Slanguages Connect: Using Translation to Foster L2 Sociolinguistic Competence

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

AI – Artificial Intelligence

AV – Audio Visual

AVT – Audiovisual Translation

DAT – Didactic Audiovisual Translation

FL – Foreign Language

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

L1 – First Language

L2 – Second Language/Foreign Language

MT – Machine Translation

MMR – Mixed Methods Research

ST – Source Text

TILT – Translation in Language Teaching

TOLC - Translation for Other Learning Contexts

TT – Target Text

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Slanguages Connect: Using Translation to Foster L2 Sociolinguistic Competence

Hannah Leonard

This investigation focuses on the marginal presence of informal language in the L2 curriculum and advocates for its inclusion via translation-related tasks to develop sociolinguistic competence. Research in L2 teaching shows that classroom-based learners often overuse formal registers, tending towards monostylistic communication, which may hinder them in casual, day-to-day interactions with native speakers (Mougeon, Nadasdi and Rehner, 2010). This may also affect the learners' agency and expression of identity if they feel the language they use is inappropriate in context. The ability to alternate between various styles, registers and discourse markers relates to identity, as it is a means to demonstrate in-group membership (Regan, 1996, 2010). Lasan and Rehner's (2018) preliminary study also indicates a positive association between an understanding of sociolinguistic variation and the ability to express and perceive identity in the L2. Furthermore, the regular omission of informal registers and slang from the classroom contrasts with their widespread daily use (Mattiello, 2005).

Translation tasks can facilitate interaction with an endless number of authentic language samples rooted in various situations and styles, and have been shown to have great didactic potential in the L2 classroom (Bruton, 2007; Laufer and Girsai, 2008). In particular, they can increase awareness of communicative competence and strategies (Pintado Gutiérrez, 2012; Pintado Gutiérrez and Torralba, 2022) and L2 learning (Carreres, 2006, 2014; House, 2008; Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez, 2011; Machida, 2011; González Davies, 2014; González-Davies, 2017, 2020). It has also been argued that translation can help to develop the learner's L2 style (Schaffner, 1998), although this relationship has yet to be fully investigated.

This investigation therefore lies at the intersection of learner agency and the use of informal language in the L2, the role of translation in L2 teaching as a tool to introduce informal language, and the relationship between sociolinguistic competence and identity in the L2.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Poetry of Everyday Life

Slang has been described both as “the poetry of everyday life” (Hayakawa, 1947, p. 148) and "a cheap substitute for good diction," which demonstrates "laziness in thought and poverty of vocabulary” (Foerster and Steadman, 1931, p. 297). Such opinions sit at the two ends of the spectrum of attitudes which the use of this non-standard language evokes, ranging from an appreciation of its expressivity and creativity, to a disdain for its failure to conform to “educated” speech. One could assume that decades later, the topic of slang has become less polarising, yet still today we have instances of its usage being both frowned upon and policed (Fishwick, 2013; Booth, 2021). Nonetheless, slang continues to form an integral part of everyday speech, captures public attention and even makes its way into the more formal realms of dictionaries (Durkin, 2012). Furthermore, from a linguistic perspective, it is recognised as an important semiotic tool which speakers use to perform various social and linguistic functions (Roth-Gordon, 2020; Damirjian, 2025).

While we often intuitively recognise slang when we encounter it, defining this category of language is notoriously difficult (Dumas and Lighter, 1978; Roth-Gordon, 2020; Damirjian, 2025). Rather than trying to restrict it to a single definition, Dumas and Lighter’s (1978) frequently cited approach focuses instead on a strategy for identifying slang. According to their classification, a term can be considered as slang if it meets two of the four following criteria:

i. Its presence lowers the formality of serious writing or speech.
ii. It implies the speaker’s special familiarity, for instance with the referent or with a lower status group that have special familiarity with the referent and use the term in question (e.g., in-group membership).
iii. It is a taboo term in normal conversation with people from higher classes or in positions of responsibility.
iv. It is used instead of a well-known conventional synonym.

Much of the language investigated in this study meets two or more of the above criteria, however some only meets the first criterion. Therefore, this thesis adopts the broader term *informal language* to encompass the full range of language which can be considered less formal than standard language, and encompasses varying degrees of informality such as slang, taboo words, casual speech, vulgar language, colloquialisms etc. Such language, which is highly frequent in

day-to-day speech, is often closely linked to and spread through media, and is particularly common amongst young people (Eble, 1996; Roth-Gordon, 2020; Damirjian, 2025).

Given its prevalence in society and interpersonal function, it is logical to assume that informal language would form part of foreign language curriculums, however, frequently this is not the case. Informal registers, along with other non-standard varieties of language are often absent from classrooms and instructional materials (Gutiérrez and Fairclough, 2006). This in turn impedes language learners' ability to acquire and use such language.

The knowledge and understanding of when and how informal language can be used forms part of sociolinguistic competence. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to deal with the social dimension of language use, and produce and understand contextually appropriate language (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 136). In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, from the Independent User level and upwards, sociolinguistic competence is recognised as including knowledge of (informal) registers. Reaching the Independent User level is a crucial stage in the language learning process as it signifies being able to communicate effectively and independently in a given language. For this reason, one of the target outcomes in *Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017 – 2026* is to increase the number of graduates reaching this level upon completing Higher Education (Department of Education and Skills, 2017).

Ireland often lags behind its European and international counterparts in terms of foreign language proficiency therefore *Languages Connect* was developed to address this deficiency and improve foreign language education in Ireland. Other key target outcomes include improving the quality of foreign language teaching, and improving learners' attitudes to foreign language learning. This thesis specifically addresses these target outcomes by drawing on empirical research from the fields of language education, sociolinguistics and translation studies to design and implement an innovative translation-based activities focusing on developing sociolinguistic competence and knowledge of informal registers.

Classroom-based learners, who often have limited contact with the target language outside of class, tend to struggle to develop this competence and overuse standard and more formal language, resulting in monostylistic communication (Regan, 1995, 2004; Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi, 2004; Nadasdi, Mougeon and Rehner, 2005; Mougeon, Nadasdi and Rehner, 2010). However, research on explicit instruction in the classroom has shown that it positively impacts learners' sociolinguistic knowledge (Lyster, 1994; Lemmerich, 2010; van Compernolle and Williams, 2012b, 2012a; van Compernolle, 2013; French and Beaulieu, 2016, 2020; Beaulieu *et*

al., 2018). Explicit instruction is a pedagogical approach encompassing a broad range of practices and strategies which teachers use to externalise cognitive processes and explain concepts and ideas to learners (Mathews and Cohen, 2022).

The majority of the research on explicit instruction and sociolinguistic knowledge has focused on French as a second or foreign language (L2 French), with considerably fewer studies investigating L2 Spanish (van Compernolle, Gomez–Laich and Weber, 2016; Pisabarro Sarrió, 2019; Ruivivar, 2020). Nonetheless, the need for an applied sociolinguistic approach to the teaching of Spanish has been recognised, in order to embrace the heteroglossic and plurinormative reality of the language (Fuertes Gutiérrez, Soler Montes and Klee, 2021). Thus far, such approaches have tended to focus on areas such as Spanish as a global language, regional varieties and Spanish as a heritage language (Muñoz-Basols and Hernández Muñoz, 2019; Hernández Muñoz, Muñoz-Basols and Soler Montes, 2021), with scant reference to register. That is not to say that there is no research interest in L2 informal Spanish. Indeed, a number of studies call for its inclusion in the classroom and propose various activities related to colloquial conversations (Briz, 1998, 2002; Albelda and Fernández, 2006; Azúar Bonastre, 2014; Bernal, 2018). The Val.Es.Co (Valencia Español Coloquial) research group has been particularly active in this area, through their work on developing a corpus of oral Spanish and investigating discourse analysis and pragmatics (Albelda and Briz, 2017; Llibrer, 2023; Albelda Marco, 2024; Pons Borderia, 2024). However, there is a lack of studies which approach the issue of teaching L2 informal Spanish specifically from a sociolinguistic perspective, and which include applied examples of explicit instruction.

One of the gaps that the present study addresses is how explicit instruction can have a positive impact on and advance learners' sociolinguistic knowledge of informal language in L2 Spanish. In the Irish context, this focus on Spanish is particularly important, with *Languages Connect* recognising the hitherto dominance of French in foreign language education. The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach and draws on translation studies and language education. One reason for this is that that translation has been shown to be an interesting means for exploring and developing learners' understanding of taboo language (Valdeón, 2015; Ávila-Cabrera and Rodríguez Arancón, 2018). Furthermore, in addition to presenting translation tasks which focus on taboo language, in their manual for learning advanced Spanish through translation, Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez and Calduch (2018) propose some of the few examples of translation tasks which focus specifically on register, demonstrating its potential in this regard.

Translation activities have been associated with a number of different benefits in L2 education, such as contributing to vocabulary acquisition (Bruton, 2007; Laufer and Girsai, 2008), intercultural competence (Elorza, 2008; Fois, 2020) and pragmatic competence (House, 2008; Lertola and Mariotti, 2017; Aydin, 2023), amongst others. These studies form part of the broader recognition of the value of translation in language teaching, which has steadily increased since the 1990s (Malmkjær, 1998; Carreres, 2006, 2014; Cook, 2010; Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez, 2011; Pintado Gutiérrez, 2012; Fernández Guerra, 2014; González Davies, 2014; Laviosa, 2014; González-Davies, 2017, 2020). However, development in this area has largely been dependent on individual researchers/language teachers who believe in the benefits of translation and have the scope and ability to incorporate it into their classes. For this reason, as recently as 2022, there have been assertions of an implementation problem, that is, a gap between academic appreciation of the value of translation and actual practice in the language classroom, where translation remains underutilised (McLaughlin, 2022).

The present thesis addresses this implementation problem by providing a fully worked example of translation in language teaching. By exploring the potential of translation as a means to foster sociolinguistic competence, this study constitutes a novel application of translation in L2 education. It consists of the design, implementation and evaluation of a programme of translation tasks with a focus on informal registers. Both learner translations and learner voices are considered in the analysis of the efficacy of the tasks, yielding a more rounded and comprehensive understanding of how translation can foster the learners' emerging sociolinguistic competence. Furthermore, this thesis presents the prototype translation tasks in detail, ready for language educators to implement in their own classes.

Informal words and expressions have been shown to be particularly salient for both L1 and L2 speakers (Durkin, 2012; French and Beaulieu, 2016; Davydova, Tytus and Schleef, 2017; DuBois, 2019; Lucek and Garnett, 2020), with non-linguists capable of readily identifying slang terms and colloquialisms (Durkin, 2012). Such terms are often discussed by the general public or in the media, where commentary can range from what not to say in work (Knight, 2024), to explanations of regional colloquialisms (O'Hara, 2025), to lists of must-know terms for foreign language learners (Quinn, 2018; Hudec, 2020). For this reason, lexical variants are the specific domain of informal language which this study focuses on. Furthermore, as translation activities have been shown to positively impact vocabulary acquisition (Bruton, 2007; Laufer and Girsai, 2008), translation tasks lend themselves to a focus on informal lexical items. The next section further outlines what is meant by informal language, lexical variants, and selected other terms which are key to the investigation.

1.2 A Note on Terminology

This section outlines a number of key terms which are integral to the study. They are introduced here in order to clarify the research proposal and facilitate the presentation and discussion of the theoretical and methodological frameworks in subsequent chapters.

1.2.1 Informal Language and the Informal Load

The target language of this investigation is informal language, which can be seen as forming part of a sociostylistic continuum ranging from highly informal to highly formal (Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi, 2004). In light of the difficulties in precisely defining the various subtypes of language along this continuum (Steel, 1997; Crystal, 2008; Sornig, 2010), the present study uses informal language as an umbrella term for all language which is less formal than neutral or standard language. Within informal language, the only distinction that will be made is between vulgar language, and language which is not vulgar or offensive but is still informal, which will be referred to as colloquial language. As vulgar language is further down the sociostylistic continuum than colloquial language, it can be said to have a greater informal *load* than colloquial language. When analysing translations of informal terms, a key consideration is whether the load of the original term has been transferred to the translated text (Ávila-Cabrera and Rodríguez Arancón, 2018; Ávila-Cabrera, 2023). That is, to what extent does the translation maintain the informality of the original term, if at all.

1.2.2 Linguistic Variable, Lexical Variant and Language Variety

One of the ways that language can vary is in terms of its (in)formality. Figure 1 below illustrates different ways of asking *how are you?* in English, which vary from more informal (*what's the craic?*) to the more formal (*how do you do?*). Together, these options constitute a linguistic variable, which is a set of different ways of expressing the same linguistic function/element, where each option or variant has social significance (Geeraerts *et al.*, 2023). In this example, each option is a lexical variant, meaning that they are single or multiword expressions. Linguistic variables can also occur at other levels of language e.g., morphological, phonological etc., however these are not the focus of this thesis.

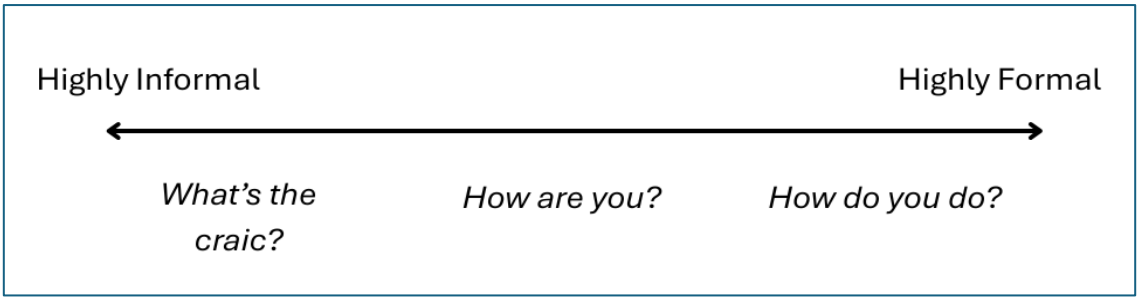


Figure 1. Lexical variants on a sociostylistic continuum

In addition to being an informal variant, the term *What's the craic?* in Figure 1 is also a variant from the Irish English variety. The term language variety is used to describe linguistic variation that is linked to specific groups of speakers. As such, a language variety is a sub-set of language features (variants) which correspond to a particular geographic/socio-situational or temporal context (Gregory and Carroll, 1978). These sub-sets can include i) a national variety of a language (e.g., Irish English or Peninsular Spanish); ii) a regional variety of a national language (e.g., Dublin dialect); and iii) a variety of register or style (e.g., colloquial or vulgar language). It is also important to note that varieties may or may not overlap. For example, *Heya* pertains to colloquial English, but not a specific national variety, while *gowl* (an insult used in the Southwest of Ireland) belongs to both a vulgar register, a regional variety (dialect) and the Irish English variety.

1.2.3 Irish English

This study was carried out in an Irish university, therefore in line with a World Englishes perspective, this study uses the term Irish English to refer to the national variety of English spoken in Ireland (O'Keeffe, 2011). A World Englishes approach views all varieties of English as being equal, but recognises their differences stemming from the history and social and cultural customs of their speakers (Kirk and Kallen, 2007; O'Keeffe, 2011; Farrell, 2017). While the first official language of Ireland is Irish (Gaeilge), English, which is recognised as the second official language, is the main language used on daily basis by the majority of the population (An Coimisinéir Teanga, 2025). Contact between the two languages has influenced a number of aspects of Irish English including grammar and lexicon, which distinguish it from other varieties (Filppula, 1999; Kallen, 2012). It also contains multiple social and regional sub-varieties and a variety which can be considered a standard variety, which is quite similar to standard British English (Filppula, 1999). Another salient feature of Irish English is the prevalence of informality and politeness, which is manifested through features such as understatements, hedges and reciprocity (Kallen, 2005), and a high tolerance for both taboo language (Farr and Murphy, 2009; Murphy, 2009) and religious references (O'Keeffe and Adolphs, 2008). With regard to vocabulary, the Irish English lexicon contains many distinct words and phrases, which are generally divided

into three groups based on their origin: i) words from Irish (e.g., *amadán* 'fool'); ii) words from British varieties, which may have become obsolete in Britain (e.g., *yoke*, used to refer to 'a thing in general' or as derogatory term for a person); and neologisms which are either created internally or stem from other loanword sources (e.g., *craic/crack* 'talk, conversation, fun, news') (Kallen, 2012). Amongst users of Irish English, lexical items from the various sub-varieties can be particularly salient, strongly linked to places and characteristics of certain speakers (Lucek and Garnett, 2020).

1.2.4 Second Language vs Foreign Language

The present study centres on foreign language/FL teaching and learning, where the target or foreign language is not widely spoken in the learners' community (e.g., learning Spanish in Ireland). However, much of the research on non-native speakers' use of sociolinguistic variation uses the term second language/L2, as many of these studies investigate contexts where the target language is spoken in the learners' community (e.g., French in Canada). In line with the terminology used by many authors in this field (Regan, 2010; van Compernolle and Williams, 2012b; Fernández, 2013; van Compernolle, Gomez–Laich and Weber, 2016), this thesis uses L2 as an umbrella term for the language(s) acquired by learners other than their native language (L1), including foreign languages. However, it recognises that L2 and FL are not entirely interchangeable.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions which guide this study centre on i) the observable patterns in learners' translations produced as part of the translation activities (RQ1 and RQ2); and ii) the learners' voices in relation to their sociolinguistic abilities, language preferences and their experience of the tasks (RQ3 and RQ4).

1. How do learners navigate register in their translation of lexical sociolinguistic variants?
2. In what ways can translation foster sociolinguistic competence?
3. Do learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and preferences for informal language change after a translation-based enrichment programme?
4. What do learner insights indicate about their experience of exploring sociolinguistic variation through translation?

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis comprises eight chapters. Chapter 2 contextualises the study in relation to prevalent language ideologies and their impact on foreign language education. It also introduces key concepts such as language variation and varieties, communicative competence and second language variation. It explores recent developments in the explicit instruction of second language variation with a focus on informal variants and Spanish. It concludes by highlighting the current conceptualisation of the learner as a social agent, and how mediation activities represent a promising avenue for fostering sociolinguistic competence.

Chapter 3 focuses on pedagogical issues in adopting a sociolinguistically-responsive pedagogy, outlining a pedagogical norm which can help to inform educators which variants to choose to teach, and where register features in institutional and curricular frameworks. It underscores the reconceptualisation of language necessary to embrace the meaning making potential of sociolinguistic variation, and makes a case for the use of translation activities to foster sociolinguistic competence. This case includes highlighting relevant benefits of translation activities such a vocabulary acquisition, and also the ways in which translation can contribute to pragmatic competence and foster sociolinguistic agency.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological framework of the study, revisiting the research aim and research questions. It outlines the rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach and selecting the single group pre-/post evaluation design. It also describes the questionnaires, translation tasks and focus group which were the data collection instruments used for the study. Finally, it explains the techniques used to analyse the data collected from these instruments, including the original framework designed for the analysis of the translation tasks.

Chapter 5 presents the original activities created for the enrichment programme in this study. It demonstrates the various steps of the design process and then details the introductory session and four translation tasks which formed the enrichment programme. Instructions and recommendations for these prototype activities are also included to facilitate language educators implementing them in their own classes.

Chapter 6 turns to the analysis and discussion of the findings from the translation tasks. It focuses on the observable patterns in the learners' translations and draws on both qualitative and quantitative data. These data provide crucial insights as to how the learners navigated register variation in their translations of lexical variants in alignment with the translation briefs,

and what opportunities translation activities can provide for learners to enact and foster sociolinguistic competence.

Chapter 7 focuses on the learners' voices, through analysing and discussing their responses to the pre- and post-questionnaires and the focus group. This is with a view to establishing whether any changes occurred in their self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and preferences for informal language. It facilitates the exploration of the learners' experience of the enrichment programme, shedding light on the potential implications of using translation activities to foster sociolinguistic competence.

Chapter 8 summarises the main research findings and discusses their significance. It outlines the limitations of the study and presents a number of conclusions before closing the study with recommendations for future directions in related research.

Chapter 2: Intersecting Sociolinguistics and L2 Education

2.1 Introduction

Language variation is a core concept of the present thesis. This chapter therefore serves to contextualise the investigation by examining the relationship between language variation and foreign language education. Facets of this relationship that are explored in this chapter include i) the ways in which language ideologies impact the varieties of language taught in foreign language classrooms; ii) language variation and Irish English as an example of a language variety; iii) the nature of sociolinguistic variation and its role in authentic communication; iv) models of communicative competence and their conceptualisation of sociolinguistic competence and iv) the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation in the foreign language.

2.2 Standard Language and its Systemic Influence in L2 Education

Language ideologies have a clear impact on social dynamics, linking language to "group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology" (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994, p. 56). The influence of language ideologies is far reaching, affecting areas such as governance, schooling, gender, and the law, as well as linguistic forms. Silverstein's (1979, p. 193) early and widely cited definition of language ideologies refers to them as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure and use". Although scholars' interpretations of the concept of language ideologies range from neutral to critical, they generally agree that such ideologies stem from or are responsive to the experience of a given social position (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994). Neutral approaches to language ideologies use the term to broadly refer to cultural conceptual systems, while critical approaches focus on power, often in relation to language politics and language and social class (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994; Woolard, 1998). Kroskrity (2004) posited that language ideologies can be viewed as a cluster concept and identified five constituent dimensions or levels of organisation: i) group/individual interests; ii) multiplicity of ideologies; iii) awareness of speakers; iv) mediating functions of ideologies; and v) the role of language ideology in identity construction. These dimensions will be discussed below, with a particular focus on standard language ideology and foreign language education that will help to problematise the topic of this thesis.

The first dimension relates to how language ideologies convey a view of language and discourse that stems from the interests of a particular cultural or social group. Beliefs about what

constitutes a language contribute to strategies of social domination. In conjunction with associated schemata for ranking languages, they underpin the gatekeeping of varieties permitted for specific institutional uses and as a result, regulate which speakers have access to domains of privilege (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994; Burns, 2025).

Standard language ideology is a particularly prevalent set of such beliefs, whereby standardisation can be seen as the promotion of “invariance or uniformity in language structure” (Milroy, 2001, p. 531). It has also been conceptualised as a sociocultural process where idealised language norms are established through the creation of dictionaries, grammars and national literature, and maintained by language academies with a focus on ‘correctness’ (Gal, 2006; Walsh, 2021; Cushing, 2023). Such a version of a language is not always a reflection of linguistic reality, thus standard language functions as “a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent” (Milroy and Milroy, 2012, p. 19). Despite this disconnect from language use in the real world, the prestige of standard language is upheld through the value and authority which the sectors of education, labour markets, media and governmental departments attribute to it (Gal, 2006; Walsh, 2021; Burns, 2025). For instance, standard languages are purported to both possess and reflect their own cultures. For example, the French standard is perceived to have its own idiosyncratic properties which are distinct and separate from those of German or Welsh. This notion constitutes one of the sources of authority from which the standard benefits. The legitimisation of the standard through various social institutions upholds its "authenticity" as a representation of the essence of its speakers in comparison to speakers of another standard. In addition to authenticity, the authority of the standard is also upheld through the concept of universality: the claim that it belongs to all speakers and is unbiased and socially neutral as it belongs to no one group in particular (Gal and Woolard, 2001). The authority of standard language is often employed in debates of territory and political sovereignty, where the “authenticity” and “universality” of a shared language can be used to legitimise border claims and political arrangements.

In an effort to counteract the linguistic nationalism and territorial demands which can stem from standard language ideology, the European Union and European Commission have various policies supporting linguistic diversity (see Gal, 2006, p. 166-167 for a brief overview). However, while a myriad of languages are recognised ("national language, minority and regional language, foreign, migrant and third country languages; mother tongues, sign languages, lesser used languages, ethnic minority, indigenous and non-territorial languages"), all of these languages conform to the process of standardisation: that is they are named languages which possess unified and codified norms of correctness evident in literature and grammars. As such, other

forms of speaking/language use (such as registers, accents, varieties and genres) are not included (Gal, 2006). Thus, the omnipresence of standard language ideology is such that it permeates the very efforts and policies aimed at reducing the forces of standardisation. This lack of official recognition of the registers, accents, varieties, and genres that constitute authentic language use means that the importance and ubiquity of these language forms are rarely acknowledged in foreign language education.

More locally, the taken-for-granted status of the standard language in the promotion of language diversity is also evident in *Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017 – 2026* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). The strategy aims to promote foreign language learning in Ireland, citing the positive impact of foreign language knowledge in relation to "personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment" (Department of Education and Skills, 2017, p. 6), as well as cultural engagement and understanding. While the document mentions cultural and linguistic diversity (albeit somewhat infrequently), diversity is here treated as intercultural and interlingual, with no mention of intralingual/intracultural diversity. This raises the question of how socially inclusive such an approach to foreign languages can be, if the languages are treated as monolithic, standardised entities. If cultural engagement and understanding are desired outcomes, surely knowledge of a foreign language should also include awareness of the range of variation which can occur in that language and knowledge that the standard language does not necessarily reflect the essence or culture of all of its speakers.

