. Introduction

This chapter explores the role of multilingual resources in ELF advice practices at a UK charity supporting refugees and asylum seekers. Previous research has highlighted how multilingualism is an essential aspect of ELF (Jenkins 2015) and the role of multilingual resources has received increased attention in the latest conceptualizations and linguistic analysis. However, the contribution and nature of multilingualism in relation to ELF need to be further investigated, especially in relation to the functions of multilingual resources. This paper addresses the role of multilingual resources in ELF conversations, focusing on their functions, in high stakes environments such as advice services for refugees and asylum seekers.

The context of exploration is a London-based UK charity supporting refugees and asylum seekers and providing advice services for them. Advice sessions are interesting

contexts of intercultural negotiations and high-stakes situations for the migrants seeking advice. In this chapter, I first explore the theoretical framework on which the research was based, and then explain the linguistic ethnographic approach taken to collect and analyze the data. The qualitative analysis of the data shows the complexity of advice practices in relation to the use of multilingual resources in ELF, and demonstrates how translanguaging can be used for at least three functions, i.e. pedagogical, explanatory and interpersonal.

2. Theoretical framework: ELF and translanguaging practices

In recent years, a growing body of work has emphasized the need for a theoretical shift in applied and sociolinguistics in the way we conceptualize language, from a view that prioritizes "reified systems" to a conceptualization of language as "social practice" (Heller 2007; Blommaert 2010). Rather than working with homogeneity, stability and boundedness as the starting assumptions, "mobility, mixing, political dynamics and historical embedding are now central concerns in the study of languages" (Blommaert & Rampton 2011:3)

The notion of translanguaging has been introduced to emphasize the permeability of languages and linguistic repertoires (García 2009; García & Li 2014). In this sense, translanguaging is essentially about a paradigm shift in the study of language, which involves fundamental changes to the way language is conceptualized. This position developed against an additive view of bilingualism as two linear wholes, that can be separated and counted, which no longer holds (Grosjean 1982). In this view, meaning-making is not confined to the use of 'languages' as discrete and fixed set of resources but to translanguaging as a holistic practice where signs are available for meaning-making in repertoires that extend beyond socially-constructed 'languages'. In translanguaging, therefore, meaning is not necessarily in the very act of switching from one language to the other (as in the code-switching, more structural, view of language alternation), although this is also possible, but in the full use of resources which is normalized without functional, or diglossic, separation (García 2009). However, more recent research has focused on translanguaging as an umbrella term, which includes code-switching practice and functional separation, rather than keeping them as completely separate language alternation phenomena.

Translanguaging is also viewed in a social perspective, within a social justice and pedagogical fairness approach. Conteh maintains that translanguaging needs to be theorized for pedagogy as a 'predominantly social', rather than linguistic, practice, and thus related to identity, culture and context (Conteh 2018; 2019). Then the emphasis shifts from merely

exploring linguistic diversity per se to translanguaging that allows for appreciation of the learner/speakers cultural background, especially when translanguaging includes 'minority' languages and disadvantaged communities (like the refugees in this study). Conteh & Brock (2011) have also identified the 'safe places' where bilingual education can take place successfully in communities of minority language speakers and how educators and family can support the development of a safe place. To this, other researches have also added the potential for change and creativity. Garcia & Li (2014) posit the idea of 'translanguaging spaces' where individuals critically and creatively engage their own experiences and those of others, often with transformative effect.

Translanguaging then is a possible practice of any multilingual, independently from proficiency in socially constructed languages. In other words, both equal bilinguals, i.e. bilinguals that have similar competence in all languages in their repertoire, and emergent bilinguals, i.e. those at the early stages of learning a language, can engage in translanguaging to communicate (Lewis, Jones & Baker 2012; Blommaert & Rampton 2011), independently of how proficient a speaker is in any 'language'.

Research in ELF also contributed to highlighting its multilingual nature and addressed translanguaging practices as an aspect of ELF (Cogo 2018). Researchers have engaged in conceptualizing ELF from a multilingual perspective (cf. Jenkins 2015; Mauranen 2012, 2013; Seidlhofer 2011) and identifying multilingual practices that are both used in a more *overt* way, by the obvious use of resources pertaining to different languages (words from Spanish or Arabic used in a codeswitching mode in ELF conversation), and *covert* resources, which involve multilingual resources in a more cognitive way, where the influences of the L1 or other resources is not visible in conversation but present in the cognitive repertoire of participants (Cogo 2016a). Even in this apparently "only English" mode the multilingual influence is still present.

In this perspective, ELF research has begun to explore the flexible and dynamic use of multilingual resources in highly mobile or super-diverse contexts (Cogo 2012), especially focusing on the speakers and their repertoires. The notion of *repertoire* (cf. Blommaert & Backus 2011) has become more important for ELF research as it moves away from analyzing 'complete' language knowledge to the whole range of sociolinguistic and cultural resources (such as any bit of language) that speakers may know and bring into the exchange. Repertoire entails moving away from conceptualizing the dynamic and changeable translanguaging practices as deficient realizations of monolingual communication. Through translanguaging,

all the linguistic resources that speakers have learnt or encountered in their lives may become relevant and possibly be used in their communication. These can range from resources learnt formally in educational environments to entirely informal pieces of language and mere exposure to different languages. This collection of resources is strictly linked with the biographical experiences of individual users, and the repertoires are therefore also dynamic and fluid, as they constantly change with the addition of new resources, the temporary loss or under-use of others and the exposure or less of exposure to again other resources.

Translanguaging practices may also take place with different kinds of users. For instance, work on translanguaging in ELF business discourse (Cogo 2012) has shown how business professionals can engage in translanguaging to cover various functions, such as to expand and clarify meaning, or conceptually refer to a specific idea, as in when a specific concept cannot be easily translatable, or simply without functional identification, i.e. because translanguaging is the common practice in that context. While functional separation resembles codeswitching in the structural sense, these practices all connect to the idea of flexible and fluid use of resources, which may or may not serve specific functions in the exchange. So codeswitching for specific functions can become part of the wider translanguaging practices of a community of speakers.

However, research has focused particularly on the potential for translanguaging, especially in relation to resistance to monolingual ideologies and practices, but less on how the use of multilingual resources is actually limited by constraints related to the context, the ideological pressures of the institutional requirements and the societal discourses (see Blackledge & Creese 2010; Dorn, Rienzner, Busch & Santner-Wolfartsberger 2014). For instance, in research concerning BELF contexts, translanguaging practices have been shown "to be kept for the internal and informal kind of communication, the emergent, un-regulated and non-ratified practices" (Cogo 2016b:46), rather than the written and more formal documents. This is something that came out quite prominently in the data collected among asylum seekers for this project, where the extent of translanguaging practices is clearly influenced by the local, national and institutional discourses and ideologies that circulate in relation to immigration in the local context.

This paper ascribes to García & Li (2014)'s translanguaging perspective, which implies a flexible and dynamic view of multilingual resources and the permeability of languages. This perspective is not in opposition to codeswitching, but in addition to the view, and includes it as one possible multilingual practice, alongside more flexible and dynamic

uses of resources. Studies have shown that translanguaging may cover specific functions, such as pedagogical, explanatory and interpersonal. In the pedagogical context translanguaging can be used to encourage participation in the class activities, to engage the learners and to facilitate the management of the tasks (Cenoz & Gorter 2011; Creese & Blackledge 2010). Translanguaging is also used for interpersonal functions – such as creating rapport and establishing solidarity among speakers (Cogo 2012; Vettorel 2014), but also an explanatory function, where it can be used to expand on meaning or engage in negotiation of non-understanding (Cogo 2009).

3. The focus: formal and informal advice for migrants

This study was conducted in a charity supporting refugees and asylum seekers in London, UK. The charity helps migrants in difficult situations independently of their status, i.e. whether they are old or new migrants, residents, destitute migrants, asylum seekers, refugees etc., with offering support for their basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and also with offering advice to support them through the hurdles of life and migration in the UK.

The advice support is the focus of this chapter. Advice and Advocacy Services constitute a considerable part of the work done by migrant charities. The aim of the services is to help vulnerable people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to address their experiences of destitution and exclusion. The kind of help they seek from the advice sessions is related to their immigration status, but not only. They deal with issues of poverty, problems with accommodation, lack of knowledge and skills. Underlying all these is the perceived need for the advisor to help them with their English skills in dealing with external agencies or providers of help.

There are a number of reasons for my focus on advice sessions within the ecology of the charity. First, these sessions provide the opportunity to examine ELF in action in high stakes environment, in contrast to the majority of ELF studies so far, with some exceptions (Guido 2012). Second, these events are also characterized by time pressure, because the advisors are busy and have to attend to many migrants per day. Therefore the sessions are supposed to be efficient moments of crucial problem solving. So, in this context, it is interesting to explore to what extent speakers exploit multilingual/translanguaging practice and go beyond language separation and for what purposes, if any.

The following questions directed this study:

1.what are the functions of the multilingual/translanguaging practices used in formal and informal advice sessions?