Although the publication of *Languages Connect* marks a significant advance in language education in Ireland, the policy's failure to recognise intralinguistic diversity perpetuates the dominance of standard language in L2 education in the Irish context. Indeed, it appears that even from a research perspective, non-standard varieties have only been explored in relation to the teaching of Irish (Ó Murchadha and C. Flynn, 2018; Ó Murchadha and C. J. Flynn, 2018; Ó Murchadha and Kavanagh, 2022), and English as a foreign language (Farrell, 2017). At a post-primary level, the Leaving Certificate Spanish syllabus (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2025) makes no mention of linguistic variation and scant reference to register varieties. Meanwhile, in Higher Education, prominent issues which have been identified in the teaching of foreign languages include the need to i) ensure that actual language provision aligns with the goals of *Languages Connect*; ii) offer a wider array of languages to a broader audience; and iii) offer heritage languages and languages important for trade (e.g., Arabic and Japanese) (Batardière *et al.*, 2023). Thus, in addition to non-standard varieties not being recognised throughout the Irish foreign language education context, their absence is also not recognised as

being of issue. The primary concern is expanding the offering of various standardised languages, without acknowledging the variation and diversity within these languages.

Countering the ascribed authority of the standard language, Lippi-Green (2012, p. 67) argues that standard language ideology is biased "toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class". From this perspective, the standard is neither authentic, as it prescribed by those with socioeconomic power, nor universal, as it is rooted in the language of an elite social group. The educational system also plays a fundamental role in perpetuating the standard, and although while it is not necessarily the beginning, "it is the heart of the standardization process" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 68). This can manifest in a number of ways. In an L1 educational setting, it may entail 'correcting' stigmatised varieties of a language or even issuing outright bans on non-standard language such as fillers and slang as shown in the press (Fishwick, 2013; Booth, 2021). From an L2 perspective, it can include the omission or minimisation of the existence of variation both at a policy level (as in the case of *Languages Connect*) or in the classroom (such as failure to recognise variation in the Irish school syllabi for foreign languages). Furthermore, the idealised (standard) native speaker has traditionally served as the benchmark against which L2 learners' competences are measured. Despite prolonged criticism of this unrealistic target model (see Sections 2.3 and 2.4 for further discussion), it remains prevalent in L2 education (Kramsch, 1997; Cook, 1999, 2016; Dewaele, Bak and Ortega, 2021; Fedorova and Kaur, 2022). In order to advance the move away from this model, it is vital that we consider whether a language is being presented in a holistic sense, to avoid reinforcing the hegemonic norm of the standard.

Kroskrity's (2004) second dimension highlights the importance of recognising the multiplicity of ideologies, stemming from the coexistence of a range of social divisions in sociocultural groups. Each of these subgroups (e.g., generation, gender, class etc.) may have their own beliefs and ideology(/ies) expressed through indices of group membership. Multiple ideologies may give rise to tensions within a given population, where divergent perspectives and even dominant ideologies are contested amongst these subgroups (Kroskrity, 2004). De Costa's (2016) study of immigrant students in an English-medium school in Singapore evidenced a particularly interesting case of conflicting ideologies. In the school in question, the official linguistic norms stemmed from an ideology favouring the use of standard English, while the unofficial norm favoured Singaporean Colloquial English (Singlish). Some of the students contested the "scholar" ideology in which they were framed, yet also purposefully favoured standard English due to its perceived future benefit which in turn reinforced the scholar image which they

disagreed with. On the other hand, some students simultaneously embraced Singlish as means of forming interpersonal bonds, while continuing to strive towards improving their standard English. This study demonstrates the importance of considering the interaction of linguistic ideologies with other circulating ideologies.

The third dimension relates to language users' varying levels of consciousness with regard to their own language ideologies. Silverstein's (1979) definition of language ideology underscores the centrality of language users' beliefs about language. However, like Giddens (1984, p. 7), Kroskrity (2004) distinguishes between discursive consciousness (a reflexive awareness enabling language users to explicitly articulate language ideologies), and practical consciousness (ideologies which are embodied in automatic conduct). Thus, language users may be anywhere between these two poles in terms of their explicit awareness of their language choices and the ideologies to which they pertain. Therefore, for foreign language learners, an important question is how conscious they are of their own language ideologies, in both their L1 and L2, and their impact on the language they use. A further consideration is how aware learners are of the choices available to them in the foreign language, and the ideologies to which such choices may potentially correspond.

The fourth dimension illustrates the vital, mediating function of ideologies, whereby they function as an interpretive filter in the relationship between language and society (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994). As such, language users' ideologies link their sociocultural experience and their linguistic repertoire by positioning linguistic forms as connected to or associated with aspects of their sociocultural experience. This type of association is known as indexicality, whereby linguistic forms become indexes or symbols that evoke characteristics, features or categories from the world around us (Silverstein, 2003; Eckert, 2019). Registers and styles can be considered the result of this process of linking language and the sociocultural, where "registers are styles with broad recognition" (Eckert, 2016, p. 76). Styles then, are distinctive linguistic repertoires whose use corresponds to particular social and situational factors. These linguistic repertoires become differentiable in a language through stylistic practice or enregisterment. Enregisterment involves the "gradual sedimentation of habits of speech perception and production across particular social domains of persons" (Agha, 2003, p. 269). Thus, linguistic forms slowly become linked with a given register through gradual and repeated social associations.

When language users construct ideologies, their consciousness influences their selection of features from linguistic and social systems, and the links that they establish between such

systems (Kroskrity, 2004). In doing so, language ideologies mediate communication itself. They constitute the metacommunicative and/or metapragmatic frames which form the basis for speakers' interpretation of linguistic symbols. These frames are fundamental in the encoding and decoding of variable elements of language as signals or styles indexing potential identities of speakers, their stance, different discourse situations and institutional and cultural distinctions (Silverstein and Urban, 1996). By way of example, lexis is often strongly associated with regional identity (Durkin, 2012), with speakers linking stereotypical words and phrases to a particular area. By extension, they are also linked to stereotypical characteristics of habitants of that area. This is evidenced in Lucek and Garnett's (2020) study on perceptions of linguistic identity among Irish English speakers, where participants linked certain words and expressions associated with affluent neighbourhoods of South Dublin with characteristics such as "snobbish" or "pretentious". By contrast, they associated other terms with North Dublin and characteristics of "knacker" and "working class" (knacker being a derogatory term often used to describe people of low socioeconomic status or members of the travelling community).

These links and perceptions evidence how language users connect their sociocultural experience and their linguistic resources, by tying linguistic forms to features of their sociocultural world. If language learners have only been taught or exposed to standard language, then this may become the lens through which they interpret communication in the foreign language. In order to be able to construct their own language ideologies and repertoires, learners need to be made aware of the variable elements of language and their indexicality. Otherwise, they may be left with a black and white perspective of what is in reality a multi-coloured language.

The fifth dimension encompasses the role of language ideology in identity construction. Language ideologies are actively used in the development of a range of social and cultural identities such as nationality or ethnicity. Historically, shared language has underpinned the boundaries of social groups (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004). As mentioned in relation to the fourth dimension, linguistic forms linked to particular speakers (which in turn come to index these speakers) are often construed as representing a range of characteristics, from group identity to political beliefs to intellectual, social or moral calibre. This in turn affects language use in the forms of style-switching, shift, change, policy and language acquisition (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994). In order for language learners to be able to effectively construct and perceive identities in the foreign language, they need to be able to navigate the indexical potential of that language.

Whether one adopts a neutral or critical stance, the above discussion demonstrates that language ideologies impact almost every level of language use in different contexts/situations.

The dominance of the standard language means that this is widely accepted as the variety to be used in official institutions, including educational settings. However, Gal (2006, p. 165) contends that the "variegated linguistic forms in any speaker's linguistic repertoire are seen to work in opposition to forces of standardization". These variegated linguistic forms stem from the multiplex ways in which language can vary across time, space, social groups and situations. Such variation is generally split into four categories: *diatopic, diaphasic, diachronic* and *diastratic*. Diatopic variation is the variation of language within a geographic region, such as different dialects, or different varieties of the same language (e.g., Irish English and British English). Diaphasic variation relates to variation according to the setting or medium of communication, such as different registers and styles, or written vs oral communication. Diastratic variation refers to the variation in language between different social groups (e.g., young people, upper class) while diachronic variation is variation in language in relation to time (e.g., Shakespearian English vs modern English) (Zampieri, Nakov and Scherrer, 2020).

Although some of the linguistic forms stemming from these types of variation may pertain to standard language, others do not, however such non-standard forms are equally authentic examples of real language use by members of a given speech community. As with all sociolinguistic variables, the choice between one variant and another is governed by social and stylistic factors (Bell, 1984). The next section will further examine the concept of a sociolinguistic variable, and how our understanding of the factors influencing variant choice has developed within the field of Sociolinguistics, before turning to the implications for L2 education.

2.3 Sociolinguistic Variation and L2 Education

A sociolinguistic variable has been commonly conceived as multiple ways of saying the same thing (Labov, 1969; Sankoff, 1980; Tagliamonte, 2006). In English, an example of this is the alternation between *speaking* and *speakin',* indicating that there is more than one way of pronouncing the word speaking without changing its referential meaning. In this example, each way of pronouncing the word *speaking* can be considered as a separate variant. While at a phonological level this is relatively straightforward, the concept becomes more complicated at the morphosyntactic level where the relationship between linguistic form and linguistic function must be taken into account (Tagliamonte, 2006). Lavandera (1978) subsequently challenged Labov's (1969, 1972a) notion of the sociolinguistic variable, arguing that rather than requiring equivalence in referential meaning, a condition for identifying variants should be functional comparability. Furthermore, the variants may often only serve similar discourse functions rather than exactly identical functions (Sankoff and Thibault, 1981). Sociolinguistic variables can also

occur at every level of language: phonological, morphological, lexical, pragmatic, syntactic, discoursal, and suprasegmental. In many cases, these variables are realised by discrete variants, where there is a defined choice between one form or another (e.g., cupboard vs press in Irish English). Discrete variables may encompass two or more variants. However, continuous variables are possible at a phonetic level, where there can be an infinite number of variants on a continuous scale. Thus, linguistic variables can be categorised in accordance with the level of language in which they occur, and the discreteness of the variants (Kiesling, 2017). Allowing for the functional comparability criterion, and the vast array of variable features of language, the present thesis will adopt Kiesling's (2017, p. 16) broader definition of the linguistic variable as a choice about language use in a speech community. While this definition does not demand that the meaning be the same, some type of equivalence should be noted. Fundamentally, the definition is also grounded in the speech community, as a feature may be variable in one community but not in another.

In terms of language variation, words are often the unit which is most salient for the general public and from a non-specialist perspective, are seen to be relatively simple. However, from a linguistic perspective, sociolinguistic variation in word forms and meanings can be a challenging area of investigation (Durkin, 2012), largely due to the fact that "words have meaning even before they acquire sociolinguistic meaning" (Geeraerts *et al.*, 2023, p. 21). Given the multifaceted nature of the field of lexical variation in general, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse it in depth (see Geeraerts *et al.*, 2023 for a detailed discussion). Therefore, building on the definition adopted by the present work for a linguistic variable (a choice about language use in a speech community) this thesis will use the term lexical variable to refer to the choice of single or multiword units (e.g., lexical variants) to denote a given concept in a speech community.

The perceived role of and attention dedicated to the social and stylistic factors influencing the choice between one variant and another have changed considerably since their recognition in the field of Sociolinguistics in the 1960s. Sociolinguistics is concerned with the "interface between language and society" (Coupland, 2016, p. 1), with the subfield of Variationist Sociolinguistics focusing on the links between social factors and linguistic variation. Studies in Variationist Sociolinguistics have progressed through three consecutive waves (Eckert, 2012).

Labov (1966) is credited with pioneering the first wave of sociolinguistic variation studies, with his research on the inverse correlation between social class and the use of non-standard variants. Multiple studies in this period noted a socioeconomic and gender stratification of language forms (Wolfram, 1969; Trudgill, 1972; Cedergren, 1973). It was also observed that

greater ethnic and regional differentiation occurred amongst the lower levels of the socioeconomic hierarchy, along with higher rates of use of non-standard variants, which are of lesser value on the standard language market (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1975). Studies in this wave were quantitative in nature and largely concerned with the interrelationship between linguistic variables and macro-sociological categories such as age, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic class, as well as geographic region. During this period Labov (1972b, p. 112) defined the vernacular as "the style which is most regular in its structure and in its relation to the evolution of the language…in which the minimum attention is paid to speech", however this focus on attention paid to speech was later questioned (Milroy, 1987).

The second wave followed an ethnographic approach and focused on the relationship between social agency and use of the vernacular as a means to express local or class identity. In one of the early studies of this period, Milroy (1980) investigated three working-class communities in Belfast. She found notable deviations from the assumed patterns of the macro-sociological categories of class and gender. While from a first wave perspective, higher levels of use of non-standard variants amongst lower socioeconomic classes and men would be expected, Milroy found that differences in social network structures also influenced language variation. The study showed that the more integrated an individual is in a social network (e.g., having family/friends/working within that network), the closer they align to the linguistic norm of that network. A key development in this period was the realisation that stigmatised variants or those which do not conform with the prestige variety may still have local value, as a means to indicate group membership or demonstrate solidarity in a speech community. That is, while the standard variety may have *overt* prestige in society due to its dominance in sectors such as politics, education and business, non-standard varieties can have *covert* prestige amongst certain groups as a means to establish group affiliations (Trudgill, 1972).

Commenting on similarities between the first and second wave, Eckert (2012) highlighted their common conceptualisation of speaker categories as being static, whereby identity was equated with category affiliation, whether those categories were macro-sociological or micro-sociological. This contrasts with the third wave, which considers variation to be indexical, reflecting social identities and categories which speakers navigate via stylistic practice. Silverstein (2003) introduced the concept of indexical order, positing that linguistic elements which are marked as pertaining to a certain group can be used to index membership to, or characteristics or stances associated with that group. In this sense, variation is a social semiotic system which speakers can use to create meaning, and are thus "stylistic agents, tailoring

linguistic styles in ongoing and lifelong projects of self-construction and differentiation" (Eckert, 2012, p. 98).

From the current third wave perspective, sociolinguistic variation is considered to be a system of signs "that enables the nonpropositional expression of social concerns as they unfold in interaction" (Eckert, 2016, p. 68). As such, it enables people to express opinions and beliefs tacitly, making it a cornerstone in social life and the pragmatics linking language use to the wider social system. In other words, the sociolinguistic choices that language users make in selecting one variant over another, communicate implicit or unconscious social meanings. While the social meaning of variation in the first two waves was viewed as "incidental fallout from social space" (Eckert, 2012, p. 94), in the third wave, the macrosocial patterns of variation both stem from and provide structure to the complex system of meaning that is language (Eckert, 2016). In today's era of globalisation, language is no longer a siloed national variety, particularly due to the separate and combined powerful influences of the English language and the Internet, which have resulted in new digital communicative spaces and practices (Darvin, 2016; Domingo, 2016).

Globalisation, "the intensified flows of capital, goods, people, images and discourses around the globe" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 13), is largely driven by innovations in technology and results in new ways of organising communities and culture. We are currently in a period of transition from the modern to the late modern world, and experiencing increasing tension between the two (Kramsch, 2014). Modernity is associated with many of the language ideologies previously discussed, such as the existence of nation-states with national languages and cultures, and standardised languages used by educated native speakers whom foreign language learners strive to emulate. This model of the native speaker was not a genuine language user in "in all his/her phonological, stylistic, ethnic, and social diversity" (Kramsch, 2014, p. 305) but rather an idealised urban metropolitan speaker who uses the standard variety. Although it is proving difficult to remove 'native-speakerism' from its pedestal (Cook, 2016; Dewaele, Bak and Ortega, 2021; Fedorova and Kaur, 2022), as we transition into late modernity, there is a growing recognition that this model no longer reflects the hybrid, heteroglossic communication of today's world. As such, the codes, norms and conventions which guided language educators in their pedagogical practices are in the process of being reevaluated and reconstructed. A pertinent example of this is the removal of the term native speaker from the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* (Council of Europe, 2001), with the updated companion volume (CEFRCV, Council of Europe, 2020) now using the term *speakers of the target language* instead. The CEFR and CEFRCV were born of a pan-European effort to describe language levels in a modular way, promote mobility and establish a common metalanguage for the

conceptualisation of language proficiency. They are landmark documents in the field of language education, and the CEFR has become the most widely used language proficiency framework in the world (Deygers, 2021), therefore this change in terminology in this framework constitutes a significant and conscious departure from the idealised native speaker norm.

Thus, from a late modern perspective, instead of pursuing the unrealistic target of the native speaker, the goal of language teaching should rather be for learners to become L2 users in their own right (Cook, 1999). In this vein, we must consider language as a social semiotic system, and expand learners' "generic and registerial repertoire" (Byrnes, 2012, p. 21) in order to improve their meaning-making capabilities. Reframing language as a social semiotic system allows us to intersect foreign language education and third wave sociolinguistic variation and create a sociolinguistically responsive foreign language pedagogy, which treats language in a holistic sense. How such a pedagogy might look is perhaps best summarised by Kramsch (2014), who notes the following:

> [k]eeping an eye on the whole means catching the essence of a word, an utterance, a gesture, a silence as they occur inside and outside the classroom, and seeing them as a manifestation of a speaker's or a writer's voice, informed by an awareness of the global communicative situation, rather than just by the correct way of constructing sentences, paragraphs, and texts (Kramsch, 2014, p. 309).

Therefore, foreign language education must recognise language as being more than the sum of its linguistic parts, constituting a key thread in our social fabric. This in turn leads us to consider how we view what it means to be competent in a language: communicative competence is not just the ability to piece together linguistic forms, but also includes the capacity to navigate the indexicality of language and express and create social meaning. In line with the changing language ideologies discussed thus far, conceptualisations of communicative competence have developed over time.

2.4 Models of Competence in L2 Teaching and Learning

Communicative competence is one of the key concepts in the field of L2 education and also one of its fundamental pedagogical goals. At its core, it is based on the construct that if the aim of L2 acquisition is to be able to use language, then language teaching and learning should be "guided and evaluated by the learner's ability to communicate" (Savignon, 2017, p. 1), with such communication occurring through social interaction in various forms (e.g., oral/written/sign) in

one or more languages. As such, it is impossible to conceptualise communicative competence without acknowledging the social and interactive component of language. Today, this component is generally recognised as pertaining to the sub-competence of sociolinguistic competence, which along with linguistic competence and pragmatic competence, constitute overall communicative competence (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). As the field of Second Language Acquisition has developed, multiple models of competence have been proposed under various frameworks, in line with changing perspectives on the nature of language and language ideologies. The following sections describe some of the key developments, underscoring the emergence of sociolinguistic competence as an integral component in these models before arriving at the definition of sociolinguistic competence which informs the present study.

2.4.1 Communicative Competence

Early conceptualisations of the term communicative competence were abstracted from authentic language use, and based on Chomsky's (1965) notion of linguistic competence, which drew a clear line between competence; "the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language" and performance; "the actual use of language in concrete situations" (Chomsky, 1965, p. 4). Chomsky's construct of linguistic competence was primarily concerned with grammaticality and stemmed from his work on a generative grammar, a set of rules which can account for all of a language's syntactic structures. As natural speech (e.g., performance) is full of deviations from linguistic rules, from a Chomskyan perspective, linguistic performance was an imperfect manifestation of the underlying grammatical knowledge of a speaker. Furthermore, competence was conceived as being independent of sociocultural features (Hymes, 1972).

This isolation of linguistic competence from the social dimension was subsequently challenged by further studies. First wave sociolinguistic investigations (Labov, 1966; Cedergren, 1973) contradicted Chomsky's (1965, p. 3) concept of the "ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly" by documenting the wide range of variation present within speech communities, and how such variation is intrinsically linked to social constraints such as sex, age and socio-economic status. In doing so, they highlighted that the ideal native speaker, who is often presented as the target from a foreign language learning perspective, does not exist as a uniform entity who consistently uses standard language. In a similar vein, Hymes (1972, p. 274) identified a "need to transcend the notions of perfect competence, homogenous speech communities and independence of sociocultural features". He suggested that grammatical competence was merely one part of communicative

competence, positing that competence is reliant upon tacit knowledge as well as use of the language in communicative settings. This introduction of a sociolinguistic perspective was highly influential in successive models of communicative competence (Canale and Swain, 1980; Bachman and Palmer, 1996).

Canale and Swain's (1980) communicative competence framework is grounded in their research on evaluating the communicative competence of L2 learners. Although one of the earlier models to emerge, this framework is still widely adopted in L2 teaching and is referenced in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). It consists of three sub competences: grammatical competence ("knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology"); sociolinguistic competence ("sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse") and strategic competence ("verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication"). Fundamentally, it recognises that these sub-competences are of equal importance and advises that they are integrated in a second language programme accordingly. Canale (1983) later added discourse competence to this model, which refers to the ability to combine grammatical forms and meanings to produce a cohesive and coherent spoken or written text.

Evidencing the interlaced nature of the various sub competences, in particular sociolinguistic and pragmatic, Bachman and Palmer's (1996) model of communicative language ability (see Figure 2 below), instead considers sociolinguistic knowledge as a subsidiary of pragmatic knowledge. In contrast with Canale and Swain's (1908) model, Bachman and Palmer's model specifically references diatopic variation by including language varieties and dialects. This is an important addition as non-standard variants and varieties often have a strong link to places.

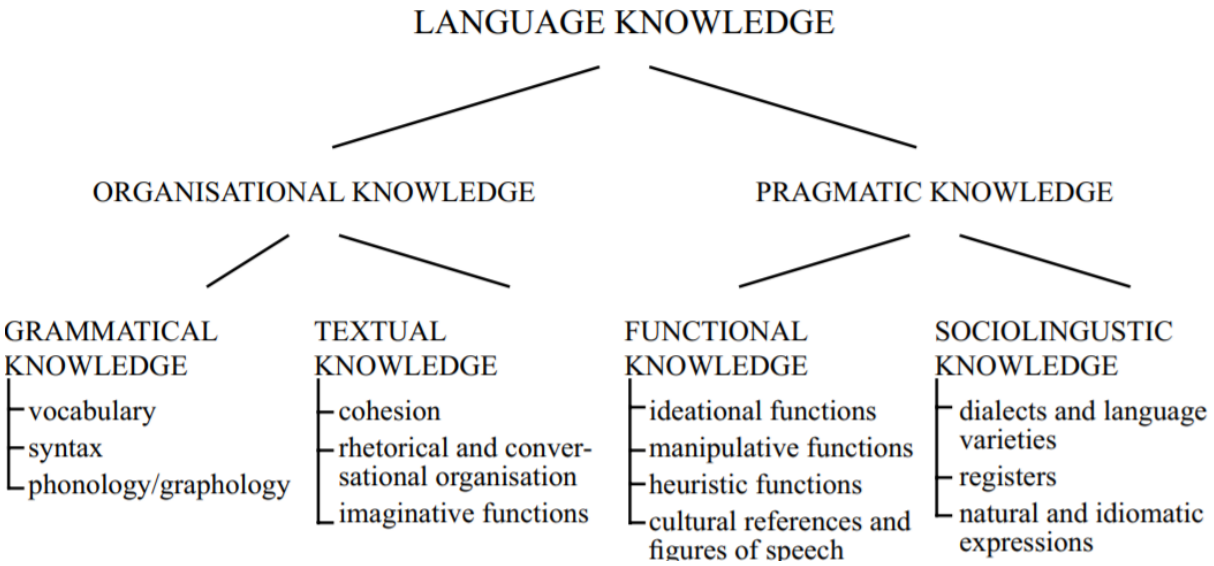


Figure 2. Areas of language knowledge (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p.68)

While various communicative competence models exist, in each iteration sociolinguistic competence is generally recognised as consisting of two core skills: the ability to understand the sociocultural context of communication; and the ability to use appropriate language in a given context (Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1995). As such, it is concerned with both receptive and productive skills, requiring reading/listening skills to interpret the linguistic input, as well as oral/writing skills to produce contextually appropriate linguistic output. More recently, Geeslin (2018, p. 550) has described sociolinguistic competence as "the ability to produce variable structures according to social norms and also to interpret linguistic and extralinguistic information". This extralinguistic information includes the social information encoded in a user's speech such as their age, ethnicity, social class, region of origin and sexual orientation. Given the neutralised standard language that is often present in learning materials, this link between language and social information can be particularly challenging for classroom-based learners. Fundamentally, Geeslin's (2018) interpretation of sociolinguistic competence recognises the plurality of social norms – what is appropriate according to one norm may be inappropriate according to another. Drawing on the definitions presented thus far, the present study views sociolinguistic competence as the ability to understand and/or produce variable structures in relation to social norms and to interpret linguistic and extralinguistic information. In line with the differing construals of communicative competence discussed in this section, sociolinguistic competence is not viewed as a siloed competence, but rather as forming an integral part of communicative competence, whereby individual competences are interdependent Another key development that has emerged in

conceptualisations of communicative competence is the agency and autonomy attributed to learners in their use of the L2.