2.what are the differences between multilingual/translanguaging practices used in formal and informal advice sessions?

The research questions presuppose a distinction between formal and informal advice sessions – the first are carried out by officially-designated advisors or case officers that take on a list of migrants according to the issue and their expertise (some advisors would deal with accommodation issues, some with benefits, others with funding etc.), and informal advice, which is carried out ad hoc, by volunteer migrants that have lived in the country for a while and are familiar with the issues that a fellow migrant is facing. Different levels of engagement with multilingual resources were noticed in these two kinds of advice service, with more use of multilingual resources in informal sessions, especially with "minority languages", and only limited use of multilingual resources in formal sessions. Therefore the interest lies in seeing which functions are covered by these resources and if there is a difference from the functions covered in formal and informal sessions.

4. Methodology

A number of data sources were collected, including audio-recordings of advice sessions, interviews with staff, volunteers and users at the charity, a focus group and observations. The quantity of data collected and the participants involved are listed in the following table:

Quantity	Kind of data collected	Participants
19	Advice and advocacy sessions (6 hours and 22 seconds in total)	Advocate/advisor and migrant
7	Interviews (from 20 to 40minutes in length for each)	Researchers and advisors/migrants
1	Focus group (1 hour and 16 minutes)	Researchers and volunteers/staff
1 month	Observations: 1 month of notes / progress sheets collection from 3 charity centres	All staff, volunteers, stakeholders and migrants

The main data set for this paper is the recordings of advice sessions (both formal, in the form of audio-recordings, and informal, in the form of observations/vignettes), which help answer the first research question. The audio-recordings, interviews, focus group and observations contribute to answering the second research question.

The advice sessions are meetings between a migrant and an advisor which are held at the charity, sometimes the advisor is a volunteer and other times a charity member of staff. The advisor can also be shadowed by a volunteer, who is doing advisory training or similar. After the session the advisor normally fills in a progress report form which includes information about the migrant receiving advice, the issue addressed, any actions taken and any further comments of relevance to the case discussed. However, apart from these typical advice sessions, the staff and volunteers also find themselves offering informal advice to migrants, especially when catching up with them about their situation or when quickly checking something for them (by making a phone call or searching the internet). Informal advice is also carried out in a peer advice kind, when migrants befriend each other and help each other in solving daily issues of different kinds. This kind of informal advice is very frequent and is not normally recorded in progress forms or other kinds of documentations, but, it is noted in the observations and, as shown later in some vignettes, it is equally important for the migrants and, for this project, it is important to provide an ecological understanding of the charity linguistic practices.

Two kinds of interviews were carried out – one with the advisors and one with the migrants. The aims of the interviews were related to the advice sessions that they had just taken part in and more generally about advice services in the charity. The participants answered questions general questions about their work in the charity, and specifically in relation to the linguistic resources or strategies used and the motivation for their use. Similarly, the focus group session was carried out with the staff and volunteers at the charity and it was a general discussion about advice services and their view of the services, what worked and did not work.

The methodology adopted in this study is linguistic ethnography (Copland & Creese 2015), a qualitative approach which privileges the study of socio-linguistic phenomena from the point of view of the participants, and sees them embedded in the wider social context and structures. Linguistic ethnography provides a suitable methodology for this study for various reasons. First, it provides a snapshot picture of the charity practices at any one moment, by

combining both linguistic- and ethnographic-oriented data (such as the data collected in this study), thus offering in-depth understanding of the complex sociolinguistic relations at work in such organization at that time. Second, ethnography is also a historical method and therefore allows researchers to make connections with past and future practices, power relations and expectations - and therefore sees current practices as dynamic and flexible (for instance, by the time of writing some of the practices in place at the beginning of working with the charity had already changed slightly). Third, this methodological approach also allows, and in fact encourages, collaboration with the participants/volunteers as novice researchers. This study is based on linguistic ethnography within community-based practices, which involves collecting data and discussing the context and the findings with the people[1] who are familiar with the charity and have been involved with it on a long-term basis. Finally, the researcher and author of the paper is also a participant / volunteer in the charity and this ethnographic perspective has allowed access to people and places as well as a deeper understanding of the context.

A total of 21 staff and volunteers took part in the project and around 200 migrants were present during the data collection at the three charity centres. All these participants were part of the observation notes, but a limited number took part in the audio recordings of the advice sessions, interviews and focus group[2]. The staff, volunteers and migrants together speak a wide range of languages: with staff/volunteers speaking Arabic, English, Farsi, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish and Spanish; and migrants speaking mainly Albanian, Arabic, French, English, Farsi, German, Italian, Pashto, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrigna, Urdu.

5. Data Analysis

From the observation data it is noted that in the open space of the charity premises multilingual practices go on at all times and the charity itself seems to be "a multilingual ELF safe space", where both charity users, staff and volunteers capitalize on, adapt and experience various kinds of multilingual resources. The general atmosphere is that of appreciation and

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[1] This study was conducted with the help of three volunteers who collaborated with the main researcher/author of this paper in setting up the study and collecting data in the charity. These are Ali, Aileen and Lounja. They have been invaluable cooperators without whom the data collection would not have been possible.
[2] All participants (staff, volunteers and migrants) had been informed about the research project on exploring the advice services, and were reminded about the aim of the project before the data collection or recording started. Both the researcher institution and the charity taking part in the study approved all ethical procedures.

engagement with multilingualism in the safe space of the charity informal environment, although, as explored later, this is not free from contextual and ideological constraints.

The initial observations showed the extent of difference between the formal and informal advice offered at the charity in relation to multilingual resources. The formal advice sessions would seem to make less use of overt multilingual resources and more negotiation and covert multilingual resources. On the other hand the informal advice and peer conversation showed use of multilingual resources, between volunteers who can speak the languages of the migrants or are learning them (for instance, Arabic is one of the most common), or between more expert migrants from the same linguistic background who try to help new migrants with advice. In the following section I will first show vignette examples from the observations of informal advice (which was not audio recorded, but was noted as part of the observation collection of data) and then examples from the transcripts of recorded formal advice sessions, the interviews and focus group data.

5.1. Informal advice sessions

The following observations (in Vignette 1) were collected by one of the volunteer researchers and they highlight how informal advice is a common practice among peer migrants, not only between volunteers and migrants.

Vignette 1: A normal day at the centre, with lunch being served at 12noon, after which advice sessions going on in different parts of the hall, ESOL classes start at 1:30 and various groups of clients gather around tables in the hall. The Kurdish people on one, the Syrians, the Nigerian women and their kids, a couple of Albanian from Kosovo and the Iranians. I went around and asked some of them what they were talking about: mainly life in London, how to make applications for different services, immigration issues, some parenting advice and education matters. They mainly spoke their local languages and English. I talked with S and B (volunteers) about these groupings and they were very positive about the impact of the group discussion, and the emotional and mental support work done by the group members.

Vignette 1 reproduces common reflections on the natural group formation in the charity, whereby migrants naturally gravitate towards people with similar socio-cultural background that speak their language. Staff and volunteers at the charity see these groups, and the

languages spoken in them, as positive ways of providing emotional and practical support by peers, especially more experienced migrants advising more recent ones. Though staff and volunteers do encourage migrants to learn English, go to ESOL classes and practice as much as possible, they also recognize the value of the migrants' group support and encourage informal advice in their language.

In the following vignette, the informal peer-to-peer advice session is the focus of analysis. V is a migrant volunteer who moved to the UK about 10 years before, speaks Urdu and English, has leave to remain in the country and has done various applications for refugee status and related administrative matters. M is a migrant who arrived in the UK a few months earlier. Urdu is his main language. He speaks little English at the moment of the recording.

Vignette 2: V is helping M fill in the travel permit application. He does that by sitting at a table next to M and opening up the paper application in front of them. From the beginning of the exchange V and M translanguage with Urdu and English. When the actual work on the application begins V continues with translanguaging practices in a more translation mode: he reads the statements/questions in English and then translates them in Urdu. This is the kind of information the application contains: "Contact address in the UK for correspondence", "Contact name in the UK if different from that of the applicant", "Home Office reference number - this will usually be given on your status letter." The whole exchange resembles a teaching moment –V reads in English, translates the questions, and he also translates the key words various times; M repeats the words in English and Urdu. While translanguaging with V, M is also learning English. V explains the questions in general and some of the words, while placing more emphasis on and repeating the key words in the application.

Vignette 2, reporting on the observation of an informal advice session, seems to recall the origins of translanguaging research in the eighties, when the term "translanguaging" was coined to describe the classroom practices and the pedagogical advantages of dual literacy (Lewis, Jones & Baker 2012). Though these kinds of episodes are very common (with 12 episodes observed) they are not happening in a formal classroom, but in a peer-to-peer mode, or volunteer-to-migrant mode, and the use of translanguaging with the 'minority' language Urdu falls between the pedagogical function of learning English through Urdu, and the

making meaning function, specifically of explaining meaning through translation and paraphrasing in another language. V and M use translanguaging in all these functions, i.e. the pedagogical, the paraphrasing and the word concept explanation, sometimes clearly separating them and sometimes in conjunction.