2.4.2 Competence and Sociolinguistic Agency

In light of the influence of globalisation and the shift away from the native speaker model as discussed in Section 2.3, more recent conceptualisations of competence have expanded to recognise language learners as multilingual/multicompetent language users (Cook, 1992) and plurilingual/pluricultural social agents (Council of Europe, 2020). Thus, rather than being aspiring imitation native speakers, learners are acknowledged as agentive language users, mediating multiple languages and cultures.

Kramsch's (2006) concept of symbolic competence also underscores the agency of language learners. Symbolic competence stems from Halliday's (1978) work on language as a semiotic resource for making meanings. From this standpoint, symbolic competence goes beyond the ability to merely communicate meanings, and consists of the creation of meanings through "the manipulation of symbolic systems" (Kramsch, 2006, p. 251). While any actions or artefacts that we use to communicate (whether produced physiologically or via technology) can be considered a semiotic resource (van Leeuwen, 2005), linguistic resources include form, genre, style and register. Symbolic competence therefore includes an understanding that discourse features and word choices may reflect important information about the minds of speakers, and help to shape the communicative context. Furthermore, these symbolic linguistic forms "are not just items of vocabulary or communicative strategies, but embodied experiences, emotional resonances, and moral imaginings" (Kramsch, 2006, p. 251). In this sense, symbolic competence enriches language learners' negotiation of meanings by enabling them to produce and exchange symbolic goods, which can be expressed through linguistic forms. Therefore, symbolic competence facilitates the learners' expression of self and their agency in co-constructing the communicative context.

This view of language as a semiotic resource intersects with the conceptualisation of sociolinguistic variation from a third wave variationist perspective (as discussed in Section 2.3). According to third wave sociolinguistic studies, sociolinguistic variants are linguistic symbols in a social system, which users manipulate to index and interpret meaning. Thus, sociolinguistic competence can represent a form of symbolic competence, possessed by an agentive multilingual user of semiotic systems.

While the discussion thus far has indicated a pressing need to consider both the variable nature of language and the learner's ability to navigate its sociolinguistic components, Kramsch (2002) argues that most current second language and foreign language pedagogies fail to do so. In reality, "the grammatical, lexical, phonological norm has remained the standardized, codified form of the national linguistic variety, the pragmatic norm is still that of the idealized NS [native speaker] in standard communicative situations" (Kramsch, 2002, p. 70). As such, the (socio)linguistic and pragmatic variations which are characteristic of authentic language are rarely present in modern foreign language pedagogies. Although a focus on sociolinguistic variation has not yet made its way into mainstream foreign language educational practices, second language variation is an area which is receiving increased academic attention (Regan, 1996; Valdman, 2003; van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a, 2012b; Nestor and Regan, 2015; Diskin and Regan, 2017).

2.5 L2 Variation and L2 Education

Before reviewing studies investigating L2 acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, it is important to highlight that L2 variation is separate to the four types of language variation which were outlined in Section 2.2 (diatopic, diaphasic, diastratic and diachronic). Within L2 variation, it is generally accepted that there are two types (Corder, 1981; Adamson and Regan, 1991; Regan, 2010; Ellis, 2015). The first type is vertical or developmental variation, where similar to children acquiring their first language, the learner may vary between two non-target forms, or between a non-target and a target form. For example, a learner of Spanish may initially produce the structure **sabo* before later producing *sé* (*I know*) to express the first-person present indicative of the verb *saber* (*to know*), or a learner of English might produce **I no like* before progressing to *I don't like*, as their proficiency develops. The second is horizontal variability, which describes variation between two target forms or varieties, such as different registers of a language, or different regional dialects or national varieties. Examples of this second type of variation include *hello* vs *heya* (e.g., formal/standard vs informal) or *sidewalk* vs *footpath* (e.g., American English vs Irish English). As such, the vertical continuum relates to Canale and Swaine's (1980) conceptualisation of linguistic competence while the horizontal continuum relates to sociolinguistic competence (Adamson and Regan, 1991). For the purpose of this thesis, the literature reviewed below centres on type 2 variation, in order to highlight how this sociolinguistic phenomenon has been investigated thus far and factors influencing how learners acquire and use this type of variation.

2.5.1 The Acquisition of L2 Sociolinguistic Variation

The development of appropriate use of sociolinguistic variation is an essential component of both L1 and L2 acquisition, as it allows language users to interact in a meaningful way, indicate empathy and solidarity, and identify with or accommodate others (Regan, 2010). Many studies investigating L2 acquisition of sociolinguistic variation in foreign language teaching and learning have focused on French, particularly Canadian French. However, there are also a growing number of investigations in relation to Spanish. Indeed, the breadth of studies mentioned below is an indication of the increasing level of interest in this field.

To date, much of the research in this area in French has centred on grammatical variables which correspond with variation in register, such as i) the use of the more informal first person pronoun *on* instead of the more formal *nous* (Dewaele, 2002; Rehner, Mougeon and Nadasdi, 2003; van Compernolle and Williams, 2009); ii) omission or retention of the negative particle *ne-* (Regan, 1996; Rehner and Mougeon, 1999; Dewaele, 2004b; Donaldson, 2017); iii) deletion vs retention of /l/ (Howard, 2006; Howard, Lemee and Regan, 2006); and iv) interrogatives (Dewaele, 1999). Rather than viewing registers as discrete categories, they can be seen as forming part of a sociostylistic continuum ranging from highly informal to highly formal. Highly informal variants are inappropriate in formal settings, typical of informal speech, often stigmatised and associated with lower social classes and do not align with the rules of standard (French) language, while highly formal variants align with standard language and are strongly associated with upper classes. In between these two poles, there are a range of variants which also pertain to the informal register; however, they can be used in formal situations, are not stigmatised and are less closely linked to specific social groups (Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi, 2004).

By contrast, while much of the research on the acquisition of L2 Spanish sociolinguistic variation has also focused on grammar (e.g., pronominal subject expression (Geeslin and Gudmestad, 2011; Linford and Shin, 2013); copula choice (Geeslin, 2003); mood selection (Gudmestad, 2006); past and future time references (Geeslin and Gudmestad, 2010)), these studies have largely consisted of contrasting native speakers' and non-native speakers' use of variable structures involving standard variants, and therefore did not relate to register variation. However, some investigations have explored the acquisition of diatopic or geographically restricted variants such as: the pronunciation of the interdental fricative [Θ] in Peninsular Spanish (Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012; Knouse, 2013); the use of second person plural subject pronoun *vosotros/as* (Reynolds-Case, 2013); and variable direct object pronouns (Geeslin *et al.*, 2010). These latter studies have tended to focus on study abroad or immersive environments and show mixed

results in learners' adoption of diatopic variants. Fernández (2013) also investigated the study abroad environment, specifically the acquisition of "youngspeak" or informal language by language learners studying abroad in Argentina. However, this study focused on the impact of social networks on this acquisition rather than classroom-based approaches. Although much scarcer, there are some works which consider L2 Spanish sociolinguistic variation from a pedagogical perspective, again with a focus on grammatical forms. For example, Shenk (2014) makes a case for incorporating the second person singular pronoun *vos,* and proposes relevant activities and means for assessing learner knowledge in this regard. Elsewhere, van Compernolle, Gomez–Laich and Weber (2016) investigated the effects of explicit instruction on the social-indexical use of the second person address forms *tú* and *usted*. Following a pedagogical intervention, positive gains were observed in learners' sociopragmatic knowledge of how to use these terms in relation self-presentation, social distance and power.

The area of L2 lexical variation has received much less attention, particularly with regard to its explicit incorporation into the language classroom. However, a number of studies have explored general L2 knowledge of colloquial lexicon in L2 English (Charkova, 2007) and L2 French (Dewaele and Regan, 2001; Mougeon and Rehner, 2001; Dewaele, 2004a). The Bulgarian adolescent and young adult learners surveyed in Charkova's (2007) study demonstrated a high level of knowledge of English slang which she attributed to two motives: identifying with a community of EFL (English as a foreign language) learners of the same age and L1; and membership in global youth culture which is mediated by the media and the English language (see for instance films, music, and other aspects of popular culture). While the L2 French studies adopted a different approach and relied on learner corpora, they generally reported lower levels of knowledge of slang or colloquial terms. However, Dewaele's (2004a) study highlighted that extraversion levels and proficiency contributed to higher levels of use of colloquial language. Although English and French are both widely spoken and economically powerful languages, the global dominance of English and its ubiquity across various media may render it more accessible to the learner, which could potentially account for the differing levels of knowledge of L2 colloquial language amongst learners of the two languages, in the studies cited here.

Overall, there is a high level of interest in the acquisition of L2 variation, however much of the research focuses on grammatical variation, with the variables studied in L2 French pertaining to register variation, while studies in L2 Spanish tend to focus more on variable structures in standard language, or diatopic variation. Although there is support for introducing informal language in the L2 classroom, applied examples of pedagogical approaches to introducing register variation through informal lexicon are lacking from the literature. This gap is particularly

evident with regard to L2 Spanish, demonstrating a need for the present thesis. The next section will further examine this gap through exploring calls for and issues relating to the teaching of informal Spanish.

2.5.2 L2 Colloquial Spanish

Before turning our attention to the L2 acquisition of informal Spanish in foreign language teaching and learning, it is necessary to first situate the issue in the context of standard language ideology. Like many widely used languages such as English and French, Spanish also possesses a standard variety (Milroy, 2006). Standard Spanish stems from a "historically, geographically, and socially situated group (e.g., the royal court in Castile)" (Train, 2007, p. 213), however, more recently a set of Latin American post-colonial prestige norms have also emerged. In any case, it is equated with "educated" speakers and supported by the *Real Academia Española* (RAE; Royal Spanish [Language] Academy) and the *Asociación de las Academias de la Lengua Española* (ASALE; Association of Spanish Language Academies). While these organisations task themselves with the promotion of Spanish globally, there is a bias towards Castilian Spanish (Rodríguez Barcia and Moskowitz, 2019). This bias in turn affects the varieties of Spanish which are taught in the L2 classroom, with the continued dissemination of standard language ideology limiting learners' ability to "participate in the diverse social and linguistic realities of Spanish as it is used in authentic conversational and written contexts" (Burns, 2019, p. 34) through minimising or erasing the sociolinguistic variation that constitutes the language. This sociolinguistic variation does not only include diatopic variation, but also diaphasic variation. Diaphasic variation refers to the use of linguistic variants appropriate to the communicative situation and exists on a continuum between the informal and the formal register (Albelda and Briz, 2017).

While L2 informal Spanish generally has not been approached from a variationist perspective as L2 informal French has, it has been theoretically explored from a pedagogical point of view. Colloquial Spanish is the commonly used term for the informal register in Spanish (Briz, 1998; Cortés, 2002; López Serena, 2007). Its relevance in everyday use and in interpersonal communication is widely recognised, as is the fact that it is an area that L2 Spanish users often struggle with (Albelda and Fernández, 2006; Azúar Bonastre, 2014; Albelda and Briz, 2017). This has its consequences, with learners' lack of familiarity with colloquial Spanish resulting in the inability to understand messages, their utterances being perceived as strange or humorous, losing their turn in a conversation and being misinterpreted or perceived as pedantic (Azúar Bonastre, 2014). Hence, there are a growing number of calls for its inclusion in the context of the

L2 Spanish classroom (Briz, 1998, 2002; Garrido Rodríguez, 2000; Laguna and Porroche, 2006; Pedrola, 2021).

There is also support for L2 use of colloquial Spanish from the perspective of the L1 user. In his study on L1 attitudes toward Spanish L2 speakers' use of informal lexical items, DuBois (2019) found that although L2 users were sometimes judged more harshly when using the same colloquial variants as L1 users, the quantitative difference was not so great as to discourage L2 use of these variants. In other words, the overall results showed that colloquial language need not be discouraged. Furthermore, many of the L1 participants indicated favourable attitudes towards L2 use of colloquial language. They acknowledged its ubiquity in day-to-day communication and deemed knowledge of such language as essential for a holistic understanding of Spanish. One L1 participant even noted that not accepting L2 users' use of slang "would be like a type of linguistic social exclusion" (DuBois, 2019, p. 120). Therefore, while L2 use of informal language might be received positively by some L1 users and negatively by others, as long as it is contextually appropriate, learners are free to incorporate such language into their sociolinguistic repertoire. From an L2 education perspective, this means that we must ensure that learners are cognisant of both the situational constraints in relation to the level of formality required, and of the fact that (L1) listeners may have widely differing opinions on the use of colloquial language.

Thus, while caution must be exercised in L2 use of informal and colloquial language, it is evident that they form an important part of the sociolinguistic landscape of the Spanish language. Furthermore, as an area that L2 users have difficulty with, it certainly merits inclusion in the L2 classroom. However, in reality this is not the case, with L2 pedagogy tending to marginalise common informal linguistic variants by focusing almost exclusively on standard language varieties. Efforts to deal with sociostylistic variation tend to present it only in relation to narrow conventions of use or rules of thumb (van Compernolle, 2013).

In the case of Spanish, the nature of the variety(ies) of the language which is taught in the classroom can be impacted by factors such as the teacher's lack of sociolinguistic knowledge, limited contact hours and the type of teaching materials which are available (Gutiérrez and Fairclough, 2006). Addressing the issue of how to approach incorporating variation into the Spanish language class, Gutiérrez and Fairclough (2006) note that this should be done in accordance with the learners' level of knowledge of Spanish, beginning at the basic levels, with instruction incrementally shifting from awareness of linguistic variation to productive abilities. Simultaneously the focus should expand from more locally used varieties registers and styles to

those used around the world. Sociolinguistic variants must be presented in appropriate contexts, which can be done through the use of texts in different modalities and styles. The authors also recognise the importance of teaching stylistic variation if the goal is to teach 'real language' rather than a sanitised standard version.

Elsewhere, other suggestions for methods to teach colloquial Spanish have included the use of colloquial conversations. Such conversations constitute contextualised speech phenomena which can be used to introduce common cultural aspects (Albelda and Fernández, 2006) and facilitate the exploration of and reflection on linguistic features linked to a given situation (Briz, 2002). Film is one way that colloquial conversations can be introduced and has been shown to increase levels of learner satisfaction (Azúar Bonastre, 2014).

The publication of *Gramática española: Variación social* by Potowski and Shin (2018, 2024) also constitutes a promising development in the field of L2 Sociolinguistic Variation and Language Teaching. Aimed at students with a B1+ proficiency level, this textbook explores grammatical features of Spanish in relation to sociolinguistic factors such as region, social group, and context. While its use may be not yet widespread, the textbook offers a crucial contribution to filling the gap in sociolinguistically-informed materials for L2 Spanish instruction, and serves to help instructors and learners understand the interplay between language and social variation in real-world settings.

Despite the interest in the teaching of colloquial Spanish, learner agency is notably absent from many of the studies in this area. While it is encouraging to see scholars and pedagogues advocating for and demonstrating applications of colloquial Spanish in the L2 classroom, there is a dearth of studies on what learners might actually do with this language. Without alerting learners to their own agency and the meaning-making capacity of sociolinguistic variants in the form of colloquial language, there is the risk that learners may continue to revert to the standard language hegemonic norm. In the following section we will look at factors influencing learners' exertion of this agency and their willingness (or lack thereof) to embrace non-standard language in the form of informal and colloquial variants.

2.5.3 Developing L2 Sociolinguistic Repertoires

It is generally recognised that instructed learners face difficulties in developing sociolinguistic competence and often tend towards monostylistic communication and overuse formal variants (Regan, 1995, 2004; Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi, 2004; Nadasdi, Mougeon and Rehner, 2005; Mougeon, Nadasdi and Rehner, 2010). This can result in difficulties in real world contexts such

as interactions with target language users or during their Erasmus Year, as students are unfamiliar with more natural, informal registers (van Compernolle and Williams, 2011). Despite acknowledgement of the challenge that this competence poses, its development is often treated as incidental in the acquisition of overall communicative competence, and as something that will come with time, whereby advanced learners eventually overcome the hurdle of sociolinguistic variation through increased exposure to the target language (van Compernolle and Williams, 2009). This stance is widely supported in the academic literature documenting learners' improved understanding and use of sociolinguistic variants following prolonged contact, such as after a study abroad period (Howard, Lemee and Regan, 2006; Geeslin *et al.*, 2010; Salgado-Robles, 2011; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012; Knouse, 2013). Social networks, as highlighted by Milroy (1980) during the second wave of variationist studies, are also instrumental in L2 acquisition of sociolinguistic variation during these periods. The increased contact with informal variants afforded by positive relationships with speakers of the target language and multiplex social networks correlate with higher usage of such variants (Isabelli-García, 2006; Gautier and Chevrot, 2015).

However, instructed learners who may have limited extracurricular contact with the target language face an additional obstacle in terms of input. Teacher talk and learning materials are often lacking in sociolinguistic variation thus reducing the range of variants that learners are exposed to (Rehner and Mougeon, 2003; Etienne and Sax, 2009; Yang and Rehner, 2015). Nonetheless, explicit instruction has been shown to yield positive results in a variety of settings.

For instance, using functional-analytic materials, which required learners to analyse sociostylistic variation and make choices regarding its appropriate use, Lyster (1994) demonstrated an improvement in French immersion students' sociolinguistic competence in terms of their appropriate use of register (*tu* vs *vous*) in both oral and written productions, as well as their ability to recognise contextually appropriate French. Elsewhere, van Compernolle and colleagues have also repeatedly demonstrated improved sociolinguistic knowledge following explicit pedagogical interventions (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; van Compernolle and Henery, 2014; van Compernolle, Gomez–Laich and Weber, 2016), as have Beaulieu and colleagues (French and Beaulieu, 2016, 2020; Beaulieu *et al.*, 2018), illustrating learners' embracement of and desire for the inclusion of sociolinguistic variation in their formal language learning. With the exception of van Compernolle, Gomez–Laich and Weber (2016), in which Spanish was the target language, all of the aforementioned studies investigated L2 French. Lemmerich (2010) and Pisabarro Sarrió (2019), on their part, have reported positive gains in German and Spanish respectively. Lemmerich's (2010) research indicated that beginner L2

learners benefit from the integration of sociolinguistic variation in the curriculum through first focusing on receptive skills and metapragmatic knowledge before moving onto productive skills, while Pisabarro Sarrió (2019) demonstrated more target-like rates of use of future time expressions following a pedagogical intervention.

Although the majority of studies investigating the relationship between explicit instruction and sociolinguistic competence have reported an improvement in learners' knowledge and/or performance, there is some conflicting evidence. Analysis of French interlanguage corpora has highlighted a lack of correlation between formal instruction and the use of certain informal variants (Dewaele and Regan, 2001; Dewaele, 2002). It is worth noting that both of these studies were quantitative in nature and in centring on interlanguage corpora, they were focused on performance. However, performance is not necessarily an indicator of overall sociolinguistic knowledge as learners may actively choose to eschew non-standard variants despite being familiar with them (Dewaele and Regan, 2001; Kinginger and Farrell, 2004). Such resistance to the use of non-standard variation may stem from a variety of reasons. Socially marked variants may be treated by learners with an air of caution due to a real or perceived lack of ability to use them appropriately, while learners' identities can also play a role in their rejection of non-standard variants. The following sections will discuss the influence of proficiency, identity and imagined communities in learner adoption of colloquial language.

2.5.3.1 Proficiency

Dewaele and Regan (2001) suggest that learners may be conscious of the pragmatic or sociolinguistic risks associated with the incorrect use of colloquial language and thus avoid vernacular lexicon due to a lack of productive sociopragmatic and stylistic competence. This lack of competence may be genuine, partially due to the lack of sociolinguistic variation in teaching materials (Gutiérrez and Fairclough, 2006; Etienne and Sax, 2009), or opportunities to use colloquial language in authentic communication (Dewaele, 2004a), however it can also be perceived (Baker and MacIntyre, 2000). In addition to learner perceptions of their proficiency, learner perceptions of the nature of their L2 identity also play a role in their use of sociolinguistic variation.

2.5.3.2 Identity

Identity is conceptualised differently depending on the discipline from which it is considered. In the social sciences, it is generally conceived of from a poststructuralist viewpoint, where identity is framed as "socially constructed, self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project in dress, bodily movements, actions and language" (Block, 2009, p. 27). The

crux of this stance is that identity is not fixed, but rather is something fluid, undergoing constant (re)construction. Like language, it occupies the space between an individual and society, and emerges from negotiating the intersubjective meanings of social practices (Kiesling, 2013). Thus, another key component of identity is its inherent relational nature: an individual may perform or enact particular social processes or identities but these social processes and identities are interpreted by others through the ideological and cultural framework in which they are embedded (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004). Highlighting the simultaneously individual and social essence of identity, Kiesling (2013, p. 450) defines it as "a state or process of relationship between self and other; identity is how individuals define, create, or think of themselves in terms of their relationships with other individuals and groups, whether these others are real or imagined". In this sense, identity relates to symbolic competence, whereby individuals draw on semiotic resources including language, to transmit facets of identity or stance, and their use of these semiotic resources is subsequently interpreted by fellow members of society through their own symbolic framework. This notion of defining oneself in relation to others underpins learners' motivations for embracing or rejecting colloquial language in the following sections.

Foreign/Non-native identity

Learners' perceived identity as a foreign or non-expert speaker of the target language may result in reluctance to use informal terms due to feeling cautious about such language, even if they are familiar with it (Kinginger and Farrell, 2004). In addition to caution, learner identity can also evoke feelings of discomfort in relation to non-standard variation, whereby as foreigners or outsiders, it feels unnatural to use such variants.

For example, in Soruç and Griffiths' (2015) study on the teaching of features of spoken grammar typical of informal speech, students attributed their reluctance to use the target features to the fact that they "conflicted with their own sense of identity, making them feel "fake", "artificial" and "embarrassed" (Soruç and Griffiths, 2015, p. 32). Participants in Fernández' (2013, p. 181) study on language learners' acquisition of youngspeak in Argentina voiced similar sentiments with one participant, Sally, expressing that she thinks using local informal variants would "sound stupid" as a foreign speaker of Spanish. French and Bealieu (2016) report some students actively avoiding L2 informal speech norms due to perceived negative impact on their comprehensibility when interacting with L1 speakers. Interestingly, some students in Soruç and Griffiths' (2015) study claimed that the status of their interlocutor (native speaker vs non-native speaker) had the opposite effect and felt that informal variants were of more use to them in conversation with native speakers rather than non-native speakers. It is possible that the lack of use of the informal

register in Higher Education also contributed to students feeling that it was inappropriate for them to use.

These instances can be considered as non-participation in particular community practices. Wenger (1998) argues:

> We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through the practices we do not engage in. Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we are not. To the extent that we can come in contact with other ways of being, what we are not can even become a large part of how we define ourselves (Wenger, 1998, p. 164).

As such, while the learners as language users may view themselves as part of the target language community in that they possess a degree of competence in that language, they might also distinguish themselves from native speakers through not participating in native speaker practices of that language because they cannot use them with confidence. In this sense, it is possible that using informal language would constitute trying to "pass" as native speakers or establish in-group membership, which the learners do not yet feel ready to do.

Imagined communities/future self

Pavlenko and Norton (2007, p. 669) posit that "language learners' actual and desired memberships in imagined communities affect their learner trajectories, influencing their agency, motivation, investment and resistance". In exploring the impact of imagination on language learning, the authors interlink three theoretical views: i) nation-states as imagined communities (Anderson, 2006); ii) imagination as a means of engaging with communities of practice (Wenger, 1998); and iii) possible selves as a "conceptual link between cognition and motivation" (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Imagined communities are the result of imagination as a social process and membership in these communities impacts a learner's decisions and behaviours, including their linguistic practices such as: i) favouring local usage patterns when intending to remain in that community (Regan, 2014); ii) prioritising varieties linked to their actual and desired social networks (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a; Fernández, 2013; De Costa, 2016; Martyn, 2022) and; iii) favouring the standard variety due to professional or academic goals (van Compernolle and Willliams, 2012a; Fernández, 2013, DeCosta 2016).

In relation to informal language, a lack of knowledge of such registers can constitute an obstacle to gaining membership in desired communities due to its role in transmitting humour and forging

personal relationships. In the professional sphere, this deficit can impede L2 users' abilities to express their identities or engage in day-to-day conversations with colleagues (Crosling and Ward, 2002; Darling and Dannels, 2003; Myles, 2009; Lazzaro-Salazar, 2013). Furthermore, failure to introduce informal language in the classroom may cause learners to perceive the classroom register as "artificial" and thus a hindrance to their goal of becoming authentic members of the target language community (Dewaele, 2004b).