In the last vignette, an informal advice session is carried out with A, a French English bilingual advisor and a migrant from Northern Africa. The vignette also reports on the informal interview carried out afterwards which reflects on the session.

Vignette 3: after the advice sessions conducted in French the advisor (A) explains to me that the migrant only speaks French and that she needs to call the solicitor to enquire about the migrant's case. A explains that she often takes on the cases of people who only speak French as she is fluent in the language, but that in this occasion she had difficulties understanding the migrant because his French is from Mali. She said that after the initial difficulty she now finds herself to, in her own terms, "trans-sound". For her to "trans-sound" is similar to "translate" or "trans-literate" but with sounds. She explains that she needs to tune in her listening to be able to understand him.

This vignette is one of the many examples of informal advice conducted in another language than English. If the advisors can speak one of the languages of the migrants advice is sometimes done in French, Arabic, Italian and others. Translanguaging practices do happen in this situation and functions covered are mainly that of explaining a term or a sentence or a concept, with translanguaging and translation as the main forms taken. This vignette also shows how the advisor tries to be flexible with the kind of linguistic resources available in the session between the two participants – she emphasises the need to accommodate (or trans-sound) her listening skills to be able to understand each other.

5.2. Formal advice sessions

In this part I analyze two formal advice sessions. The first conversation involves S, the advisor, and C7, a migrant from Algeria with accommodation problems. One of the problems is that there are rodents in the room where she lives.

Extract 1:

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   1   S    so you want to call this number?
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 2  C7  yes
 3  S   and what is this? this is your address?
 4  C7  no no this eh number is the officer commissar office
 5
 6  S   ok
 7  S   the council (.)this is for what council?
 8  C7  ehm
 9  S   Rotteram?
10  C7  yes yes
11  S   ok ok ehm did you receive a letter from them?
12  C7  no no just I wait (.) tell me people I want to
13      cause this letter take more time the court to get this
14      letter
15  S   but the court letter is about what?
16  C7  what? the: the landlord need take me out
17  S   eviction?
18  C7  eviction yes but
19  S   but did you receive the letter?
20  C7  no no  no
21  S   you didn't receive the letter?
22  C7  no no no I want-I wait
                                 [lines delition]
23  C7  because I have problem with this landlord mhm because
24      my my bedroom I have mouse
25  S   ah no:
26  C7  [taking phone from bag] <Sp>mira<Sp>
                               <Sp>look<Sp>
27  S   <Sp>hablas espanol?<Sp>
        <Sp>do you speak spanish?<Sp>
28  C7  <Sp>si hablo espanol<Sp> french
        <Sp>yes I speak spanish<Sp>
29  S   ehhhh
30  C7  <Sp>lo que quieres<Sp>
        <Sp>whatever you want<Sp>
```

The conversation starts with some difficulties on the part of the advisor to find out what the migrant's needs are. From line 1 to 22 the advisor is trying to find out how she can help S and seems to think that S is being evicted (line 16-18). Eventually S clarifies that the letter of eviction never came (line 22 emphatic repetition of 'no no no') and explains the advisor that the problem is with the accommodation being infested by rodents (line 24 'my bedroom I have mouse').

While C7 is explaining her problems to S she takes the phone from her bag and wants to show S the pictures of the room and rodents. While doing that she says 'look' in Spanish ('mira' in line 26). It is at this point that the advisor realises that S may speak Spanish and checks that with her in line 27 ('do you speak Spanish?'), to which S replies affirmatively ('si' in line 28). Her reply does not stop at confirming the Spanish she also starts adding other languages, such as 'french' and her intonation seems to suggest she would continue with a list of languages but the advisor interrupts with an exclamation of surprise ('ehhh' in line 29).

After that S explicitly adds that any language would be fine by her with her 'whatever you want' ('lo que quieres' in line 30).

This extract is particularly important in various ways. First, it represents the moment both advisor and user realize they have another resource in common that they can draw on in their session – this becomes relevant in the rest of the session (see extract 2) where Spanish and English are used in such a translanguaging way, and with the addition of Spanish the advisory session becomes more effective as C7 uses Spanish and English translanguaging to explain how the rodents have affected her life and her family. Second, it is in this moment that S shows her positive orientations towards her language knowledge: she seems to suggest she knows many languages and to be proud of that, as indicated by her saying 'lo que quieres' in line 30. This utterance can be translated as 'whatever you want' or, more liberally, 'any language you like I can speak'. This changes the dynamics of the conversation as from now on the advisor and C7 start translanguaging. What before this moment resembled a difficult conversation in English (from line 1 to 22) where the advisor is trying to understand what the problem is and what is needed, from this moment onwards (from line 23 onwards, including Extract 2) the conversation flexibly moves between and through linguistic resources in a translanguaging mode. Third, this is the moment where S starts using her phone displaying the pictures of the room where she lives to explain the problem and provide evidence for it. The use of the visual input also becomes relevant to the rest of the session and part of the negotiation of meaning in the translanguaging mode.

Another important aspect of this extract is that the advice session starts to liven up, with more dramatic effects such as louder and smiling voices (lines 8, 9, 20 below), when the adivisee and advisor discover they can use Spanish too (together with other languages – French etc.) to communicate, and the more informative /factual discussion of the case leaves some space for the narrative to happen. The possibility of translanguaging in ELF opens up spaces for more in-depth discussion of the case, by showing the pictures and expressing emotional response, but also for some more descriptive telling of the situation of the migrant, the family, the daughter and other aspects. This serves a more personal function of relationship building and creating personal connections among the translanguaging participants.

In the following extract, C7 clarifies that she lives in a small room with her husband and daughter and is showing pictures on her phone demonstrating the poor state of the room

to the adviser. This situation is giving her stress and stomach problems and creating problems to her daughter too.

Extract 2:

```
1    C7     I have more photos [showing photos]
2    S       but … it's terrible … horrible
3    C7    <Sp>si si ahora es invierno<Sp> I have damp I
4          need every day every day pfff
           <Sp>yes yes now it's winter<Sp>
5    S     ok so
6    C7    the problem the this I have my stomach the
7          stress when I see my mouse <Sp>este dia no como
8          nada [.] no toco nada nada mi hija NO @no
9          quiere tocar nada@ salimos fuera<Sp>
           <Sp>that day I don't eat anything [.] I don't
           touch anything my daughter NO @she doesn't want
           to touch anything@ we go out<Sp>
10   S     <Sp>cuantos anos tiene tu hija<Sp>
           <Sp>how old is your daughter<Sp>
11   C7    <Sp>tiene die-nueve<Sp>
           <Sp>she is te-nine<Sp>
12   S     <Sp>nueve<Sp>
           <Sp>nine<Sp>
13   C7    <Sp>nueve anos<Sp>
           <Sp>nine years<Sp>
14   S     you your daughter
15   C7    my husband
16   S     and your husband
17   C7    yes
18   S     three people in this room?
19   C7    my daughter? <Sp>duerme conmigo mi marido y
20         todo … tiene miedo @ todo el dia asi … yo
21         estoy<Sp>
           <Sp>she sleeps with me my husband and
           everything … she is afraid @ all day like that
           … I am<Sp>
```

The conversation develops from the pictures that C7 is showing. S comments on the state of the room ('terrible' and 'horrible') and the rest of the narrative is a translanguaging event where C7 moves from the pictures to the explanation of her sickness with gestures (putting her hands on her stomach) and explaining to S the situation. This is accompanied by a certain level of performance, or dramatism, when C7 explains how unwell she is at seeing the rodents in the room and how the daughter too cannot eat and they have to leave the room. The whole story is told with emphasis and repetition of Spanish 'nada', which provide particular prominence to the narrative. This part adds to the clarification that what C7 is asking is not help with 'eviction', which was the original non-understanding, but help with

complaining about the landlord not taking care of the accommodation. The translanguaging part then has a clarification function, it helps the advisor get a general understanding of the issue before proceeding with the action of making a phone call to the authorities. It also provides more in-depth understanding of the consequences on the health of the migrant, which is relevant to put pressure on the authorities to take action to address the accommodation problem (in fact the advisor then uses C7's sickness in her phone call).

Another point is that from line 14 onwards the advisor chooses to switch to English. This is possibly because the advisor needs to sort out the problem with the accommodation officer and the conversation with the officer is normally carried out in English. This advice session is then imagined to generate a later exchange (between the advisor who will be calling the accommodation officer) which is expected to be in English only and, though in a future time frame then the one of the advice session, still influences the choice of languages used in the session.

In the following extract this is also shown:

Extract 3