Thus far, English, and to a somewhat lesser extent French, have been the principal languages studied in L2 variation; however, the findings of these investigations may be applied to other languages. The above examples serve to demonstrate the incredibly complex, varied and individual nature of L2 users' language learning trajectories, particularly in terms of the enthusiasm or caution that they approach informal language with. While learners' autonomy in the acceptance or eschewal of such language must be respected, the widespread use of slang in everyday language means that at the very least, learners should develop a receptive competence. As summarised by Mattiello (2005):

> first, a passive knowledge of slang is often vital for understanding conversations in the media and real situations and may allow learners to identify people's origin and their belonging to a social group or place; second, some active knowledge of it will also allow learners to act in everyday life, to socialize and to create intimacy with their peers; third, some aspects of slang will make the learners' speech vivid, colourful and interesting, and will get them closer to the expressive trends and styles of native speakers (Mattiello, 2005, p. 36).

Therefore, despite the frequent omission of informal varieties from the language classroom, there is a real and pressing need for their inclusion, with the discussion thus far highlighting support from both academic circles and the learners themselves. We have also seen in Section 2.4 that sociolinguistic competence is integral to communicative competence and is recognised as such in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). The question then, is how to go about incorporating sociolinguistic variation and particularly informal variants into the L2 curriculum in order to develop learners' sociolinguistic competence. The CEFRCV (Council of Europe, 2020) sociolinguistic appropriateness scale constitutes an interesting starting point in this regard.

2.5.4 The Language Learner as a Social Agent

If we consider the first descriptor of the sociolinguistic appropriateness scale, which states that a C2 user "can mediate effectively and naturally between users of the target language and members of their own community, taking account of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 137), it is evident that mediation is a key component of advanced sociolinguistic competence. While the 2001 CEFR did not explore mediation in depth, key concepts emphasised were the "co-construction of meaning in interaction and constant movement between the individual level and social level" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 36). These concepts are also fundamental in symbolic competence and sociolinguistic agency (see Section 2.4.2) where language users negotiate meaning through the exchange and intersubjective interpretation of linguistic semiotic resource, that is through exploiting the indexical nature of language. Simultaneously, the flux between the individual and the social mirrors that which occurs in the expression of identity (see Section 2.5.3.2), which is fluid, relational in nature and emerges through interaction between the individual and society. Thus, mediation is inherent to language use on multiple levels. In light of these shared elements between mediation, sociolinguistic competence and indexicality mentioned here, mediation activities represent a promising avenue for developing sociolinguistic competence. Furthermore, mediation has come to prominence as one of the four modes of communication (along with reception, production and interaction), with the CEFRCV (Council of Europe, 2020) now recognising mediation as a process where the language user is a social agent and creates bridges of meaning either within the same language or across multiple languages/modalities. One of the core characteristics of mediation is that "one is less concerned with one's own needs, ideas, or expression than with those of the party or parties for whom one is mediating" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 91), making it an ideal activity for exploring sociolinguistic variation. This is due to the way in which mediation of informal language requires learners to understand and reproduce language that they may not necessarily interact with otherwise, while still respecting the fact that it may not form part of their idiolect.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has explored the intersection of sociolinguistics and foreign language education, highlighting the omnipresence of standard language ideologies. These ideologies serve to perpetuate the power and prestige attributed to the standard variety both in society and language education, and marginalise other varieties and variants, despite the fact that they constitute authentic language. The multiple ways in which language can vary was outlined, with a specific

focus on features of Irish English as the present study takes place in an Irish University. The role of sociolinguistic variation in indexing aspects of identity was linked to more recent conceptualisations of communicative competence, where learners are seen as being agentive L2 users in their own right, who can appropriate L2 linguistic resources accordingly. These linguistic resources include informal varieties, as informal language can help to establish interpersonal relationships, in-group membership and convey aspects of identity. However, acquiring the sociolinguistic competence necessary to do this is an area that many instructed learners struggle with. Ways in which to address the acquisition of the sociolinguistic competence required to navigate informal lexical variants in L2 Spanish is a particularly under researched area, highlighting the need for the present thesis. Departing from the CEFRCV (Council of Europe, 2020) view of the language learner as a social agent, the chapter concludes by presenting mediation activities as a promising avenue for developing sociolinguistic competence, do to their positioning of the learner as sociocultural mediator between various languages and cultures. Chapter 3 will further explore the potential of mediation activities in the form of translation tasks, as a tool to foster sociolinguistic competence.

Chapter 3: Translation and Sociolinguistic Competence: A Dynamic Duo?

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 explored the complex relationship between language ideologies, sociolinguistic variation and language teaching, highlighting the challenges faced by learners in acquiring and using non-standard varieties including informal language. It also demonstrated support and scope for the inclusion of informal language in L2 education from language learners and academic circles, and introduced mediation as a promising avenue in this regard. Departing from Chapter 2's focus on *why* we should incorporate sociolinguistic variation in the L2classroom, Chapter 3 now turns to the matter of *how* to do so. It begins by considering Valdman's (1976, 2000, 2003) pedagogical norm, a set of guiding principles for the selection of which sociolinguistic variants to teach before examining the level at which such variation can or should be introduced, contrasting institutional recommendations with empirical studies. It then argues for a reconceptualisation of language in language education before making a case mediation activities in the form of translation activities as a means to introduce sociolinguistic variation.

3.2 A Pedagogical Norm for a Sociolinguistic Approach

It is fundamental that familiarity with sociolinguistic variation is included as a goal of language learning, with the discussion thus far highlighting two main reasons in this regard. Firstly, a sociolinguistically inclusive pedagogy conveys a more accurate reflection of the linguistic and cultural diversity of a language, rather than reinforcing the hegemonic norms of the standard variety which are not always relevant in day-to-day interactions. Secondly, such a pedagogy also allows learners to become L2 users in their own right, and make use of sociolinguistic variation as an indexical resource to negotiate and interpret meanings and identities, and establish group membership and interpersonal relationships. From a pedagogical viewpoint, this then raises the issue of which elements of sociolinguistic variation should be taught and when to introduce them. A framework which endeavours to aid language educators in this decision is Valdman's (1976, 2000, 2003) pedagogical norm.

Valdman's pedagogical norm presupposes that in linguistic communities, language users' behaviour is guided by a shifting orientation toward multiple overlapping norms. Rather than language users simply conforming to a greater or lesser extent to the linguistic behaviour of one dominant group, it is argued that they shift their norm orientation due to the influence of multiple

factors, such as the situational context and their communicative intent. The pedagogical norm is based on an approximation to the target language determined by i) (socio)linguistic, ii) sociopsychological or epilinguistic, and iii) acquisitional criteria. The (socio)linguistic criterion refers to the natural variation that occurs amongst speakers in genuine communicative situations. The epilinguistic criterion encompasses the target language community's expectations of L2 users and the acquisitional criterion consists of the degree of difficulty associated with learning and using specific variants. In short, this norm essentially advocates selecting and teaching form(s) of the language which are accepted by target language users and are easier than the whole native language system (Bardovi-Harlig and Gass, 2002). Although a relatively simple concept, putting pedagogical norms into practice and including them in the curriculum is a complex issue given their dynamic nature: "they shift as languages evolve, as international expectations for learner speech mature, and as learners progress in their second language development" (Bardovi-Harlig and Gass, 2002, p. 4). Thus, as well as tackling variable features, a pedagogical norm is in and of itself, variable in nature.

Valdman (2000) posits that the epilinguistic criterion also includes learner attitudes towards the choice between different variants within a formal foreign language learning environment. Learners' adoption of standard variants aligns with Bourdieu's (1991) concept of the linguistic market, whereby foreign language learning, which represents an investment on the part of the language learner, becomes more profitable through the acquisition of prestige target language varieties which offer maximum return. However, as discussed in Section 2.5.3, language learners' adoption or non-adoption of non-standard variants can be attributed to a multitude of reasons. Therefore, it is difficult to argue or indeed assume that standard language is more "profitable" for them as such a stance neglects to consider the learners' individual needs and desires in their language learning process. With this in mind, we must advocate a pedagogical norm that not only highlights the multitude of variants available to language users, but also the reasons why one might be chosen over another in a given context. In this way, learners are made conscious of the potential meanings that such choices might communicate, and are empowered to use language the way that best serves them. Thus, it is also necessary to enhance learners' meta- and epilinguistic awareness of the complex nature of language and the meaning making practices of users of the language, with such an approach also acknowledging the learner as a social agent.

3.3 Institutional Frameworks and Sociolinguistic Variation

While Valdman's norm is a useful aid for pedagogues in the development of sociolinguistically appropriate materials and classes, language educators and curricula are also heavily influenced by institutional recommendations. *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (or CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001) has played (and continues to do so) a key role in shaping language teaching, policies and assessment in Europe (Figueras, 2012) and throughout the world (Byram and Parmenter, 2012). This framework breaks language proficiency into six levels (ranging from the initial A1 to the advanced C2). For each level it provides descriptors outlining the abilities of a language user by type of competence and sub-competence (Council of Europe, 2023). The original document has since been expanded and updated with the publication of the *Companion Volume* (or CERFCV, Council of Europe, 2020).

The CEFR describes sociolinguistic competence as being "the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 118). The Companion Volume (2020, p. 136) also recognises that sociolinguistic competence encompasses a range of sociocultural elements, not just the components of the scale of sociolinguistic appropriateness provided. Key concepts on this scale include (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 136):

- using polite forms and showing awareness of politeness conventions
- performing language functions in an appropriate way (at lower levels in a neutral register)
- socialising, following basic routines at lower levels, without requiring the interlocutor(s) to behave differently (from B2 up) and employing idiomatic expressions, allusive usage and humour (at C levels)
- recognising sociocultural cues, especially those pointing to differences, and acting accordingly
- adopting an appropriate register (from B2 up)

According to this sociolinguistic appropriateness scale, the B2 level, which comes under the "independent user" category, is identified as a milestone where language users can start incorporating elements of sociolinguistic variation such as marked/non neutral registers. Another important framework to consider is The Curricula Plan for the Instituto Cervantes (PCIC - *Plan curricular del Instituto Cervantes,* 2006). Instituto Cervantes is a Spanish government agency and the largest organisation in the world responsible for the dissemination of Spanish language and culture. The PCIC takes its lead from the CEFR and also tends to only introduce more informal and colloquial registers in the more advanced proficiency levels (Instituto

Cervantes, 2006). However, one criticism of the CEFR scales, both the originals and those in the CEFRCV, is the apparent overreliance on evaluations and interpretations of language professionals and the absence of authentic learner performance from their creation or calibration (Deygers, 2021). Failure to incorporate learner voices or evidence of their genuine usage of the language into the scales raises the issue of how accurately the scales represent the learners and their needs and abilities at each level. In addition, given the prevalence of variation in language, it seems a disservice to language learners, and indeed language itself, to relegate sociolinguistic variation to the uppermost levels.

Indeed, in a previous study by Beaulieu et al. (2018) on language learners, almost a quarter of participants expressed disappointment at sociolinguistic variation (specifically informal variants) only being introduced when they had already reached an advanced level. One participant describes the realisation that native French speakers do not always use the formal French which she has been taught as indicating that she must now "unlearn and relearn things" (Beaulieu *et al.*, 2018, p. 214). Other studies also support the earlier inclusion of sociolinguistic variation, demonstrating an increase in beginner learners' sociolinguistic awareness following educational interventions (Lemmerich, 2010; French and Beaulieu, 2020). Thus, if learners both want, and are capable of handling sociolinguistic variation at lower levels, this provides a solid rationale for its inclusion at an earlier stage. Drawing a parallel with grammatical knowledge being progressively taught in the target language, Kramsch (2002, p. 76) recommends a similar approach for pragmatic and sociolinguistic awareness and knowledge of sociolinguistic variation whereby they are given "ever increasing attention in the target language".

In line with this growing body of research advocating for the earlier incorporation of sociolinguistic variation, Pedrola (2021) proposes a series of frameworks outlining suggested CEFR levels for various features of colloquial Spanish. The features are organised into five categories: non-verbal, phonetic, morphosyntactic, lexical-semantic and conversational. While many of the subcategories are certainly weighted towards the more advanced levels, what is notable is that with the exception of the non-verbal category, each category contains elements which can be introduced at the initial stages. For example, features suggested for the A1 and A2 levels in Spanish include i) phonetic lengthening to express surprise, indignation etc.: *¿Quéééé?, ¡Síííííííí!;* ii) informal introductions using the demonstrative *este* (morphosyntactic); iii) common abbreviations such as *boli* for *bolígrafo,* meaning pen (lexical semantic) and: iv) the use of fillers e.g., *bien, pues, bueno* (conversational). Commenting on the lexical semantic section, the author highlights that certain wildcard words, lexical frequency and abbreviations are extremely useful for lower-level students but agrees that other areas such as idioms and neologisms are better

left to more advanced levels. Interestingly, despite the widespread frequency of slang and insults in day-to-day language, Pedrola lists these elements as being appropriate for C1/C2 users. Nonetheless, Pedrola's frameworks show that informal variants can and should be woven into every level of language teaching, emphasising the need to present language more holistically, rather than treating non-standard language, including informal varieties, as an afterthought to be added on at higher levels.

3.4 Reconceptualising Language in L2 Education

Reconsidering the hitherto focus on standard language in language education requires us to reconsider our understanding of language in general, particularly from an L2 perspective. As discussed in Section 2.3, globalisation has challenged the "purity" of the standard language and the authenticity of this variety and that of the native speaker, with online communication giving rise to a "heteroglossic real world of linguistic hybridity" (Kramsch, 2014, p. 300). In Section 2.4.2. we explored how learners can navigate such a heteroglossic world as agentive users of the semiotic resources of language. This idea is also supported by Blyth and Dalola (2020, p. 106) who postulate that nowadays L2 users are regarded as authentic speakers in their own right once they are "able to appropriate new forms and meanings that are consonant with their self-perceptions and performed ideas". This (re)definition of an authentic speaker aligns with the more recent conceptualisation of the learner as a social agent, as opposed to an imitation native speaker. Rather than merely calling for the earlier introduction of sociolinguistic variation in the language curriculum, Blyth and Dalola (2020) argue for a reconceptualisation of language itself and set forth five tenets grounded in what the authors term *sociolinguistic facts*, as outlined below:

i) Language is variation: Variation is a core feature of language and "language teachers should acknowledge and name linguistic variables and engage learners at all levels of L2 education in identifying and decoding these variables" (Blyth and Dalola, 2020, p. 107). Initial levels should be introduced to fundamental concepts of linguistic variation in order to improve their sociolinguistic and metalinguistic awareness, intermediate levels should be taught specific variants and their corresponding indexical meanings and in addition to learning further specific variants, advanced learners should also learn about prevalent language ideologies such as that of standard language. It is interesting to note that this contrasts with recommendations of the PCIC and CEFR which assign register to upper intermediate and above. The authors also recognise that different variables will present different levels of difficulty, highlighting the

importance of Valdman's three-pronged approach which factors in such difficulties under the acquisitional criterion.

ii) Language is interaction: Language teachers often perceive language in terms of competence from a Chomskyan perspective (see Section 2.4), with a focus on grammatical rules and little attention paid to patterns of genuine language use (Van Lier, 2004). As a result, Communicative Language Teaching, a longstanding pedagogical approach, often presents generic scenarios in lieu of highlighting these genuine patterns (Swaffar, 2006). In doing so, it rarely focuses on the analysis of interactions reflecting specific social contexts, but instead adopts a macro level approach based on normative situations. Dalola and Blyth (2020) specify that it is a micro focus on language as interaction, rather than macro perspective that is needed to alert learners to how meaning is negotiated dynamically in interactions. This underscores the importance of using authentic materials in the classroom in order to provide examples of genuine language rather than a sanitised textbook version. It also encourages learners to pay attention to what language users *do* with language: how they present themselves, how they navigate power dynamics, how they converge with or diverge from their fellow interlocutors. In essence, such an approach highlights how language can help to shape the communicative context in an interaction.

iii) Language is a means of self-authentication: This tenet stems from the third wave of sociolinguistics which recognised how identity can be indexed in performance and style. Language users draw upon their sociolinguistic repertoire to construct a personalised and context-specific style. As many L2 materials focus on standard language, learners are restricted in their access to authentic input which would allow them observe intersectionality as well as familiarise themselves with resources to perform their own identity. Thus, learners should be supported in observing various performances and then analysing the meaning behind the constituent cultural and linguistic choices. In this way, learners will gain an increased awareness of the range of variants available to them, and learn how to appropriate linguistic semiotic resources, expressing themselves in a way that reflects their identity.

iv) Language is a remix: This tenet recognises the existence of a vast array of linguistic hybridity. Drawing on sociolinguists such as Blommaert (2010), the authors contend that language educators need to recognise the complex and multifaceted nature of language and as such, "language should be approached as an inherently *multi*lingual and *multi*modal cultural tool performed via *trans*lingual practices within a *pluri*lingual context" (authors' emphasis) (Blyth and Dalola, 2020, p. 111). They adopt the term remix as a way of encompassing the meanings of *multi-*, *trans-* and *pluri-*. As such, learners are not just emerging L2 users aiming to fit in with the target

language community, they are plurilingual language users mediating between languages and cultures in a globalised world. The authors also link this tenet to the concept of Designs of Meaning as conceived by the New London Group (1996) in their pedagogy of multiliteracies. According to this concept, any semiotic activity can be treated as a type of Design consisting of three elements: Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned. Available Designs refer to the resources for Design in various semiotic systems such as languages, photography, film and gesture. Available Designs also include "orders of discourse" (Fairclough, 1995), which are the conventions governing a semiotic activity in a particular social space. Designing describes the process of shaping emergent meaning. In re-articulating, recombining and transforming the resources of Available Designs, new meaning is created. The authors stress that activities such as reading and listening (which are typically viewed as receptive) are productive in the sense of Design – listeners and readers produce or Design an interpretation of a text for themselves through drawing on the text as an Available Design and also on their experience of other Available Designs. The Redesigned is the outcome of Designing – a resource which has been transformed through Designing. The Designs of meaning concept underlines that "meaning making is an active and dynamic process, and not something governed by static rules" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 74). In this way, language users can draw upon Available Designs in various languages and cultures to design or remix semiotic resources. Similarly to the third tenet, this principle emphasises the autonomy and agency of the learner in making use of language(s) in the (co)construction of meaning. Their linguistic knowledge and experience not only help them to create new meaning, but also serve as a filter through which they make sense of the world around them. For example, learners use L1 language ideologies to scaffold socio-ideological knowledge in the L2 by extending these L1 ideologies and attributing corresponding social-indexical values to target language variables, e.g., perceiving the standard variety to be more 'intelligent' or superior (Davydova, Tytus and Schleef, 2017; Carrie and McKenzie, 2018). In this sense, acknowledging language as remix acknowledges the presence of the L1 in this mix, and the fact that it permeates every aspect of L2 acquisition. Thus, the learner is an inherent mediator between languages, cultures and ideologies.

v) Language is a dynamic object of study: Following on from the previous tenet, the authors identify two principal ways in which language is continuously evolving. Firstly, it is constantly being remixed by its users, and secondly, our understanding of language continues to develop thanks to research in this area. With this in mind, Blyth and Dalola (2020) stress the importance of language educators staying up to date with developments in the field, and recommend that

teacher education programmes draw on areas such as instructional pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics.

The authors conclude by calling for "a paradigm shift in modern language education that embraces sociolinguistically-oriented teaching practices in an effort to respect our learners' multiple social identities, cultural practices and communicative intents" (Blyth and Dalola, 2020, p. 115). Although various approaches to teaching sociolinguistic variation have been explored, as discussed in Section 2.5, there is room for further investigation in this area, with specific focus on identity, register and agency. While van Compernolle and colleagues have done much interesting work in this regard, their research mainly focuses on grammatical structures (e.g., forms of address) and L2 French (van Compernolle and Williams, 2009, 2012b, 2012a; van Compernolle, 2010, 2013; van Compernolle and Henery, 2014). As such, despite wide ranging support for the inclusion of informal Spanish in the L2 curriculum (Briz, 2002; Albelda and Fernández, 2006; Azúar Bonastre, 2014; Albelda and Briz, 2017), there are few, if any studies which approach it with a focus on lexicon and learner agency. Words, like other linguistic forms, have meanings which extend beyond their referential meanings, and evoke associations with categories from the world around us, conveying information about the speakers and shaping the context. In order to alert students to this tacit meaning making capacity of sociolinguistic variation, we need to draw their attention to the indexical nature of such variation and its interrelationship with culture, the self and communicative intentions. Simultaneously, we must recognise and embrace the role that the L1 plays in processing such knowledge (Davydova, Tytus and Schleef, 2017; Carrie and McKenzie, 2018) and use it to our advantage, drawing on the vast sociolinguistic schemata that exists in the L1. One teaching practice which both respects the multiplex nature of language and honours the L1 is the use of translation as a pedagogical tool in the L2 classroom. The next section will trace the (re)emergence of translation as a pedagogical tool, consider its benefits and how it can provide opportunities for the development of sociolinguistic competence.

3.5 Sociolinguistic Affordances of Translation in Language Teaching

A preliminary systematic search of key databases has revealed that to date, the use of translation in the language classroom has yet to be applied to the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation and the development of sociolinguistic competence. This does not necessarily imply a lack of translation's potential in the classroom, but is rather a reflection of the (re)emerging status of translation in the field of language teaching. While interest in the implementation of translation in foreign language education is growing, there are still many novel applications which have yet

to be explored. It is the position of the present study that translation constitutes a promising tool for exploring the social and stylistic meanings associated with variable features of language, and as such can contribute to the development of language learners' sociolinguistic competence.

Thus far, we have discussed variability primarily in relation to variable linguistic forms. However, Kramsch (2002, p. 72) extends the concept of variability and a language learning norm "to include all explicit or implicit language awareness and communicative competencies against which learner performance is measured, assessed and judged". Specifically, variable forms of use, levels of meaning, modalities of input and contexts of use. With regard to forms of use, relativity in language use can be exploited as a language learning strategy. For example, translation problematises the commensurability of referential meanings, thereby drawing the learner's attention to the similarities and differences between the L1 and L2, and the variable relationship between form and meaning. In other words, by tasking learners with exploring the equivalence of semiotic symbols in the L1 and L2, it heightens their awareness of the meaning-making capacity of sociolinguistic variation. Before further exploring this line of enquiry, it is important to first consider the place of translation in language teaching, and what we mean by translation.

3.5.1 Translation and L2 Learning

Translation has experienced a somewhat rocky road in the field of language education, due in part to its association with the grammar translation method. This traditional method was widely used until the mid-1900s, and focused on reading and writing skills in the form of direct translation from the target language into the L1 (for a detailed review see Cook (2010)). Subsequent language methodologies such as the Reform Movement and the Direct Method discouraged the use of translation, instead advocating a focus on speech and orality. During this period from the late 19th century to early 20th century, it was also argued that learners' L1 negatively impacted their L2 acquisition, which further contributed to the demise of translation (Bazani, 2019). Today, translation related activities in language education are increasingly accepted, by scholars, teachers and students as being of pedagogical value (Carreres, 2006; Leonardi, 2010; Fernández Guerra, 2014; Laviosa, 2014; Kelly and Bruen, 2015). Indeed, approaches to translation in language teaching have now shifted from whether it has a place, to focusing on best practice for its use in the classroom (Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez, 2011).

With regard to the nature of translation in a L2 context, a distinction must be made between translation in relation to professional translator competence, where the production of a translated text is the end goal, and translation for pedagogical purposes (Klaudy, 2003; Vermes, 2010; Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez, 2011). However, while these are distinct areas, they do

have important points of contact. For example, Kelly (2014, pp. 83–84) suggests the following sub-competences as a requisite for translator competence:

- Communicative and textual competence in at least two languages and cultures
- Cultural and intercultural competence
- Subject area competence
- Professional and instrumental competence
- Attitudinal or psycho-physiological competence. Self-concept, self-confidence, attention/concentration, memory, initiative
- Interpersonal competence
- Strategic competence

At a glance, it is evident that many of these are competences which we hope to develop in the foreign language learner, which in turn contributes to the argument for translation's inclusion in foreign language education. However, not all translation in the language classroom is considered to be pedagogical translation *per se*. Earlier conceptualisations of translation in language teaching encompassed various forms of translation such as i) translation as an independent pedagogical exercise (pedagogical translation); ii) learners' use of translation to check the meaning of input (interior translation); and iii) teachers use of translation to provide an explanation in the learners' L1 (explicative translation) (Pintado Gutiérrez, 2012).

Although this categorisation is useful, it does not illustrate the full range of L1/L2/additional language use in the classroom or other practices which have been related to translation in language teaching such as code-switching and translanguaging. In fact, Pintado Gutiérrez (2018) highlights that one of the principal issues in defining pedagogical translation is the plethora of terms and concepts which have been associated with the construct. Building on conceptualisations of pedagogical translation in various theoretical and empirical frameworks, she proposes the use of Cook's (2010) term *Translation in Language Teaching* (TILT) as an umbrella term for the various uses of L1/L2 and/or additional languages in the language classroom. These uses include "translating per se, translation in relation to linguistic skills, translation and language alternation, and also translation as a cognitive strategy" (Pintado Gutiérrez, 2018, p. 234).

Pintado Gutiérrez' (2018, p. 234) framework consists of three categories as outlined below:

- Pedagogical translation: translation activities/tasks included in L2 teaching and learning which develop language awareness, accuracy, pragmatic and intercultural competence,

creativity, problem solving, and autonomy and collaboration (amongst other skills). Tasks are not limited to written activities and can include multimodal material.

- Code-switching: various forms of alternation between the teacher's and learners' languages during classroom interaction, which can include, the teacher using translation for explanation purposes, class discussions and student-student interactions.
- Interior translation: cognitive strategies which draw on students L1 or additional languages as a resource for developing or organising knowledge about the L2.

González-Davies (2020, p. 434) refers to this first type of translation (pedagogical translation) as Translation for Other Learning Contexts (TOLC), that is "translation to acquire linguistic and intercultural mediation skills in fields other than translator training". The same author also posits that translation is both a translanguaging scaffolding activity and a dynamic communicative process (González-Davies, 2017). Both Pintado Gutiérrez' and González-Davies' conceptualisations of translation stress the broad scope of the construct, where the focus of translation is not necessarily purely linguistic, and it can relate to a range of mediation skills.

These changing conceptualisations of translation in language teaching align with the development of the construct of mediation in institutional frameworks. Although translation was included under mediation as one of the four principal communicative activities in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) (the others being reception, production and interaction), the concept of mediation was somewhat limited, with it being presented primarily as processing and producing written and spoken texts, and linked in particular to translation and interpreting. However, in the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020), mediation has been much further developed. Mediation is now seen to encompass a broad range of activities (see North and Piccardo (2016, pp. 17–20)), including i) linking idiolects, sociolects, styles and textual genre; ii) facilitating exchange in social interaction; and iii) appropriating language as a semiotic resource to facilitate thought. These examples serve to highlight the sociolinguistic role of mediation, thus lending weight to the present argument that translation can be used to facilitate the development of sociolinguistic knowledge.

In sum, translation in language teaching includes a wide range of uses of the L1/L2 in the classroom including translation per se, code-switching and cognitive strategies, with activities drawing on multimodal sources, not just the written language. Nowadays, institutional frameworks such as the CEFRCV consider translation under the communicative activity of mediation. Translation's pedagogical value is also increasingly being recognised, with research

demonstrating a range of ways in which translation activities can positively impact instructed language learning.

3.5.2 Applications and Benefits of Translation in Language Education

Translation is a complex activity which often involves multiple skills simultaneously. Furthermore, it is not independent of other skills, but rather is "dependent on and inclusive of them" (Malmkjær, 1998, p. 8). Therefore, translation constitutes a crossroads where learners' awareness of language both in terms of meaning in context and form is enhanced, and also improves learners' skills such as reading and writing (Machida, 2011). At the same time, it facilitates practice with other areas such as language discourse and textual analysis (Pintado Gutiérrez, 2012). While Malmkjaer's discussion of integration and interdependency referred to the four traditional *skills* (reading, writing, listening and speaking) within the activity of translation, the focus has now shifted to the four communicative language *activities* (reception, production, mediation and interaction) (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020). However, the notions of integration and interdependency remain just as important, with the CEFRCV considering mediation to encompass reception, production and frequently interaction (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 34). Therefore, translation, under the umbrella of mediation (broadly in 2001 and more specifically in 2020), requires language users to interact with other language users/texts/ideas/forms of input and draw upon receptive, productive and often interactive skills. More recently, conceptualisations of texts and forms of input have been expanded to included audiovisual materials, which has in turn led to the emergence of an approach using audiovisual translation in L2 education, known as Didactic Audiovisual Translation (DAT). This use of translation can enhance learners' motivation, cognitive processes and creativity (Talaván, 2020; Talaván, Lertola and Fernández-Costales, 2023).

While there has been extensive research on language education and translation studies, or language education and sociolinguistics, work at the intersection of all three is scarce. As the present study is concerned specifically with L2 sociolinguistic competence in relation to informal lexical items, a logical starting point is the impact of translation on vocabulary acquisition.

In this regard, collaborative L1 – L2 translation tasks with dictionary support have been shown demonstrate significant lexical knowledge gains (Bruton, 2007). Furthermore, as the tasks were completed together by the whole class, they encouraged extended oral interaction and language processing in the L2. Elsewhere, a comparison of L1 – L2 translation tasks, L2 – L1 translation tasks and the rote-copying of L2 words/phrases with their L1 translations resulted in significant short-term lexical recall across all three tasks types (Hummel, 2010). Interestingly, contrary to

the author's hypothesis, a significant advantage was observed for the rote-copying condition versus the two translation conditions. This may in part be due to the greater cognitive load associated with producing a translation in comparison with the receptive processing of a translation in the rote-copying condition. This in turn indicates that perhaps a threshold of L2 proficiency is required for the translation condition to be more effective. However, there are also calls for using translation with beginner levels (Badda Badda, 2024; Liu and Yang, 2025), therefore it is perhaps rather a case of finding the most appropriate task type for the learners' level. Nonetheless, the positive results yielded by the rote-copying condition suggest that exposure to translation equivalents facilitates increased interconnections and more elaborate memory traces. Exposure to translation equivalents could potentially also contribute to lemma mediation.

L1 lemma mediation refers to the process whereby rather than link new L2 words directly to their referential concepts, learners first link them to L1 words which represent L1 concepts that they are familiar with (Dagut, 1977; Ellis, 1997; Jiang, 2004). Therefore, they essentially draw on interior translation to understand new L2 terms and the concepts which they denote. However, the conceptual systems of languages do not always directly correspond with one another, therefore an L2 term may not have an exact L1 translation that is semantically equivalent in every way. Laufer and Girsai (2008) give the example of *home* which is translated as *maison* in French. Although *maison* and *house* are equivalents, *maison* is not an exact equivalent for *home* as it does not evoke the same connotations of safety and comfort. Thus, when there is a lack of direct equivalence, the learner must adjust their semantic or conceptual knowledge of the L2 term to that of the target language community in order to be able to use it appropriately.

In addition to the L1 influence on the acquisition of L2 vocabulary such as that observed in lemma mediation, there are other possible reasons for the positive impact of translation on vocabulary acquisition. For example, Laufer and Girsai's (2008) investigation of contrastive analysis and translation activities attributed the resulting positive gains in vocabulary to the "noticing" hypothesis, the "pushed output" hypothesis and "task-induced involvement load".

According to the "noticing" hypothesis, learners need to notice forms and their corresponding meanings to convert input into learning intake (Schmidt, 1990, 1994). While some learning may take place without noticing or intentionally focused attention, it is likely a necessity for language learning (Schmidt, 2001). One method for drawing attention to an L2 item and increasing its noticeability is contrastive association between the L2 item and its corresponding L1 item(s) such as that which occurs in translation (Laufer and Girsai, 2008).

Translation into the L2 also constitutes a form of "pushed output" as the act of translation requires learners to interact with specific terms and prevents them from avoiding challenging words or structures (Laufer and Girsai, 2008). According to the "pushed output" hypothesis, language production which requires learners to stretch their linguistic resources contributes to improved language production and development (Swain, 1985; Swain and Lapkin, 1995).

Finally, Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) "task-induced involvement load" hypothesis asserts that tasks with a high involvement load optimise vocabulary acquisition. A high involvement load consists of three elements: need, search, and evaluation, whereby the need is the motivational component, and search and evaluation are the cognitive components. The requirement for a term in order to complete a task constitutes the need element. Search is the exploration for the meaning of a new L2 term or the hunt for an L2 term to express an L1 concept. Evaluation entails the appraisal of a word's meaning or form while considering its context. In a translation task, terms in the source text must be both understood and (re)produced in the translation, constituting the need element. The search element is present in both L2-L1 translation (looking up the meaning of previously unknown L2 terms) and L1-L2 translation (searching for L2 terms to express an L1 term or concept). The evaluation element is present in the selection of the most contextually appropriate equivalent for a given term/phrase. As such, translation exemplifies a high involvement load task.

The discussion thus far illustrates the benefits of translation with regard to vocabulary acquisition, where it has been shown to yield lexical gains, encourage prolonged oral interaction in the target language, aid in building connections between L1 and L2 concepts, increase the noticeability of a L2 term, stretch learners to interact with challenging terms they might otherwise avoid and constitutes a high-involvement load task. Such results all lend strength to the argument that translation is a useful pedagogical tool for enhancing leaners' knowledge of informal lexical items. However, there are many more relevant benefits to translation in language teaching, such as its role in fostering pragmatic competence.

3.5.3 Translation, Pragmatic Competence and Sociolinguistic Agency

Given the entwined nature of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, another useful avenue to explore is research intersecting language education, translation and pragmatic competence, as such studies help to further make a case for the role of translation in the development of sociolinguistic competence.

Translation is a problem-solving activity which requires learners to evaluate both the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) in relation to the cultural norms of different language users. This in turn contributes to enhance learners' metacognitive awareness of themselves as members of cultures and linguistic communities (Elorza, 2008). In doing so, translation can also foster intercultural competence by positioning the learner as a mediator between their own linguistic communities and those of the target language (Fois, 2020). Such communities are not just monolithic L1/L2 communities, but rather multiple overlapping subcommunities of language users. As such, translation constitutes a literacy practice which draws on relationships "between text and reader, student and teacher, classroom and community, in local, regional and transnational sites" (Norton, 2013, p. 116). By investing in such literary practices, learners are simultaneously investing in various potential and imagined identities. Therefore, by making learners cognisant of their own and alternate linguistic communities, translation highlights current and potential affiliations to a range of real and imagined communities.

Mediation between linguistic communities in the form of translation also entails an exploration of cultural pragmatics, which can in turn contribute to pragmatic competence (Fois, 2020). Kim (2013), for example, demonstrates how learners naturally rely on interior translation to develop their understanding of the pragmatic feature of sarcasm. Although the instructional method used in this study was concept-based instruction rather than translation, it showed that Korean EFL learners relied on their L1 cultural schemata and translation to process instances of sarcasm in the L2. By translating the instances into the L1, they used their L1 semantic knowledge to aid them in detecting and understanding L2 sarcasm. Furthermore, they drew on their L1 perceptual knowledge of politeness and appropriate intensity when using sarcasm, which occasionally differed from that of native speakers in terms of the grade of (in)formality. While the use of the L1 cultural schema was sometimes problematic in this sense when there was a lack of conceptual equivalence between the L1 and L2, translation nonetheless aided them in their development of pragmatic competence and served as a natural scaffolding between the two languages.

Elsewhere, Guzman and Alcón (2009) advocate the use of translation in the EFL classroom as a communicative-pragmatic activity which spans cultures. They argue that it can highlight the social role of linguistic resources in the expression and interpretation of meaning and communication. In this sense, contextual knowledge and linguistic competence are complementing variables which contribute to the comprehension of L2 culture. Guzman and Alcón's (2009) intervention uses translation as a tool for raising learners' sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic awareness with a focus on requests. They use contextualised examples in

translation as a form of guided observation to draw learners' attention to the associations between linguistic forms and pragmatic functions, and the role of sociopragmatic factors.

More recently, Lertola and Mariotti (2017) have demonstrated positive gains in pragmatic awareness following their quasi-experiment on the effects of i) reverse dubbing; ii) subtitling; and iii) traditional translation tasks in an Italian English as a Second Language class. Although no statistically significant differences were observed, the reverse dubbing and subtitling groups outperformed the traditional translation tasks and control groups in both the post-test and the delayed post-test. The authors posit that this, combined with the learners' enjoyment of the activities indicates that the relationship between L2 pragmatic awareness and the use of AVT materials merits further investigation. Elsewhere, Aydin (2023) has investigated the effects of implicit and explicit form-focused instruction on the development of L2 pragmatic competence. This employed translation activities in the form of i) translation exercises using target forms or ii) requiring learners to compare role play scripts that they had written with scripts which had been written by native speakers. Although explicit instruction appeared to more effective than implicit instruction in this investigation, both methods and activities demonstrated an improvement in pragmatic performance. Finally, Kargar and Ahmadi (2021) present one of the few studies which intersects sociolinguistics and translation in language teaching, where collaborative translation tasks in a supportive novice-expert environment resulted in improved sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge.

House (2008) explores the specific benefits and features of translation which can be used to develop L2 pragmatic competence, and considers how translation activities can be incorporated into the L2 curriculum. Translations bidirectionality is key, with the two-way relationship affecting both the meaning of the message and how it is communicated, that is, its style. The author conceptualises translation as a form of communication across cultures, with the past and present sociocultural context anchoring both the ST and the TT. The context is composed not only of the physical environment but also of the cognitive, embodied in the expectations, norms and values of members of linguistic communities. Alongside the macro context of culture, individual situations constitute micro contexts. House posits the ST and TT must be equivalent in meaning and function, with the function relation to the application or use of a text in a specific context of situation. In this sense, context of situation is ingrained in the text through the language used and the social environment. Thus, a core component of textual analysis is the analysis of the situation in which it is nested. This situational and contextual emphasis constitutes a key benefit of translation as a complex interlinguistic activity:

> If translation is used in a way that its pragmatic potential is fully exploited, it would be carried out as an exercise in establishing functional, pragmatic equivalence by relating linguistic forms to their communicative functions as utterances in a context of situation and culture as described above. Translation would thus play an eminently useful role in developing learners' communicative competence (House, 2008, p. 147).

This linking of linguistic forms with their communicative functions is a means to explore the use of pragmalinguistic devices to enact sociopragmatic concepts. Although House advocates the use of translation activities as means to foster pragmatic competence, many of the activities she proposes involve translating a text in accordance with modified sociolinguistic parameters such as a different register or geographic context. An understanding of the relationship between form and function empowers the learner to make informed decisions regarding the language that they use. This in turn aligns with CEFRCV's construal of the language user/learner as a social agent, acting autonomously in social interaction and the learning process (Council of Europe, 2020).

3.5.4 Translation, Sociolinguistic Agency and Sociolinguistic Competence

The equation of the language learner to a social agent coincides with van Compernolle and Williams' (2012a) view of self, identity and agency as being inextricably intertwined. Rather than referring simply to the ability to act, agency also encompasses "the ability to assign relevance and significance to things and events" (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, p. 143). Thus, van Compernolle and Williams (2012a) define sociolinguistic agency as:

> the socioculturally mediated act of recognizing, interpreting, and using the social and symbolic meaning-making possibilities of language. It consists of an understanding of how the use of one linguistic variant or another simultaneously reflects and creates the context in which it is used, is a performance of one's social identity at the time of utterance, and affects one's environment and interlocutor(s) (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a, p. 237).

The authors clarify that sociolinguistic agency is not a characteristic nor a property of a speaker but rather something which is enacted in the moment at a micro-level between interlocutors. Therefore, it can be argued that a sociolinguistically competent language user is someone who is able to exert sociolinguistic agency: in addition to being aware of appropriate language use in context, they are also aware of how the language they use can (co)construct this context.

When considering how to improve learners' competence, one issue is whether or not such knowledge or abilities can be taught. Kasper (1997) argues that they cannot:

> Competence, whether linguistic or pragmatic, is not teachable. Competence is a type of knowledge that learners possess, develop, acquire, use or lose. The challenge for foreign or second language teaching is whether we can arrange learning opportunities in such a way that they benefit the development of pragmatic competence in L2 (Kasper, 1997, p. 1).

Although Kasper uses the term pragmatic competence, the same can easily be said of sociolinguistic competence. As evidenced in previous sections, explicit instruction can and has positively impacted the sociolinguistic competence of learners in terms of their knowledge of informal and colloquial registers. However, it has also been shown that learner performance is not necessarily an indicator of their sociolinguistic knowledge as learners may choose to actively avoid certain variants that they are in fact familiar with, if said variants do not align with the learner's identity. Herein lies the strength of translation as a learning opportunity. In centring on the process rather than the product, it shifts the focus onto the underlying decisions behind the selection of certain pragmalinguistic or sociolinguistic variants over others and the resulting impact on the style and message of the text. When tasked with establishing equivalence, the learners are required to interact with the indexical nature of language itself and thus fulfil "the socioculturally mediated act of recognizing, interpreting, and using the social and symbolic meaning-making possibilities of language" that constitutes sociolinguistic agency (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a, p. 237). In addition, although learners may choose to embrace or eschew informal sociolinguistic variants for a wide range of reasons, at a minimum they will need to develop a receptive competence to be able to interact with native speakers of the L2 or L2 media. As a form of pushed output, translation respects the fact that they may not necessarily choose to use these variants themselves but still allows them to engage with and become familiar with the sociolinguistic or sociopragmatic connotations of a given term or expression. Thus, they can then make an informed decision about whether to incorporate these terms into their sociolinguistic repertoire rather than simply avoid them with caution for fear of making a sociolinguistic blunder. Finally, one of the principal obstacles L2 learners face is the lack of informal or colloquial input due to the formal style of learning materials and teacher input, with sociolinguistic variation and particularly informal registers rarely explicitly incorporated into the L2 curriculum. Translation activities can help to overcome this and allow learners to interact with an endless and varied array of authentic language samples demonstrating sociolinguistic variation in all its diversity.

3.6 Summary

This chapter began by demonstrating how Valdman's (1976, 2000, 2003) pedagogical norm informed the selection of informal lexical variants as the target feature for the present study. It then examined how informal registers and non-standard languages feature in institutional frameworks such as the CEFRCV, arguing for their increased inclusion in L2 education. Reconsidering the inclusion of such varieties in L2 education requires us to revisit how we conceptualise language itself from an L2 perspective, recognising its variable, interactive and hybrid nature and its role in the expression of self (Blyth and Dalola, 2020). Such a reconsideration also acknowledges the impact and potential of the L1 in the process of L2 acquisition, and how this can be exploited in the form of translation activities. The chapter then outlined the benefits and applications of translation in language teaching, such as contributing to vocabulary acquisition, therefore making it particularly appropriate for working with lexical variation. In light of the dearth of studies intersecting sociolinguistics and translation and language teaching, studies exploring translation to foster pragmatic competence were examined, as the interrelated nature of pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence indicates that translation can in turn also foster sociolinguistic competence. Chapter 4 now turns to the methodology and research design of the present study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this study is to evaluate the use of translation-related activities as a means to foster foreign language learners' sociolinguistic competence. In order to do so, a translation-based pedagogical enrichment programme (in line with terminology used by van Compernolle (2012, 2013, 2016)) was designed, and implemented in an upper intermediate Spanish class in an Irish university. A mixed methods approach was adopted to facilitate evaluating the programme from multiple angles. This chapter presents and justifies the research methods used to address the aims of the study. It begins by problematising sociolinguistic variation in the context of foreign language learning, and stating the aim and research questions guiding the study. The discussion then moves to an overview of mixed methods research (MMR), examining its definition, philosophical underpinnings, rationales for its use and design types. Subsequently, the specific design of this study is presented before an outline and justification of the data collection instruments that are used in this study.

4.2 The Challenge of Sociolinguistic Variation for L2 Learners

As outlined in Chapter 2, sociolinguistic variation constitutes a semiotic system which language users manipulate in order to convey social meanings, and as such, it plays a core role in communication (Eckert, 2012, 2016). Despite the evident importance of sociolinguistic variation in day-to-day interaction, it is often absent from the L2 classroom due to the prevalence of standard language ideology, which prioritises the prestige standard variety of a language (van Compernolle, 2013). Teacher talk and learning materials tend to lack representation of sociolinguistic variation, thus reducing the contact that foreign language learners have with colloquial and informal variants (Rehner and Mougeon, 2003; Etienne and Sax, 2009; Gautier and Chevrot, 2015).

As a result, instructed learners struggle to develop sociolinguistic competence (defined in Section 2.4.1 as the ability to understand and/or produce variable structures in relation to social norms and to interpret linguistic and extralinguistic information) (Regan, 1995, 2004; Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi, 2004; Nadasdi, Mougeon and Rehner, 2005; Mougeon, Nadasdi and Rehner, 2010). In addition to having limited input of informal and colloquial language, learners may also eschew such variants due to caution, and their status as a non-native speaker of the target language (Kinginger and Farrell, 2004; Soruç and Griffiths, 2015). Learners' plans,

aspirations and actual or desired social networks also influence their adoption or rejection of informal and colloquial variants: e.g., those learning a language for professional purposes might favour a more "neutral" register (Fernández, 2013) as might students for whom the foreign language is more of an academic pursuit (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a). Elsewhere, those who envisage themselves as future active participants in a target language community may want or need informal and colloquial language to integrate themselves into this community and form interpersonal relationships (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a; Lazzaro-Salazar, 2013).

The highly individual and subjective nature of the learner's trajectory complicates the matter of fostering sociolinguistic competence from a didactic perspective. Rather than a one size fits all approach, the goal is that learners are able to interact with a wide range of speakers in as many contexts as possible. Furthermore, how are foreign language educators to know that their students are capable of understanding the linguistic and extralinguistic information embedded in sociolinguistic variants, if the non-use of such variants is a valid option? Indeed, choosing to avoid certain variants may reflect a learner's individual relationship with the target language and their aspirations. If performance alone is not a reliable indicator of sociolinguistic knowledge, we need to also consider the underlying processes which influence performance.

Therefore, in addition to increasing instructed language learners' contact with informal and colloquial language, it is also necessary to foster opportunities which allow them to become familiar with such variants while simultaneously respecting their autonomy, and the fact that certain variants may not align with their future selves, imagined communities or the wider social pressures to become proficient in a standard. Thus, this investigation explores whether translation-related activities can provide such an opportunity in a formal instruction environment.

4.3 Study Aim and Research Questions

The overarching aim of this study is to improve learners' L2 sociolinguistic competence. Accordingly, the purpose of this mixed methods study is to design, implement and evaluate a pedagogical programme which hopes to facilitate the development of L2 sociolinguistic competence through the use of translation tasks.

The research questions which guide the study are as follows:

1. How do learners navigate register in their translation of lexical sociolinguistic variants?
2. In what ways can translation foster sociolinguistic competence?

3. Do learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and preferences for informal language change after a translation-based enrichment programme?
4. What do learner insights indicate about their experience of exploring sociolinguistic variation through translation?

The study adopts a convergent mixed methods design, where quantitative and qualitative data are collected in parallel during the enrichment programme. These data are then analysed separately and subsequently merged. A convergent design aims "to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" (Morse, 1991, p. 122), to provide a better understanding of a research problem. Data collection instruments in this study include a pre- and post-questionnaire, learner productions and a focus group.

The enrichment programme consisted of a series of translation tasks which were carried out in a final year Spanish language module in an Irish university, bookended by a pre-enrichment/post-enrichment questionnaire which was administered prior to and following completion of the programme. The questionnaire consisted of closed questions to collect quantitative data and was employed to assess potential changes in self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and language preferences, before and after the programme. Qualitative data was collected in the form of learner productions, that is, their responses to four translation tasks designed for the purpose of this study. This data served to explore the emerging sociolinguistic competence of the learners. Further qualitative data was collected using a focus group which was conducted after the programme to shed light on the learners' experience of the pedagogical methods.

The multifaceted relationship between learners' sociolinguistic knowledge and their sociolinguistic performance means that a mixed methods approach lends itself well to this study. Ivankova and Greer (2015, p. 64) note mixed methods' increasing popularity in the field of applied linguistics, and posit that it can offer "a more multidimensional and accurate view of the processes of learning a language", citing the complex nature of linguistic, cultural, political and social aspects in language learning as a key consideration. Combining quantitative and qualitative techniques also contributes to the overall methodological rigor of the investigation (Mackey, 2017). The following section provides a more detailed description of MMR before the discussion turns to the design of the present study.

4.4 Mixed Methods Research

MMR emerged in the late 1980s across disciplines ranging from sociology, evaluation, management, nursing, medicine, and education, as authors in these fields explored how to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). It is now considered to the third major research approach alongside qualitative and quantitative research.

4.4.1 Definition and Philosophical Foundations

MMR combines quantitative and qualitative approaches (including data collection methods, analysis and philosophical considerations) for the purposes of "breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007, p. 123). One of the key characteristics of MMR is its affordance of the methodological strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research, while reducing the limitations of both approaches. In this particular study, it serves to enhance the evaluation of an educational programme by incorporating the learners' perspectives, and facilitates the evaluation of both the processes and the outcomes of the programme (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data can be achieved through merging data sets, explaining the data, using one database to help build another or embedding the data in the context of a larger framework (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). These integration procedures are usually informed by a worldview or paradigm, which often in mixed methods (and in the case of the present study), is pragmatism.