```
1    C7    tu eres espanola?
           are you Spanish?
2    S     no (.) mi marido es espanol
           no (.) my husband is spanish
3    C7    ah por eso hablais espanol
           ah that's why you speak Spanish
4    S     si
           yes
5    C7    entiendo
           I understand
6    S     ok I call the centre to see what they can do
7          (.) ehm:
8    C7    yo when I came here no hablo ingles ya eh
9          [ahora hablo
           me when I came here I didn't speak English [now
           I speak
10   S     [but you speak english well
11   C7    @ si si @
           @yes yes@
12   S     I like [how you speak
13   C7    si I understand nooo:
           yes I understand nooo:
14   S     you are very good you speak english spanish and
15         [french
16   C7       [french yes
17   S     you speak arabic?
18   C7    yes
19   S     amazing @@@ (.)
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At this point of the conversation the participants have been translanguaging for a while and the advisor knows why C7 speaks Spanish (she lived in Spain for a while), but C7 does not know why S speaks Spanish. This is probably what motivates the question on line 1 asking whether S is Spanish. When S replies that she is not, but her husband is Spanish then C7 clearly shows that her reason for asking was to know why S spoke Spanish (line 3 'ah for this reason you speak Spanish'). And now she understands ('entiendo' in line 5) why that is.

The advisor seems to want to go back to the issue in hand, the accommodation and the call to the centre to sort it out (lines 6-7), but C7 takes advantage of a hesitation moment (line 7 '(.) ehm') to return to the discussion of languages learnt. She adds that when she arrived there she did not speak any English (line 8 'yo when I came here no hablo ingles') but that now she does (line 9 'ahora hablo'). This description of her language learning experience sounds like a proud summary of a learning trajectory. She draws attention to the difference between when she arrived with her little English knowledge and now that she can speak English. This episode becomes even more interesting since the advisor is there to help her because her English is supposedly not good enough to sort out the issue by herself. S picks up on the proud formulation of language knowledge and encourages C7 by complimenting her on her English (line 10), to which S replies affirmatively ('yes yes' in line 11) but also makes a modest addition that 'she (just) understands (English)' (like 13). The multilingual appreciation of C7 becomes the topic in the next few lines when S continues complimenting her for her language knowledge, listing the languages she knows. C7 adds the language 'french' in an overlap with the advisor (lines 15/16), which shows how keen she is to demonstrate her knowledge and "show off" her multilingualism.

This extract also emphasizes how translanguaging can also serve as a way to create personal connections and emphasize the common experience, that is that both are related to Spanish in some ways through their life trajectories. And this is also possible because the charity is seen as a safe translanguaging space. So, while English is the language of the institutional immigration system, of the external help and external legal requirements, the internal space of the charity can be used as a safe translingual setting, where using the participants' repertoires, rather than English-only, is not only permitted but also seen in a positive light (Li 2011).

The final extract is from a different conversation. This is a formal advice session with a migrant (H) from Ivory Coast. H is waiting for the advisor (J) to arrive and is chatting with

T (a volunteer who is shadowing J). When J comes into the room T explains what they were discussing, i.e. where H is from.

Extract 4:

```
1    T    we were just chatting about eh where she is
2         from
3    J    ah
4    T    from Ivory coast
5    J    yes remember I saw you last week where Maba
6         took the bus
7    H    mhm
8    J    yeah yeah yeah because they were talking their
9         language from Ivory coast which
10   H    -jula
11   J    =jula
12   T    is it like a mixture with French
13        [and something else?
14   J    [that's what I thought
15   H    no::
16   J    no that's what I thought but it woul-no: I
17        couldn't recognise anything
18   T    can you say something in jula?
```

This is a moment just before the start of the advice session and though it is not the advice session proper it is of interest here as, just after discussing H's situation with her family, T asks her where her family is – Ivory Coast, where she is from. At this moment J comes in the room and the question of H's first language becomes relevant. As a matter of fact, J had already noticed H speaking her language (lines 8-9) when she saw her at a bus stop (lines 5-6). It is here that H, who up until that moment kept rather quiet, interrupts J to tell her the name of her language, "Jula"[3] (line 10). T thinks it may be a kind of creole, which includes French (the official language of the country), but H denies it and the volunteer asks her to say something in her language, which she goes on to do.

This exchange is an example of the various moments in the charity communication practices where languages become a topic of conversation. Even when those languages are not shared by the participants, and they remain a covert resource as translanguaging cannot happen, as in this example, multilingual resources can still become of interest to the exchange. In this precise moment, the volunteers who were going to help H in the advice session, do not speak Jula and cannot use any other language apart from English for the advice session. However, talking about Jula is a way of getting to know the migrant, her

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[3] Although French is the official language of Ivory Coast, Jula is one of the local languages.

background, and a symbolic acceptance of diversity in this context. The exchange is a way of invoking and remembering the language which participants had heard (or used) at the bus stop in a covert way. When translanguaging is not possible, other ways of creating connection, building relationship are sought around talking about languages and multilingualism.