Paradigms are composed of four constituent elements: i) ontology: assumptions about the nature of reality, ii) epistemology: the nature of the relationship between the enquirer and what can be known; iii) methodology: how can the enquirer go about investigating what they believe can be known; and iv) axiology: the role of values in the research process (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, 2005). These elements are closely entwined and influence decisions relating to how best to produce evidence (methodology); what can be captured and considered as evidence (epistemology and ontology) and what is deemed worthy of being understood (axiology) (Ortega, 2005). Thus, even if not stated, all research takes place in a paradigm as it is guided by a set of implicit and/or explicit beliefs in relation to the above elements (Grix, 2004).

Intuitively, pragmatism is an appealing paradigm for MMR as it allows you to "study what interests and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that you deem appropriate, and use the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system" (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, p. 30). It is for this reason that the present study is founded in a

pragmatic worldview, as it prioritises the research question(s) and allows this to shape the methods which are used. While quantitative research is often associated with paradigms favouring a deductive approach and qualitative with paradigms favouring an inductive approach, MMR rejects this dichotomy and employs both in the inductive-deductive research cycle, as depicted in Figure 3 below.

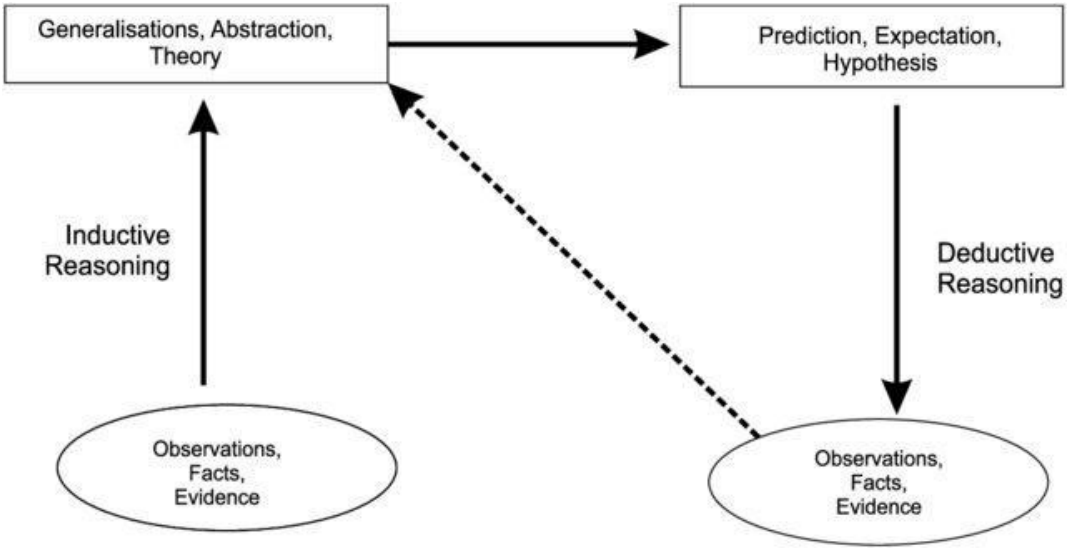


Figure 3. The inductive-deductive research cycle (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.27)

Here, there is a continuous back and forth between the general (e.g., theories or conceptual frameworks) and the particular (e.g., data).

4.4.2 Intersecting Study Purpose and Design

In addition to the influence of the chosen research paradigm, MMR study design is also shaped by the underlying purpose(s) and rationale for adopting MMR. Based on Creamer's (2018) adaptation of Greene, Caracelli and Graham's (1989) typology of purposes, the present study is an evaluation design, as it seeks to evaluate a pedagogical enrichment programme. Evaluation/intervention designs are used to collect qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the "effectiveness of an intervention, program, activity, class or workshop" (Creamer, 2018, p. 28). Both intervention and evaluation studies are process oriented, and endeavour to answer questions about *what* the outcomes of an intervention or evaluation were, as well as *how* or *why* these outcomes emerged. A key difference between the two types of studies is that intervention studies will often have a control group and employ an experimental or quasi-experimental design, whereas evaluation studies are highly context specific and are unlikely to have a control group. Creamer (2018, p. 31) specifies that "[e]valuation studies often have a qualitative priority

because of interest in participants' perceptions and to answer both outcome (e.g., what was learned) and process questions (e.g., what led to improved outcomes)".

As well as categorising mixed methods studies according to the purpose and rationale of the investigation, they can also be categorised in relation to their design. As the present study constitutes a type of programme evaluation, it is a complex mixed methods design, in that it contains more components than a simple core convergent design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) identify three core designs in their typology of mixed methods design: convergent, explanatory sequential and exploratory sequential. This typology is based on the *intent* of the design or the outcome that the researcher aims to attain by mixing qualitative and quantitative databases (e.g., to converge, to explore or to explain). They posit that mixed methods studies will employ one or more of these designs or apply them within a larger framework.

In the explanatory sequential design, quantitative data is collected and analysed in the first phase. In a second phase, qualitative methods are used to expand on or explain the results from the first phase. In the exploratory sequential design, qualitative data usually is collected in the first phase. Building on these results, a quantitative feature such as an instrument is developed in a second phase and this feature is then tested in a third quantitative phase. In the convergent design, quantitative and qualitative results are compared or combined, with a view to validating one set of findings with the other, and gaining a more rounded understanding of the problem (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

A convergent design was deemed to be the most appropriate option for this study due to its potential to provide multiple perspectives of a problem from various angles (Creswell, 2015). In this study, this design allowed the quantitative pre- and post-questionnaire results to be compared with the qualitative learner productions, to gain a more complete insight into the impact of the enrichment programme on learners' sociolinguistic knowledge. Secondly, the qualitative focus group provided the opportunity to incorporate learners' perceptions and opinions of the programme itself. Thus, the efficacy of translation-related activities as a means to develop sociolinguistic competence was explored from multiple angles. Finally, as there was limited time for collecting both quantitative and qualitative types of data (e.g., in the course of one semester), a convergent design was particularly useful as it facilitated the collection of both types of data in the one phase (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

This study embeds a convergent design (Creswell, 2015; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018) within an evaluation design (Creamer, 2018). Fundamentally, programme

evaluations focus on assessing the outcomes of a programme, but can also include identifying a need for a programme, its design, delivery and/or efficiency (Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman, 2004). As highlighted by Creamer (2018), one of the distinguishing features of an evaluation design is that due to its highly context-specific nature, there is often no control group. With this in mind, a single group pre-test post-test design was adopted for this project.

4.4.3 A Mixed Methods Single Group Pre-/Post- Design

In the single group pre-test post-test design (also referred to as pre-experimental), a pre-test is administered to a group prior to undergoing an educational programme, followed by a post-test upon completion of the programme. Observed improvements between the pre-test and post-test scores may indicate that the treatment or programme has worked (Marsden and Torgerson, 2012). Pre-experimental designs can determine the "*promise* of an intervention during its development phase" (original italics), and help to demonstrate the feasibility of implementing the intervention. However, it is important to not overestimate the efficacy of the programme as other factors may influence any changes in results as is further discussed under limitations in Section 8.3 (Marsden and Torgerson, 2012, p. 592).

A single group pre-test post-test design (e.g., with no control/comparison group) was deemed to be the most appropriate design for this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the inclusion of this element in a study on foreign language learners' sociolinguistic development is supported by existing literature. Following their study on metasociolinguistic reflections and the insight they provide into learners' developing sociolinguistic repertoires, Beaulieu et al. (2018, p. 217) called for studies to adopt a pre-/post-test design to "explore the degree to which actual gains in receptive skills… or productive skills… may indeed occur". There are also certain advantages to this design; namely that it is useful and flexible when ethical issues and limited resources impact the ability to adopt an experimental design (Wang and Morgan, 2010). As the research was conducted in a real-world environment, it was necessary to work with an intact class in the interests of minimising disruption to the learners, and not depriving learners of potentially beneficial content. The module in which the intervention was carried out is only taken by one cohort of students, who come from two different undergraduate programmes. In order to adopt an experimental or quasi-experimental design (i.e., with a control or comparison group), it would be necessary to identify a separate group which is similar enough in characteristics to the treatment group. Characteristics would include being at a similar stage of their undergraduate studies (i.e., Year 3 or 4); having previously covered some translation content; being comparable in terms of numbers of students who had spent a prolonged period in a Spanish speaking

community; and ideally being taught by the same lecturer to account for variability within teaching style and focus, etc. Furthermore, to ensure that groups were comparable in terms of course content, an intervention for the control group using an alternative method to translation activities to explore similar sociolinguistic content would need to be designed. Therefore, for reasons of resources and feasibility, the use of an experimental or quasi-experimental approach was deemed to be beyond the scope of the present project.

In order to improve the rigour and validity of the single group pre-/post-test design, this study uses a mixed methods approach to triangulate learners' self-perceived abilities (pre-/post-test) with learner performance (translation tasks) and learners' reflections (focus group) to provide a more complete picture of how the enrichment programme influenced their developing sociolinguistic repertoires, if at all. Thus, the quantitative pre-/post-questionnaire component of the study served to frame the structure of the project. The qualitative element is embedded within this framework and consists of i) the learner productions (their individual translations produced in the four translation tasks constituting the enrichment programme); ii) the focus group conducted following completion of all other elements of the enrichment programme. While the qualitative component does not negate all potential threats to validity, it does help to shed light on the process of the programme and how it is experienced by the learners. Thus, the pre-test/post-questionnaire results are not standalone results from two isolated points in time, but rather form part of the overall picture of how and to what extent the learners' perceptions of their own abilities and language preferences changed during the period of the programme.

Along with the design of the evaluation framework for the programme, another crucial design element was the sampling process. The next section will discuss and justify the decisions made in this regard.

4.4.4 Sampling Design for the Present Study

Sampling refers to a sequence of decisions about a research project "including decisions about settings/contexts, size/number of participants, and processes/procedures (including strategies)" (Miyahara, 2019, p. 53). Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) distinguish between sampling designs (the framework encompassing the sampling process(es) including the subsidiary sampling schemes and the sample size), and sampling schemes (the strategies used to select people/events/settings etc). This section outlines the sampling decisions made in relation to the project and their rationale.

4.4.4.1. Sampling Schemes

The present study required two sample groups. The first sample group was selected from the Dublin City University student body using a convenience sampling scheme, and the second group was a subset of this group. This relationship between the two sample groups is referred to as a nested relationship (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007).

Group 1: Convenience Sample

Since this study seeks to design, implement, and evaluate the potential of a translation tasks-based programme, which aims to foster sociolinguistic competence amongst foreign language learners, the desired setting was a foreign language learning environment, with enough flexibility in the curriculum to implement a translation element. For a number of logistical reasons, it was decided to implement the enrichment programme in the university where the researcher was based. This type of sampling is known as convenience sampling and is the most widely used type of sampling in L2 studies (Mackey and Gass, 2005). It consists of "choosing settings, groups and/or and individuals that are conveniently available and willing to participate in the study" (Collins, Onwuegbuzie and Jiao, 2007, p. 272).

The class chosen for the study was an upper intermediate Spanish language module, which is taken by students in either their third or fourth year of an undergraduate degree at Dublin City University. This module sets its minimum exit level as B2 on the CEFR scale (Council of Europe, 2001), therefore according the CEFR descriptors in both the original framework and the CEFRCV, a knowledge of informal and colloquial language is expected at this level (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 122; 2020, p. 137 respectively). The module was one with which the researcher was very familiar and had previously taught, which facilitated adapting specific tasks and materials to the preexisting content and module aims. Furthermore, the majority of students in this module had some level of experience with translation, therefore it was both a highly relevant addition for them and not an entirely new skill.

Although all participants in this study were required to complete the translation activities as part of their coursework, they were voluntary participants as opposed to captive, as they were free to choose whether to share their responses with the researcher (Teddlie and Yu, 2007).

The class in which the enrichment programme took place was an intact class of 22 students, of which all chose to participate in the study. There were seven male students, one nonbinary and the remaining 14 were female. All students were in the 18-22 age range apart from one student who was in the 23-29 age range. The majority of the students came from an undergraduate programme in Applied Language and Translation Studies, with three coming from a Joint Honours

programme where students major in Spanish and one other subject from the Humanities. Seven of the group stated that they had spent a prolonged period (e.g., 8+ weeks) in a Spanish speaking community.

A small minority of the students (2) were not Irish, but had done their post-primary education through English and were completing their full undergraduate studies in Ireland (also through English). Furthermore, they had been living in Ireland for a significant amount of time, and demonstrated high proficiency in English (C1/C2 level according to the CEFR). All participants had varying levels of knowledge or exposure to additional languages, either through formal education (e.g., studying other languages at school or as part of their degree), study abroad experiences, or through multilingual backgrounds. Due to the sample size and scope of the project, it was decided that it was beyond the remit of the study to investigate the learners' knowledge of additional languages and their corresponding levels as independent variables, however it is acknowledged that they were likely of influence (see Section 8.3 for further discussion)

Group 2: Focus Group Nested Sample

A nested sampling strategy was used to recruit participants for the focus group. In a nested relationship, participants for one part of the study constitute a subset of participants for another element of the study (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). Participants were asked to self-volunteer to take part in the focus group, resulting in five female volunteers. In an effort to both increase representation, and overrecruit in order to surpass the ideal minimum number of six participants (Johnson and Christensen, 2014; Krueger and Casey, 2015), three male members of the class were contacted by the researcher and asked if they would consider taking part. One male student agreed to do so, bringing the total number to six. Unfortunately, due to timetabling, only five students were available at any one time for the focus group, so the decision was made to proceed with five participants, of which four attended on the day. All four of these participants were Irish.

4.4.4.2 Ethics and Recruitment

Ethical approval was sought from the Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Committee (F-REC) at Dublin City University, which deemed the study to be a low-risk project (see Appendix A.1). All participants were over the age of eighteen and were capable of informed consent.

The researcher visited the class during the first week of the semester, provided an overview of the project, went through the plain language statement (see Appendix A.2) and the students were

provided with informed consent forms for each stage of the data collection in which they participated: the online questionnaire; translation tasks and the focus group (see Appendices A.3 – A.5).

Students were also provided with contact details for the researcher and project supervisors, as well as details for the Research Ethics Committee Secretary, whom they could contact as an independent person if they had any concerns. It was also stressed multiple times throughout the recruitment process that choosing to participate in the project (or not), would have no impact on the learners' final grade for the module.

Participation in the study required no additional work/time from students (with the exception of one hour for Group 2 participants for the focus group). The activities were aligned with the overall learning outcomes of the module and were incorporated into the curriculum. Completion of this section of the curriculum was worth a total of 15% of the final grade. The only requirement for participating in the overall study was for students to share their responses to the tasks with the researcher for data analysis purposes.

The focus group was outlined during the initial recruitment process when the overall research project was presented. Then, at a later date in the semester, the researcher visited the class and gave a more detailed explanation of the nature of the focus group and a description of what would be covered (general topics and one hour time requirement).

4.5 Data Collection

Data collection occurred in a single phase during Semester 1 of the 2023-2024 academic year, where quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. The quantitative data was in the form of a pre- and post-questionnaire. Further qualitative data was collected throughout the enrichment programme in the form of learner productions in response to the translation tasks, and a focus group. The learners had two one-hour Spanish classes per week which were delivered by the module coordinator, who was an experienced Spanish lecturer. During the weeks where data was collected, the activities were incorporated into one of these classes, with the second class remaining dedicated to other coursework on the curriculum. The researcher was present in the class when the translation activities took place, but the activities were delivered by the module coordinator and the researcher did not participate, in order to minimise disruption to the class. Table 1 illustrates the sequencing of the data collection, and the following sections outline the various data collection instruments and methods.

Semester Week	Instrument/Activity	Data Type
2	Pre-questionnaire	Quantitative
3	*Introductory Session*	*N/A*
4	Translation Task 1	Qualitative
5	Translation Task 2	Qualitative
8	Translation Task 3	Qualitative
9	Translation Task 4	Qualitative
10	Post-questionnaire	Quantitative
11	Focus Group	Qualitative

Table 1. Outline of data collection

4.5.1 Sociolinguistic Abilities and Language Preferences: Pre- and post-questionnaire

Pre- and post-tests are a common instrument used to measure the effect of a treatment. The pre-test serves to establish learners' existing abilities or level of knowledge prior to an intervention or programme, while the post-test is an observation of these abilities or knowledge following the intervention or programme (Mackey and Gass, 2005; Wang and Morgan, 2010). Comparison of these results can help to shed light on whether any progress was made. Rather than a test *per se*, this study used pre- and post-questionnaires. Brown (2001, p. 6) defines questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". While this definition of questionnaires shares a similar design to tests, tests are designed with a specific answer in mind, therefore some answers will be pre-determined to be correct/incorrect. By contrast, the aim of a questionnaire is to shed light on a participant's perspective (Iwaniec, 2019). For this reason, questionnaires were used as the focus was learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and language preferences.

The pre-questionnaire was administered one week prior to beginning the programme in week 2 of the semester, and the post-questionnaire was administered in week 11 of the semester, one week after students had submitted the final tasks for the programme. Responses for both the pre- and post-questionnaire were collected using Google Forms.

The decision was made to confine the programme to one semester as the greater the time period between a pre- and post-test, the higher the potential effects of maturation (Cook and Campbell, 1979; Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2002). The pre- and post-questionnaire were identical, apart

from Parts 2 and 3 which were only included in the pre-questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of a number of sub-components as outlined in Table 2.

Part	Section	Content
1	A	Self-identified sociolinguistic abilities relating to use of English (5 statements with Likert scale)
	B	Self-identified sociolinguistic abilities relating to use of Spanish (5 statements with Likert scale)
	C	Language preferences in relation to use of informal language (5 statements with Likert scale)
	D	Language learning preferences (5 statements with Likert scale)
2		Informed Consent Form (only to be completed by those participating in the study)
3		Demographic Information (only to be completed by those participating in the study)

Table 2. Pre-/post-questionnaire sections

Part 1 looked at learners' self-identified sociolinguistic abilities and their language preferences. It contained 20 statements subdivided into four sections. The responses consisted of a 6-point Likert scale with the following options: *strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree*. Sections A and B consisted of identical statements with the only difference being that Section A related to English and Section B related to Spanish. At the time of designing the questionnaire, a pre-existing questionnaire could not be found which related to learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities, therefore, the statements were adapted from previously used interview questions and can-do statements from the Sociolinguistic Appropriateness scale in the Companion Volume for the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFRCV) (Council of Europe, 2020).

Statements 1 and 2 were based on Lasan and Rehner's (2018) interview question: *When you listen to someone speaking French, do you feel that you are able to understand their personality and intentions based on the words and structures they use?* For example, for Part 1A, this was adapted to create Statement *I can recognise someone's social identity (e.g., gen Z/college student/older person) and intentions (e.g. to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity) based on the words and structures they use when communicating in English*. As the learners may not have reflected previously on how social identity and intentions can be indexed through language, category examples were added to help them to respond to this statement. The categories were based on Silverstein's (2003) second and third orders of indexicality, which refer to the connection between linguistic forms and broader social categories (second order) and cultural and ideological associations (third order). Humour, shock and solidarity are social effects which

can emerge through speakers' use of language by being funny to establish closeness with peers, displaying irreverence to challenge social norms or aligning oneself with a particular social group in solidarity.

Statements 3 – 5 were based on the selected can-do descriptors in Table 3 from the Sociolinguistic Appropriateness scale (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 137). These descriptors were deemed to be the most relevant for this investigation as they primarily relate to register and receptive and productive skills.

Level	Statement
C1	– Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts; may, however, need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. – Can understand humour, irony and implicit cultural references and pick up nuances of meaning. – Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage. – Can adjust their level of formality (register and style) to suit the social context: formal, informal or colloquial as appropriate, and maintain a consistent register.
B2+	– Can recognise and interpret sociocultural/sociolinguistic cues and consciously modify their linguistic forms of expression in order to express themselves appropriately in the situation. – Can express themselves confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned.
B2	– Can adjust their expression to make some distinction between formal and informal registers but may not always do so appropriately. – Can express themselves appropriately in situations and avoid crass errors of formulation.

Table 3. Selected can-do descriptors from the Sociolinguistic Appropriateness scale (Council of Europe, 2020, p.137)

Sections C and D were drawn from van Compernolle's (2016) attitudes towards linguistic variation survey and the same author's (2017) preferences for (in)formal language survey. These questions helped to explore how learners felt about sociolinguistic variation in general, and how important they considered it to be in the context of their formal foreign language education.

4.5.2 Introduction and Translation Tasks

Following the pre-questionnaire, but prior to commencing the translation tasks themselves, one class was dedicated to introducing the concept of sociolinguistic variation. This session explored examples of sociolinguistic variation in Irish English, highlighting the indexical associations that learners made with specific variants. It also examined how and why speakers might use different variants and then presented the different ways in which language can vary before asking learners

to analyse a conversation (for a full description of the introductory session see Section 5.4.1 and Appendix E.1 for materials).

The aim of this introductory class was to prime the learners for recognising register variation and indexicality in the subsequent tasks. It centred on in-class discussion and neither responses nor data were collected. Following this session, four translation tasks were carried out over a number of weeks (see Table 4 for an overview of materials and translation type). These tasks consisted of in-class discussion activities which took approximately half an hour, followed by a translation task to be completed at home. Each of the tasks drew the learners' attention to specific variants and the in-class discussion activities included the intralingual or interlingual translation of specific terms from the ST. The at-home translation of the full ST was then collected for analysis via Google Forms.

Task	Source Text (ST)	ST Word Count	Translated Text (Learner Production)
1	Clip from feature film (ENG)	79	Intralingual Translation
2	Novel extract (SP)	299	Interlingual Translation
3	Clip from TV series (SP)	139	Interlingual Translation
4	Letter (SP)	307	Intralingual Translation

Table 4. Overview of translation tasks

4.5.3 Focus Group

The final data collection instrument was a focus group with four participants. The focus group was conducted and moderated by the researcher during the final week of the semester, following submission of all other tasks. Focus groups are group discussions which centre on a particular topic or phenomenon (Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook, 2007), and typically consist of an informal discussion amongst a small group of people, which can last for 1 – 2 hours (Dörnyei, 2007; Galloway, 2019). These groups are specific in their purpose, composition, size and procedures, and serve to shed light on how a group perceives a certain phenomenon or subject. In this case, the focus group allowed the impact of the programme to be explored from the learners' perspective. The opinions, attitudes, and feelings of the learners about the programme are an important indicator of its merit or potential.

The one-hour focus group took place on campus and the data was collected by audio recording the conversation and then transcribing this recording. The data was also pseudonymised, with participants being referred to as Participant #1, #2 etc. Learners in the present study often appeared somewhat shy and were reluctant to speak up in class, therefore a focus group offered the advantage of helping participants to feel at ease and encouraging them to be more

forthcoming than they would if in a one-to-one interview (Galloway, 2019). Another benefit afforded by the focus group was its role as a follow-up or confirmatory tool, facilitating data triangulation and saturation (Galloway, 2019). In this study, the focus group served primarily to follow up on the learners' experience of the programme and incorporate their ideas and perspectives into the evaluation of the programme.

One final advantage of focus groups that merits discussion is their potential for reducing power and control (Galloway, 2019). In the present study, as the researcher was not the principal lecturer of the Spanish class where the programme was carried out, this helped to reduce the power imbalance between the participants and the researcher. Thus, the decision was made that the researcher could moderate the focus group. Furthermore, the researcher was from a similar population to the participants as she was a student at the same university and shared the same L1 and cultural background as the participants, which further decreased the distance between the participants and the moderator. Finally, the researcher was also extremely familiar with both the module and the tasks therefore by the researcher acting as moderator, it eliminated the need to provide in depth training to a third-party moderator who would not be as familiar with the content of the intervention.

Following the collection of the data from the pre- and post-questionnaires, the translation tasks and the focus groups, it was then necessary to prepare the data for analysis and revise the analytical approaches which would be used.

4.6 Data Preparation and Analysis Techniques

As the three data sets outlined in the previous section were diverse in nature, each required a distinct analytical approach. The present section outlines how each of the data sets were prepared and then analysed.

4.6.1 Questionnaires

Responses from the pre- and post-questionnaires, which were collected via Google Forms, were imported into Excel, with each row representing a participant and each column corresponding with a statement from the questionnaire. There were 20 statements in total for each questionnaire, each of which required a closed-ended response on a 6-point Likert scale. The frequency for each response was then calculated in Excel, to facilitate analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics was the most appropriate option for the sample size (22 students). Data cleansing involved checking for any errors and inconsistencies. This included ensuring that no

responses had been omitted and cross referencing the counts for each response in Excel with the counts illustrated in the Google Form pie charts.

Once satisfied that the frequency counts were correct, the responses were separated into the four constituent sections of the questionnaire: i) Self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English; ii) Self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish; iii) Preferences for (in)formal language; and iv) Attitudes towards linguistic variation in L2 education. The pre- and post- results were arranged side by side as shown in Figure 4 below, in order to generate a clustered stacked bar chart, to facilitate the comparison of the breakdown of the pre- and post- responses for each statement.

	English						
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agre	Somewhat Disa	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	S1. Pre	11	6	5			
	Post	16	6				
		0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0
2	S2. Pre	9	9	4			
	Post	15	6	1			
		0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0
3	S3. Pre	16	3	3			
	Post	19	3				
		0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0
4	S4. Pre	16	6				
	Post	17	5				
		0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	0
5	S5. Pre	16	6				
	Post	19	3				

Figure 4. Data preparation of first section of pre-/post-questionnaire

4.6.2 Learner Productions: Translation Responses

The second set of data, drawn from the learners' translations in the translation tasks was the most complex component of the data analysis. As the use of translation activities to foster sociolinguistic competence has thus far not been explored to the best of my knowledge, it was necessary to draw on existing categorisations of language and translation approaches to design an analytical framework which was appropriate for this set of data. Since the present study is concerned with the learners' sociolinguistic abilities in relation to lexical variation (the variable use of words/multiword expressions to denote a given concept as defined in Section 2.3), the first step was to select the relevant sociolinguistic lexical variants from the source texts (ST) for each of the translation tasks. These variants were identified as being non-standard according to

the *Cambridge English Dictionary* and *el Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, that is, these dictionaries labelled them as being slang/informal/idioms/vulgar. In instances where the terms did not appear in these dictionaries, other resources such as the *Collins Dictionary*, *wordreference.com* and the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* were consulted. Only informal lexical items were selected, as opposed to phonetic features such as *gonna* or elongation of words such as *aaaalllll*.

Once the terms of interest had been identified in the ST, a corresponding code was created in NVivo for each term, and this code was applied to each instance of a learner translating (or omitting) that term in the TT: i.e. in Task 3, a code was created for the term *tía,* and then all learners' translations of this term in the TT (e.g., *girl, bird, someone*) were added to said code for that specific task (see Figure 5).

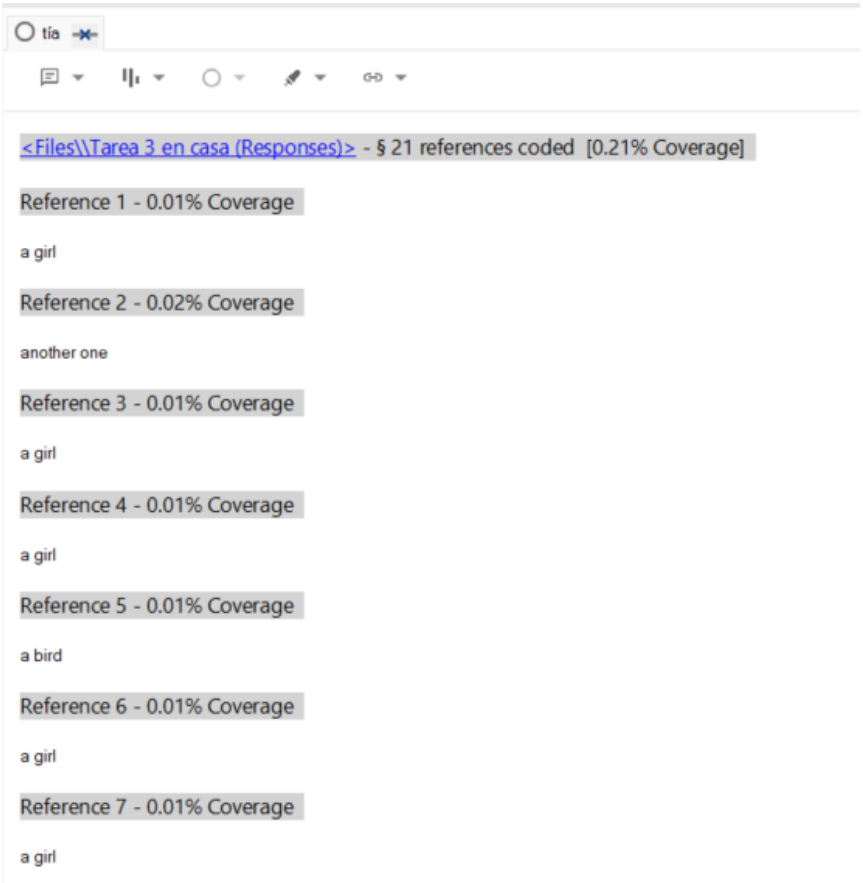


Figure 5. Sample of coding for tía (Task 2)

For terms or expressions that entailed a more complex translation, the whole phrase or sentence was tagged in order to provide further context on the translation (e.g., *cabrón* was generally translated as a single word (*bastard/asshole*) whereas when translating *largarse (to leave/to take off),* some learners also changed the sentence structure, therefore it was necessary to provide

further context rather than code a single term). Figure 6 shows a sample of translations for the term *largarse* in the sentence *una mujer no puede abandonar a su marido y largarse de casa*. In references 15 and 17, the learners have maintained a similar structure to the ST and used one verb for leaving the husband and another for leaving home whereas in reference 16, the learner has combined both actions in one verb.

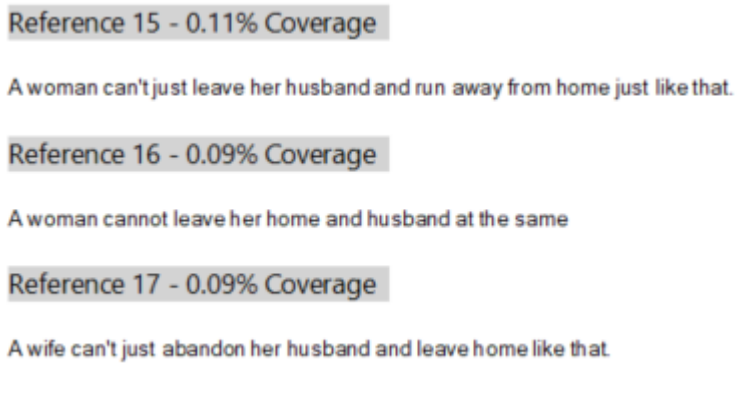


Figure 6. Sample of translations of largarse *(Task 2)*

In instances where learners omitted a particular term or expression, the section of text where the term would have appeared in the TT was still coded in order to be able to count instances of omission.

Once all of the variants had been coded, a framework matrix was generated for each task which displayed each learner's translation for each sociolinguistic variant in that task (see Appendix C). These matrices facilitated a preliminary qualitative analysis of the types of translations that learners had provided (e.g., did they translate using neutral, colloquial or vulgar terms) and the development of a strategy for further analysis of the data, that is, how to group the translations provided by the learners.

Initially, these translations were broadly divided into two categories. These categories were based on the principal strategies for the translation of non-standard varieties identified by Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez and Calduch (2018), according to whom a dialectical variety can be translated: i) using standard language (neutralisation); or ii) using a non-standard variety. These strategies parallel the categories of translation techniques identified by Ávila-Cabrera (2020, p. 129) in relation to the translation of profane language: i) non-transfer; and ii) transfer. The term transfer refers to the transfer of the profane/blasphemous load of the original term in the translated text. Based on this distinction, Ávila-Cabrera provides a further taxonomy of the constituent techniques:

Techniques utilised	
Transfer	Toned up
	Maintained
	Toned down
Non-Transfer	Neutralised
	Omitted

Figure 7. Ávila-Cabrera's (2020, p. 129) taxonomy of translation techniques

As indicated in Figure 7, If the term in the TT is stronger, the original term has been toned up, if the load of the term in the TT is similar, it has been maintained, and if the term in the TT is softer, it has been toned down. Alternatively, if the load of the original term is not present in the TT, it has either been neutralised (i.e. translated using terms which do not cause offense) or omitted entirely. Although Ávila-Cabrera's (2020) overarching categories of transfer and non-transfer refer to the transfer of the *profane* load of the original term, for the present study they will refer to the transfer of the *informal* load or grade of informality of the original term. Thus, the transfer of not only vulgar/profane language but also colloquial variants can be observed between the ST and the learners' TTs.

To establish whether terms had been toned up/maintained/toned down or neutralised, it was necessary to categorise variants according to their grade of (in)formality in order to be able to compare them with one another. Table 5 provides an overview of how this was done, using a combination of the frameworks proposed by McEnery (2006) and Valdeón (2020) for categorising vulgar language in English and Spanish respectively. Combing these frameworks resulted in five levels of categorisation of vulgar language: i) very mild, ii) mild, iii) moderate, iv) strong and v) very strong. Although Valdeón (2020) combined the fourth and fifth levels into one category in relation to vulgar language in Spanish, McEnery's fifth category was maintained for the present analysis, as the data was in both Spanish and English. All examples in the Very Mild – Strong categories in Table 5 are drawn directly from the authors' respective works. For terms which occurred either in the ST or learners' translations and were not present in McEnery's or Valdeón's original categorisations, native speakers were presented with examples from each category and asked where they would place the term in question. The categorisations of each of the learners' translations can be seen in Appendix C. When comparing the transfer of the informal load, the categories were grouped as follows: *strong/moderate* and *very mild/mild* to broadly compare stronger language with milder language.

Terms that were not vulgar, but which were also informal and non-standard (e.g., colloquialisms, slang, idioms) were allocated to a single category of colloquial. The difficulty in differentiating

and defining these various subtypes of informal language has previously been recognised (Steel, 1997; Sornig, 2010), and in his definition of formality, Crystal (2008, p. 195) describes highly informal language as "very loosely structured, involving a high level of colloquial expression, and often departing from standard norms (e.g., by using slang, regionalisms, neologisms, and code-mixing". As the present study is concerned with the load of (in)formality of sociolinguistic variants, it was therefore decided to follow Crystal's approach and group these terms rather than attempt to differentiate between them.

It is important to note that these are not siloed categories, particularly when it comes to distinguishing between the levels of vulgar language. While McEnery's and Valdeon's categorisations serve as an important guide, individual perceptions of where a term appears on the spectrum between strong vulgar language and very mild may vary widely due to questions of style, taste and religious beliefs. Two further categories were included to account for instances where learners had either omitted one of the sociolinguistic variants of interest or where they had provided an erroneous translation. Categorising both the sociolinguistic variants of interest in the ST and the learners' translations of these terms in this manner meant that quantitative counts could be obtained for the use of a given register level. These counts in turn facilitated the observation of where and when leaners tended to tone up/down or maintain the register of the original term.

	Categorisation	**Description/Examples**
Non-standard	Very Strong	Eng: Cunt, motherfucker
	Strong	Eng: fuck
		Sp: cabrón, coño, joder, jodido, hostia, cojones, puta, putos, puta, putear, putada, hijo de puta, de puta madre, cagar...
	Moderate	Eng: arsehole, bastard, bollocks, piss, prick, shag, wanker, whore...
		Sp: coña, mierda...
	Mild	Eng: arse, balls, bitch, bugger, Christ, cow, Jesus, moron, pissed off, screw, shit, slut, sod, tit, tits, tosser...
		Sp: furcia, mear, zorra, Dios, por Dios...
	Very Mild	Eng: bloody, crap, damn, God, hell, sod, son-of-a-bitch...
		Sp: imbécil, maldito, cabrear, culo, Jesús, la Virgen...
	Colloquial	Idioms, colloquialisms, informal (but not vulgar) language, terms of endearment.
Neutral	Neutral	Standard/neutral terms and expressions
	Omission	Learner has omitted term or expression that was present in the source text
	Meaning Error	Translation that learner has provided is incorrect e.g., incorrect/inexact/opposite meaning or overly literal and unnatural sounding translation (can include items which are grammatically correct)

Table 5. Categories for classification of learners' translations of terms of interest

The object of investigation is the students' ability to understand and/or produce variable lexical structures in relation to social norms, that is, their sociolinguistic competence. For that reason, only the translations of the variable structures (the sociolinguistic variants of interest in the ST) were analysed. In addition to categorising the register level of the translations provided by the learners, other features of the translations were also annotated. Firstly, tags were added to highlight the use of diatopic variants, as this study took place in an Irish university. These tags identified variants which i) are widely used in Irish English; and ii) those commonly used in a variety of English other than Irish English.

In addition to these tags, the translations were also annotated where relevant using tags adapted from the Translation-oriented Annotation System manual (TAS, Granger and Lefer, 2021). These tags were used to provide additional information about the translations such as the nature of errors or modifications to content. The TAS manual was designed as part of the Multilingual Student Translation (MUST) project (Centre for English Corpus Linguistics, UCLouvain), for the annotation of translations produced by L2 learners or trainee translators. In the interest of clarity and simplicity, the hierarchical structure of the TAS tags has been adapted to suit the present analysis. Table 6 provides an overview of the annotation tags. Entries in italics are additional or adapted tags while all other entries are drawn directly from the TAS manual and are accompanied by their corresponding page number.

Annotation Tags		
Geographic Variants	*Ir*	*Generally used in Irish English*
	Non-Ir	*Generally used in non-Irish variety of English*
Error	Reg Heavy	Chunks of text which are stylistically heavy, clumsy or awkward (p. 27)
	Lex/Term Word(s)	*Errors involving incorrect words which do not come under the categories below. Includes overly literal translations or words which have not been translated or do not exist.*
	Inexact Meaning	Minor distortion errors where the meaning of the target text is inaccurate or incomplete with regard to the one intended by the source text (p. 12).
	Incorrect Meaning	Major distortion errors where a word or a phrase in the target text conveys a meaning which at first sight seems to make sense (is plausible) but is in fact incorrect (p. 12).
	Incomprehensible Meaning	Major distortion errors where the target text is difficult or impossible for the reader to understand, even given the context (p. 11).

	Illogical	Major distortion errors where a word or a phrase in the target text is given the opposite meaning to the one intended by the source-text author(s) (p. 12)
Content	Omission	Elements present in the source text (titles, headings, words, phrases, sentences, etc.) are missing from the target text and cannot be recovered from the context of the target text (p.12)
	Addition	Information not present in the source text is added to the target text (p. 13)

Table 6. Tags used to annotate learners' translations

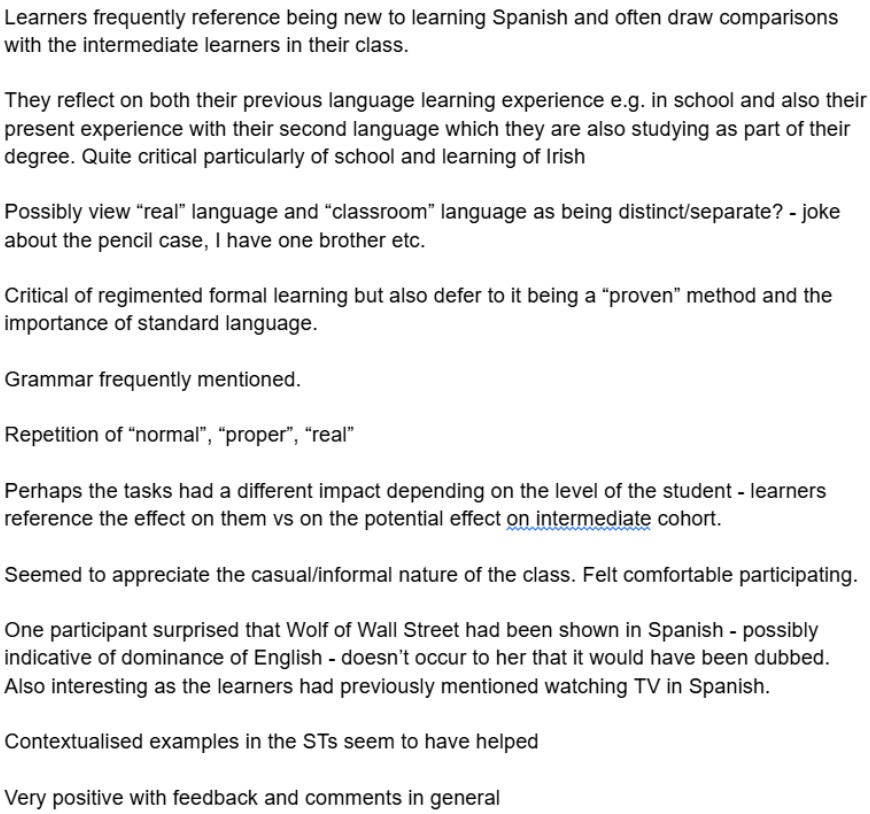
4.6.3 Learner Insights: Focus Group

Finally, the focus group data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflective thematic analysis. This type of analysis acknowledges the researcher's active role in the creation of knowledge through their "reflective and thoughtful engagement with their data and their reflexive and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process" (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 594). The analysis was predominantly inductive, with codes being created solely based on the data rather than being drawn from a pre-existing theory or framework. Braun and Clarke's six-phase process was followed. In phase one, the transcription of the focus group was read multiple times while listening to the audio recording to become familiar with the data. In phase two, transcription was imported into NVivo, and initial codes were generated and applied to the data. In phase three, themes were generated by grouping codes which shared meanings. In phase four, the potential themes were reviewed to ensure that their constituent codes were relevant and in phase five the themes were finalised in order to be able to be written up in phase six, which consisted of producing the report on the focus group. Progression through the phases is not linear and it was an iterative process with a number of revisions to codes and themes before finalising the analysis.

The focus group was a one-hour informal discussion that was conducted after all of the translation tasks and the pre- and post-questionnaires. The researcher led the discussion with four voluntary participants, focusing on the areas of: i) how the learners felt about using slang and informal language in Spanish; ii) the impact of such usage on their identity as L2 learners; iii) how they felt about using translation to look at this type of language; and iv) how their beliefs and attitudes towards slang and informal language changed during the semester, if at all. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was followed for this part of the data analysis. The next sections present the process(es) of each of the six phases in this model. Although presented ordinally, progress through the phases was not linear and there was a degree of back and forth between each step.

Phase 1: Familiarisation with the data

In most qualitative analysis, becoming familiar with the dataset constitutes the first step of the analysis. In this case, the researcher had designed the tasks, been present for their in-class delivery and facilitated the focus group, and was therefore already extremely familiar with the context of the data. Nonetheless, it was important to gain further immersion in the data through repeated active reading of the transcription, searching for patterns and meanings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). These initial readings were done while listening to the audio recording, to achieve greater understanding of the depth and the breadth of the dataset. This also served as an opportunity to verify the accuracy of the transcription against the recording. Figure 8 illustrates some of the preliminary notes taken in this stage.


Learners frequently reference being new to learning Spanish and often draw comparisons with the intermediate learners in their class.

They reflect on both their previous language learning experience e.g. in school and also their present experience with their second language which they are also studying as part of their degree. Quite critical particularly of school and learning of Irish

Possibly view "real" language and "classroom" language as being distinct/separate? - joke about the pencil case, I have one brother etc.

Critical of regimented formal learning but also defer to it being a "proven" method and the importance of standard language.

Grammar frequently mentioned.

Repetition of "normal", "proper", "real"

Perhaps the tasks had a different impact depending on the level of the student - learners reference the effect on them vs on the potential effect on intermediate cohort.

Seemed to appreciate the casual/informal nature of the class. Felt comfortable participating.

One participant surprised that Wolf of Wall Street had been shown in Spanish - possibly indicative of dominance of English - doesn't occur to her that it would have been dubbed. Also interesting as the learners had previously mentioned watching TV in Spanish.

Contextualised examples in the STs seem to have helped

Very positive with feedback and comments in general

Figure 8. Preliminary notes in phase 1

Phase 2: Initial codes

Following the initial readings and note taking, code production was begun. This consisted of identifying features of the data that appeared salient. Codes represent basic elements of the raw data which can provide meaningful information about the phenomenon under investigation (Boyatzis, 1998). While there were some ideas for codes based on the preliminary notes, the coding process was largely inductive. As such, it was open-coded, meaning that the coding was data-driven and stemmed from the participants' responses, rather than from a pre-specified

conceptual framework. That said, analysis is rarely exclusively either inductive or deductive, and while one tends to dominate, the approaches are often, to a certain extent, combined. In this case, the deductive element consisted of ensuring that the open coding included elements which related to the research questions and the other datasets.

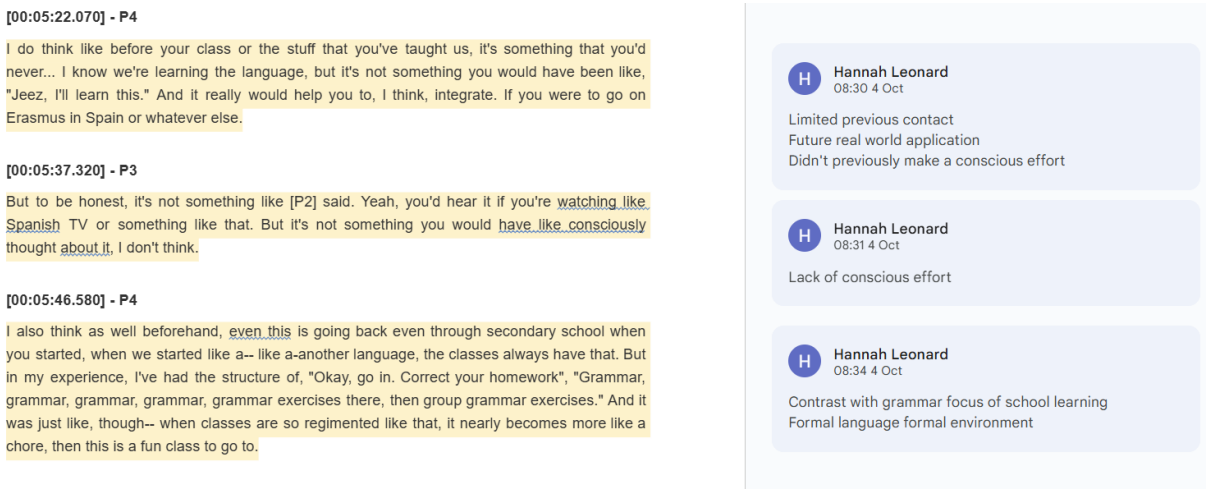


Figure 9. Example of preliminary coding

This initial phase of coding was done using the comments function of Google Docs. On the left in Figure 9, there is the extract of the transcription and the comments on the right are the initial codes for this section. As the participants' turns are relatively short, the entire segment was coded in order to avoid the common pitfall of losing context (Bryman, 2001). Here, we can see that P4's comments have been coded multiple times, while P3's comment has only been assigned to one code. P4's first comment has been coded to *limited previous contact*; *future real-world application*; and *didn't previously make a conscious effort*. This first iteration served to highlight what immediately stood out; however, these codes lack sufficient detail. This was addressed in subsequent iterations of coding where the codes became more descriptive. For example, *limited previous contact* became *limited previous contact with informal registers,* and *contrast with grammar focus of school learning* was split into two codes: *critical of language learning in school* and *mention of grammar*. These subsequent iterations of coding were carried out using the qualitative analysis software NVivo.

Phase 3: Generating themes

Once the initial iterations of coding were completed, these codes were collated into potential themes using the maps function of NVivo (see Figure 10). This phase served to refocus the analysis at a broader level, considering how various codes combined with one another and linked to an overarching theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It was also an opportunity to review potentially redundant codes and to discard codes which did not fit into a specific theme.