6. Discussion and conclusions

Overall the charity is a super-diverse space with staff, volunteer and users from all over the world in a linguistic ecology, which provides a safe place for the use of multilingual resources. Communication is mainly in ELF and all the various activities at the charity show flexible use of translanguaging practices, but this paper focused on one of them – the advice sessions.

The analysis presented in this chapter exemplifies the role of multilingual resources in ELF advice sessions and relates to the original two research questions (RQ) as follows. In relation to the extent multilingual resources are used in the ELF advice sessions (RQ1), the data showed that they are used both in the formal and the informal advice sessions, but the informal sessions tend to contain more translanguaging with "minority languages", because they are carried out by experienced migrants, from the same linguistic background, with peers who are less experienced with life and practices in the UK. While the formal sessions do occasionally show translanguaging practices they remain with the well-known (mainly European) languages and, with some exception, most are in a monolingual mode. In situations where the formal advice may not show translanguaging practices, the participants may still include references to linguistic diversity in the meta-comments around the languages used by the participants in the charity.

In relation to the functions of translanguaging practices in the advice sessions, the data showed that practices can cover at least three functions: 1) the pedagogical function, especially in the informal advice session, where translanguaging is used by the migrants to learn or teach English in an informal way, while helping their less experienced peers. This is when the expert migrant may help the new migrants navigate the difficulties of life in the new context, but also understand key English discourses in their own community, or English that they will encounter in their life in London; 2) the enhancing meaning function, i.e. the spontaneous and dynamic use of translanguaging as making meaning and enhancing understanding, when the conversation done in English-only is not enough and by

translanguaging participants get a deeper understanding of the issue at hand; 3) the more interpersonal function of building rapport, sharing migration backgrounds and creating special connections among the participants by sharing personal narratives through translanguaging.

Although this is beyond the scope of this paper, it is also possible to infer (mainly from interview data that could not be analyzed here) that the different functions relate to the aspects that affect the use of multilingual resources, such as language ideologies, temporal and spatial understandings of the specific language ecology. Despite the multilingual safe space, there are certain services within the charity where multilingual resources are less obvious, and where access to them or legitimization in using them is limited for various reasons: 1) linguistic limitation, especially when the advisor and the user do not share the same linguistic knowledge and repertoire; 2) topic limitation, when the topic of discussion cannot be solved between the migrant and advisor, but would need the input of an outside agency or institution that specializes in solving the issue. These can be the local council, another charity offering specific services, an aid agency etc. for this reason the topic is then discussed in the language that needs to be used with the external agencies too, i.e. English; 3) written mode limitation, when the formality of the advice session means that the discussion and decisions need to be reported and written in a progress form for the migrant's case to be documented in case another advisor needs to continue with the work. Cases often do not get resolved in one session and, although the same advisor tries to continue working on the same case, this is not always possible. This means that a written report needs to be done in English so that the case can be taken over by anybody in the charity; 4) local limitation, because the charity is based in the UK the understanding is that the official language is English. Although the charity space is very multilingually-friendly, across the external space outside the charity and the national space (the immigration authorities, the local authorities and the regulations concerning migrants in UK) the dominant language ideology is "English-only".

In terms of this study, this means that both what happens during the advice sessions over the course of an hour, as well as across weeks or months, and in the organization, but also in the spaces outside it (the local institutions, the government or others), may influence what happens in the communication with the migrants. It would be interesting, therefore, in future work to explore how the relationships across the temporal and spatial scales affect the language choices and access to resources in multilingual ELF encounters. In this paper, it was possible to have a glimpse of how time and space scales, as projected in the future, limit the

resources that can be used during the advice session. The advice practices were tailored towards the needs, requirements and expectations of different groups outside the exchange itself, i.e. the local authorities, the external charities or aid organizations, the national immigration services etc.

In a more general sense, there is an overall acceptance of socio-cultural diversity, and the charity offers a safe place where friendly, convivial and cooperative relationships are encouraged in the ethos of helping migrants. Naturally this should not obscure the tensions and power struggles that go on within the services offered by the charity and also with the institutions outside it, the local and national regulations and immigration requirements. Even in a rather super-diverse ELF context like this one, where ELF trasnlanguaging practices are welcome, there are limitations to accessing or performing these practices that are ideological or spatio-temporal, among others, which emphasize the complexity of ELF practices and the role of multilingual resources in ELF.

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