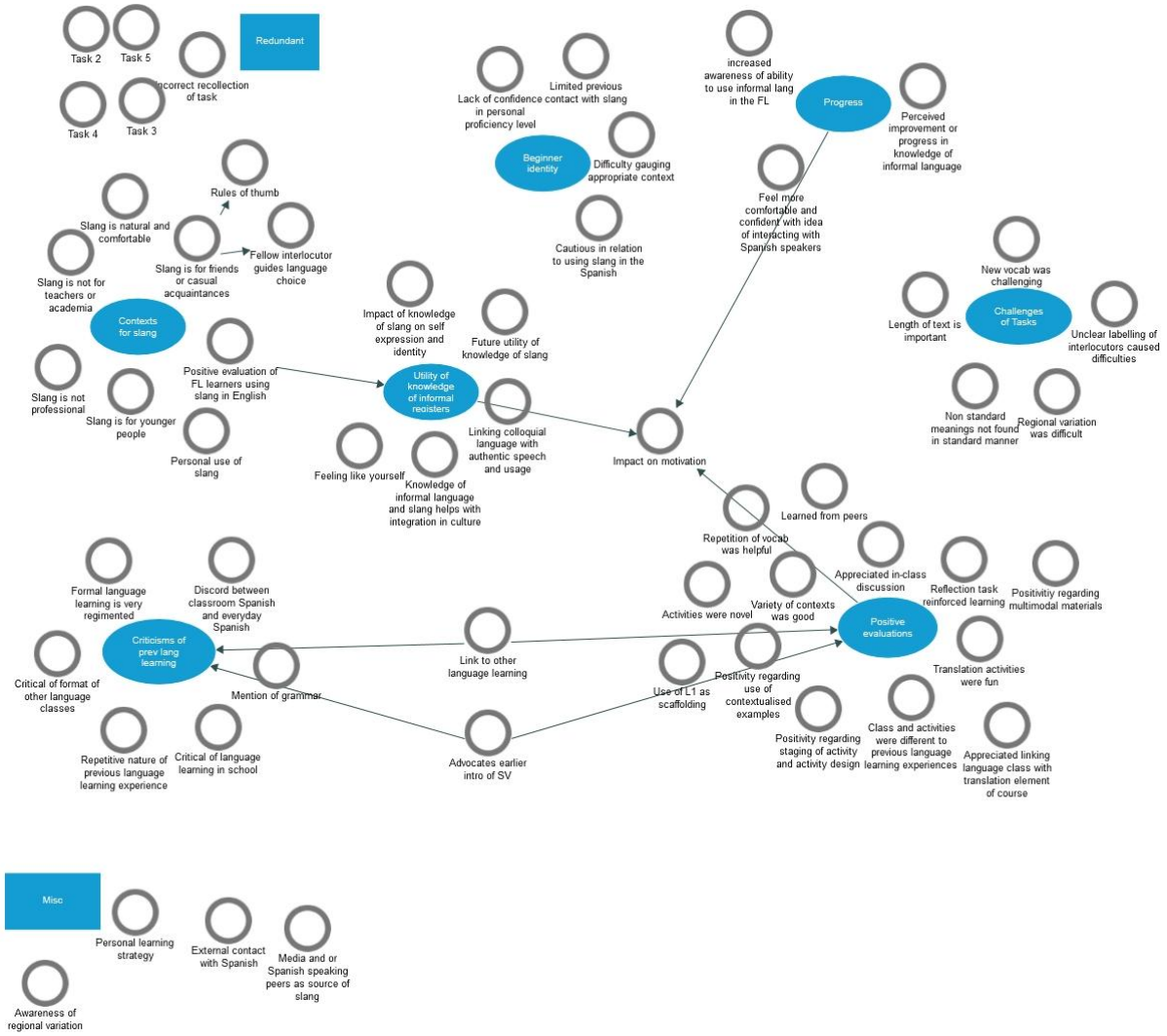


Figure 10. Initial grouping of codes

Certain themes were clearly definable such as the learners' beginner identity; the positive evaluations of the tasks; the challenges presented by the tasks and the criticisms of previous language learning. Contexts for slang and the utility of knowledge of informal registers were less easily delineated; however, they were retained in this initial phase of themes.

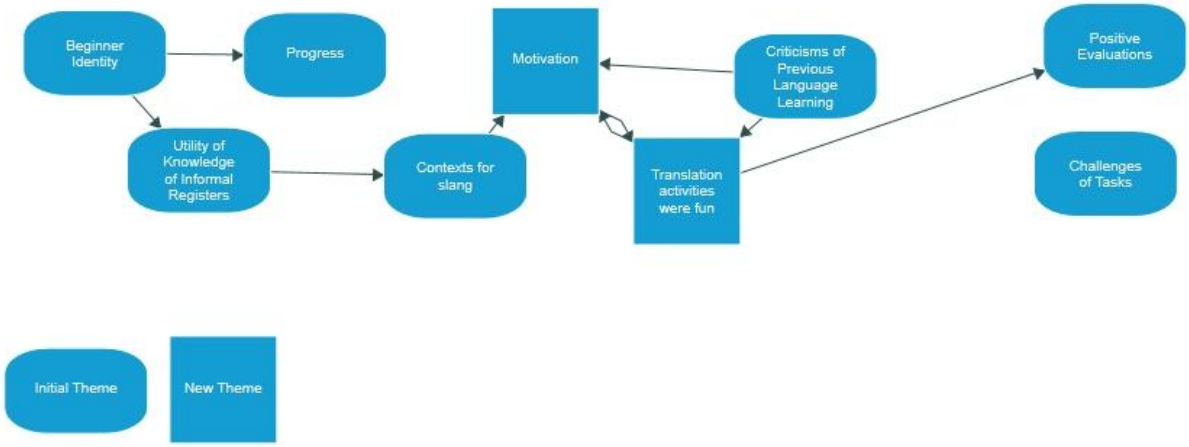


Figure 11. Initial thematic map

The themes generated from the codes were then grouped as shown in Figure 11. In addition to the themes identified in Figure 10, it was decided that *motivation* constituted a theme in its own right, as did the code *translation activities were fun*. Although this phase explored how the themes related to each other, a hierarchy between the themes was not established until phases four and five.

Phases 4 - 5: Reviewing and defining themes

While Braun and Clark (2006) emphasise that progress through the stages is not linear and that the phases will often be revisited multiple times, their original article presents the phases separately. In line with the more recent work of Terry et al. (2017), phases four and five are discussed together here, emphasising the interlaced and iterative nature of these steps.

Having identified the candidate themes in Figure 11, their constituent codes and the corresponding data were once more reviewed to ensure that they formed a coherent pattern (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It was decided that the themes of *utility of knowledge of informal registers* and *contexts for slang* encompassed too diverse a range of data, therefore these themes were reworked. Many of the codes under *contexts for slang* which related to with whom you can use slang were reallocated to a new subtheme of *imagined communities*. A new subtheme *authentic language* was created, which encompassed many of the codes from *utility of knowledge of informal registers*. The code *future utility of knowledge of slang* also became a subtheme, while the existing theme of *progress* became part of *beginner identity*. *Motivation* became a main theme which encompassed the subthemes of *criticisms of previous language learning, translation activities were fun and authentic language*. These reworkings resulted in the thematic map illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Revised thematic map

It is important to ensure that themes are distinct from each other, yet also relate to one another and contribute to an overall story about the data (Terry *et al.*, 2017). As such, it is necessary to be able to identify the "essence" of what each theme is about or its central organising concept (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Terry *et al.*, 2017). In Figure 12, the central organising concept of Theme 1 is the role of learners' trajectories; past, present and hypothetical future and how this impacts their relationship with informal registers. The second theme, motivation, is underpinned by novelty as a contributing factor to learners' enjoyment of language learning, while the third theme is organised around pedagogical implications. To a certain extent, Theme 3 could be considered a domain summary of what participants said about the activities, as the data coded to this them reflects task elements which the learners evaluated positively or identified as having been challenging. While this departs from Braun and Clarke's (2006) conceptualisation of a theme, analysis of this theme did not stray into a codebook approach. As the overarching goal of the project was to investigate the use of translation activities to foster sociolinguistic competence, it was important to collate and highlight participants' views as to "what worked" and what was challenging about the tasks in order to provide some considerations for educators intending to use similar activities. Therefore, from a pragmatic standpoint, it was decided to retain this theme.

Although there had been multiple working titles for the themes illustrated in Figure 12, theme names were not finalised until nearing the end of the analysis. In earlier iterations, Theme 1 had been called *identity, imagined communities and future selves*. However, as the analysis developed, it became apparent that this was more a summary of subthemes rather than the overarching theme. Thus, the name for Theme 1 became *L2 Identity,* which encompasses the learners' present beginner identity in the L2, their identity as a member of various imagined communities such as young people or Spanish speakers, and the identity of their future selves. Where possible, Terry et al. (2017) suggest using creative and inventive names for themes, which can include data quotations. With this in mind, the theme of motivation became "*Coming to that class was actually so refreshing"* as this quote reflected the idea of the novelty of the tasks as a

motivating factor. Finally, Theme 3 became *Considerations for Educators*. The final thematic map of these renamed themes is presented in Figure 13.

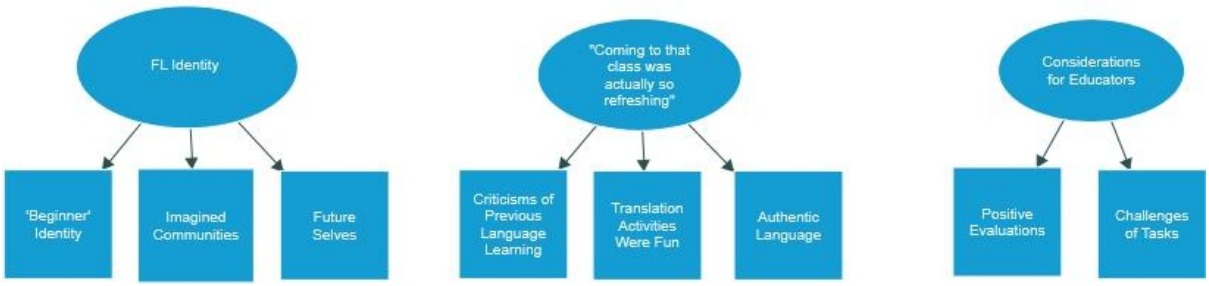


Figure 13. Finalised thematic map

Phase 6: Producing the report

This final phase consisted of producing the report which appears in the discussion chapter under RQ3. As with the other phases, this was an iterative process and as such, it was not a case of beginning to write once the analysis was complete, but rather revisiting and reflecting on what had been written during the process of analysis. In this way, the write-up was woven into the process of analysis from start to finish, rather than an isolated final step. Byrne (2022) suggests that at this stage it is useful to consider the order in which themes will be discussed. It was decided that *L2 Identity* was an appropriate starting point, as this identity shaped the lens through which the participants viewed and described the tasks. The participants made multiple references throughout the whole conversation to their own beginner level, often contrasting it with that of their intermediate classmates. Their discussion of the tasks was also often framed by where and when informal language might be useful in the future, e.g., how it might be relevant to their future selves. The logical next step was then to discuss *Coming to that class was actually so refreshing*, as this theme established how the novelty of the tasks compared with the learners' previous language learning experiences, and contributed to their enjoyment of the class, as did the novelty of getting to work with what they perceived to be "real" language. Finally, it was fitting to conclude with *Considerations for Educators,* as this zoomed the analysis out to the macro level, highlighting the potential strengths and weaknesses of the tasks for future iterations of such activities.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the philosophical and methodological background to this mixed methods study on the use of translation-related tasks to foster sociolinguistic competence in L2 learners. The study adopted a convergent mixed methods design embedded in a single group pre-/post-test evaluation framework to explore learners' experience of the pedagogical enrichment programme from multiple angles. The investigation was informed by a pragmatist worldview, which prioritises the research question and allows it to shape the methods which are used. The integration of qualitative *and* quantitative methods facilitated the evaluation of both the processes and the outcomes of the programme. Quantitative pre- and post-questionnaire data were collected to provide insight into i) learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities prior to and following the programme; ii) their preferences for informal language and its importance in their foreign language education. Qualitative data in the form of learners' responses to translation tasks were collected to explore their emerging sociolinguistic knowledge. Finally, a focus group provided further qualitative data on learners' perceptions of the programme itself.

The diverse nature of the data collected meant that a multidimensional analytical approach was required. Descriptive statistics were used for the questionnaire results while Braun and Clarke's (Braun and Clarke, 2006) reflective thematic analysis was used for the focus group. Due to the novelty of using translation activities to explore learners' emerging sociolinguistic competence through their translations of lexical variants, an original analytical framework was designed for this purpose. The framework draws on i) categorisations of vulgar language in English (McEnery, 2006) and Spanish (Valdeón, 2020); ii) Ávila-Cabrera's (2020) classifications of the transfer of profane language and iii) Translation-oriented Annotation System manual (TAS, Granger and Lefer, 2021). The originality of this framework constitutes one of the contributions of this thesis to both the fields of Translation in Language Teaching and L2 Variation.

Bryman (2007, p. 8) comments that "[t]he key issue is whether in a mixed methods project, the end product is more than the sum of the individual quantitative and qualitative parts". This chapter has defended the design and execution of the study in this regard and highlighted how the qualitative elements reduce the limitations of a quantitative single group pre-/post-test design, by shedding light on the processes of the programme. For example, learner productions can be compared with their pre- and post-tests: is there a correlation between their responses and the way they navigate register in the tasks? Are their preferences for (in)formal language reflected in their productions? Similarly, the quantitative element enhances the qualitative data by highlighting potential gains in self-perceived sociolinguistic skills. Integration of these

qualitative and quantitative data sets allows us to explore to what extent the results converge or diverge.

With a view to providing an enhanced understanding of the pedagogical enrichment programme and thereby contextualising the data analysis and discussion in Chapters 6 and 7, Chapter 5 now turns to the design and rationale of the tasks which were used in the enrichment programme.

Chapter 5: Bridging Theory and Practice - Translation Task Design

5.1 Introduction

This investigation aims to improve learners' L2 competence through the use of translation tasks, therefore a fundamental part of the study was the design of the translation tasks. This chapter outlines the design process and presents the original translation tasks which were designed for and implemented in the enrichment programme. It begins by revisiting why learners may choose to adopt or avoid non-standard L2 variants and reiterates how mediation in the form of translation activities can help to sensitise them to the meaning making potential of such language while respecting that it may not form part of their idiolect.

5.2 L2 Sociolinguistic Competence and Translation

The development of L2 sociolinguistic competence is a particularly challenging hurdle for instructed language learners, often due to limited contact with sociolinguistic variation in the classroom. As outlined in Chapter 2, many learners only acquire knowledge of sociolinguistic variation at a later stage in the learning process, through immersive experiences such as studying abroad (Howard, Lemee and Regan, 2006; Geeslin *et al.*, 2010; Salgado-Robles, 2011; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012; Knouse, 2013), or through social relationships with communities of target language users (Isabelli-García, 2006; Gautier and Chevrot, 2015). In addition, learners' identities and individual learning trajectories play a huge role in determining their adoption or rejection of informal variants. Some learners may feel like "outsiders" in relation to certain target language communities and deliberately avoid specific language due to caution or a belief that using informal registers is inauthentic for non-native speakers (Kinginger and Farrell, 2004; Fernández, 2013; Soruç and Griffiths, 2015; French and Beaulieu, 2016). This caution is not entirely unfounded as even L1 users may be cautious in their use of informal language, however in general they are accepting of L2 speakers' use of informal variants (DuBois, 2019). Meanwhile, other learners might view themselves as actual or future members of target language communities that use non-standard variants which in turn impacts their decisions and behaviours, including their linguistic practices such as: i) favouring local usage patterns when planning to remain in that community (Regan, 2014); ii) prioritising variants associated with their actual and desired social networks (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a; Fernández, 2013;

Martyn, 2022) and; iii) favouring the standard variety due to academic/professional goals (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a; Fernández, 2013).

Despite learners' potential resistance to the use of informal registers due to caution or feeling like an outsider, explicit instruction has been shown to positively impact L2 sociolinguistic knowledge, particularly in relation to appropriate use of informal and formal forms of address (e.g., *tu/vous* in French and *tú/usted* in Spanish) (Lyster, 1994; van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a, 2012b; van Compernolle and Henery, 2014; French and Beaulieu, 2016; Beaulieu *et al.*, 2018; Pisabarro Sarrió, 2019). Regardless of whether learners choose to produce informal variants, at a minimum it is helpful for them to have a receptive understanding of informal registers to be able to interact with speakers of and media from the L2 (Mattiello, 2005). Thus, explicit instruction materials must be such that they respect the learners' autonomy and agency in using variants which align with their plans and aspirations, but also foster interaction with and an understanding of informal registers. This is closely tied to the one of the language activities and strategies promoted by the CEFR and the CEFRCV, and that I make the case in this thesis can enhance the learners' informal register. Mediation requires that the mediator (in this case, the language learner) prioritises the understanding between two or more parties for whom they are mediating. A given situation may entail mediating in informal contexts and language, which requires learners to operate in or be familiar with this specific language style, regardless of whether it is language that they choose to use or interact with at an individual level. In this sense, mediation activities ensure that learners familiarise themselves with informal language in a way that feels realistic and purposeful, rather than asking learners to "perform" language that might feel artificial for them if it does not form part of their individual style or repertoire.

Mediation activities also have the goal of arriving at mutual understanding, and thus facilitate interaction with various communities. Through interacting with authentic language samples from various contexts, learners can see examples of language in "in action", and use such examples to expand and inform their sociolinguistic repertoires. This in turn will increase their ability to express their own identities in the L2 and broaden the range of interactions that they can have in the L2.

Translation is a mediation activity which encourages learners' awareness of form and meaning in context (Machida, 2011) and contributes to enhancing intercultural competence (Elorza, 2008; Fois, 2020) and facilitating the development of pragmatic competence (Kim, 2013; Lertola and Mariotti, 2017). Intercultural competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence, are closely entwined, with all three centring on the language learner being

positioned between the L1 and the L2 (or indeed between different varieties of the same language), and mediating between their constituent (sub)communities, (sub)cultures and pragmatic expectations. Thus, by extension it is an ideal activity for fostering sociolinguistic competence.

Another affordance of translation is that it can positively impact the acquisition of new vocabulary (Bruton, 2007; Laufer and Girsai, 2008; Hummel, 2010), making it particularly appropriate for working with lexical variation. From a theoretical perspective, the use of translation in language teaching is associated with a host of benefits, however, it seems to remain underutilised in the classroom (McLaughlin, 2022; Pintado Gutiérrez, 2022). This study addresses the implementation problem, that is, the gap between current classroom practices and the academic literature advocating the use of translation (McLaughlin, 2022), by providing a worked example of the design and implementation of translation activities with a view to improving learners L2 sociolinguistic knowledge of lexical variation. In doing so, it demonstrates a practical application of translation in language teaching, and it also addresses the area of instructed L2 acquisition of informal lexical variants in Spanish, which has received scarce attention to date. The next section turns to the steps and considerations involved in the creation of the translation tasks before concluding with a detailed presentation of the final tasks.

5.3 Developing Translation Activities to Foster Sociolinguistic Competence

Long gone are the days where mediation was primarily viewed in a broad sense as translation and interpreting. Nowadays, mediation is considered as a sociocultural process for facilitating communication and cooperation, requiring social, cultural and plurilingual competences (Council of Europe, 2020). It can take place through the mediation of a text, the mediation of concepts and/or the mediation of communication. These different types of mediation cannot be practiced entirely independently of each other, therefore engaging in one type will inevitably draw on the other types to a varying extent (Council of Europe, 2020). In order to carry out these mediation activities, learners are required to use the mediation strategies associated with explaining a new concept and/or simplifying a text. The tasks in this study focus on mediating texts through written translations, therefore by reproducing the ST in a different register or language, the learners are mediating communication by making it accessible to a new audience. In-class collaboration in preparation for the translation activities also calls on learners to mediate concepts in their interaction. The steps outlined in the following sections are drawn from Pedregosa and Sánchez Cuadrado's (2022, p. 209) guide for designing mediation activities.

Although the steps are discussed sequentially here, the task design was an iterative process and there was some back and forth between the various steps. The activities were also trialled in a Spanish class one year in advance before arriving at the final versions presented in Section 5.4.

5.3.1 Type of Mediation Activities

All of the activities in the present study are translation-based and focus on translating a written text. The majority of the learners were studying for a BA in Applied Language and Translation Studies therefore most learners had some previous experience with translation, and such a focus linked with other aspects of their course. As class-time was limited and the learners were in the final year of their studies, translation activities were also suited to the schedules of the learners and the course, allowing learners to work collaboratively in class but complete the translations individually outside of class. Furthermore, translation activities facilitated the incorporation of a degree of audiovisual translation (AVT), with a view to encouraging interaction with Spanish language media. This is particularly relevant as often L2 learners have limited contact with the target language outside the classroom. The inclusion of multimedia materials as a ST is also reflective of the real-world environment, where learners are likely to encounter a variety of text types. While mediating a text was the primary activity, it is important to note that this facilitated other mediation activities in the classroom. For example, in-class discussions related to mediating concepts, where learners collaborated in groups with their peers and explored the meaning of the texts. When tasked with translating for a specific audience e.g., children or an Irish audience, the learners also acted as an intermediary between the culture of the ST and the culture of the TT. Finally, as the class consisted of a mix of levels, with some learners having taken up Spanish at beginner level in university while others had studied it previously at school, learners were also able to act as intermediaries for each other, with more experienced learners explaining new vocabulary (Council of Europe, 2020).

5.3.2 Input Level

Following the selection of the type of mediation activity, the input level was the next key decision. The participants were a class of final year Spanish students. The minimum exit level of this class was B2, therefore the input materials were required to be a B2-C1 level in order to also challenge more advanced students. Pedregosa and Sánchez Cuadrado (2022) recommend making input level decisions in conjunction with deciding whether reception, production or both sets of skills will be worked on in the task. The tasks in the enrichment programme focus on both sets of skills although receptive skills are worked to a slightly greater extent due to the nature of the directionality of the tasks (further detailed in Section 5.3.4), with two consisting of L2 – L1

translation. As discussed in Section 2.5.3, learners may choose to adopt or eschew non-standard language in their personal language use for a variety of reasons, however, at a bare minimum they will need receptive skills to be able to interact with proficient users of the L2, or with media in the L2. Thus, with a view to respecting the diverse range of skills, desires and needs in the class, and the fact that some learners may not want or need to produce informal language in their future interactions with the language/speakers of the language, there was more of an emphasis on receptive skills in the L2 than productive. Nonetheless, one activity did focus on productive skills in the L2 and an additional benefit of the programme was that as much of the in-class discussion took place in the L2, it provided opportunities for the learners to engage in spontaneous oral production in the L2 (Bruton, 2007).

5.3.3 Text Genre and Discourse Environment

The input level must also align with the discourse environment and text genre, as certain environments and genres are more appropriate for specific levels. The CEFRCV (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 218) identifies four primary discourse environments for the mediation of a text: personal, public, occupational and educational. The discourse environment selected was personal as this is where informal registers are most prevalent. Texts in the B2+ and C1 categories of the personal discourse environment primarily include letters, articles, some colloquial writings and short stories. It was decided that informal conversations would be particularly useful for the tasks in terms of exploring the indexical nature of sociolinguistic variation and the information which different variants can convey about the speaker. The use of informal conversations in the teaching of Spanish has also received support in academic circles (Briz, 1998, 2002; Albelda and Fernández, 2006; Albelda and Briz, 2017). Although not specifically listed as a text genre for the personal discourse environment, written examples of such conversations were considered to come under colloquial writings. With a view to enhancing the variety of the tasks and increasing learners' engagement and interest, it was decided to include audiovisual materials in conjunction with transcriptions of conversations for some of the tasks, as DAT can contribute to learners' motivation and help to enhance their creativity and cognitive processes (Talaván, 2020; Talaván, Lertola and Fernández-Costales, 2023).

5.3.4 Direction of Translation Activities

The next step was to consider whether the tasks were to be intralinguistic or interlinguistic and in the latter case, which direction the translation would be (e.g., L1-L2 or L2-L1). The CEFRCV specifies that languages used in translation (referred to as language A and B in the descriptors) "may be different languages, varieties or modalities of the same language, different registers of

the same variety or any of the above" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 92). In the interest of designing a varied programme for the learners, a mixture of directionalities was used, in ascending order of difficulty. For the intralingual translations, learners work with two registers of the same language, (e.g., translating from an informal register to a more a formal register in either the L1 or the L2), while for the interlinguistic translations, learners work with two different languages but the same register in both languages (e.g., translating from an informal register in the L2 to an informal register in the L1). Task 1 is an intralingual translation in English, designed to draw learners' attention to the impact of register variation in the L1. The aim of beginning with this task was to increase their sociolinguistic awareness in the L1 to better prepare them for similar reflections in the L2, as register variation was not necessarily something that they had previously consciously reflected on.

Tasks 2 and 3 were interlinguistic (both Sp-En) translation tasks. Each of the tasks introduce contextualised informal Spanish to expand the learners' sociolinguistic repertoire. As many L2 learners have limited contact with Spanish outside of the classroom, the objective was to introduce examples of authentic usage of informal registers to increase their understanding of such registers and the contexts where they can be used. Translation allows the learners to draw on their L1 sociolinguistic knowledge and use it as a conceptual framework for interpreting the contextual appropriateness of the ST terms. In a similar vein, exploring and analysing equivalent informal terms in their L1 encourages them to reflect on the indexicality of the sociolinguistic variants in the ST, comparing and contrasting them with the language they use in the TT. By tasking the learners with translating the informal Spanish texts into English while maintaining a similar register, the aim was for them to interact with the language on a more granular level.

Task 4, the final task, looks at intralingual translation in Spanish. As intralingual translation in the L2 is likely to be the most challenging type of translation for the learners, this was kept as the final task, with the idea being that by this stage they would be more sensitive to the informal load of sociolinguistic variants in Spanish. As such, they are expected to be better prepared to recognise which informal lexical variants are inappropriate in a more formal context. Replicating their work in Task 1, the learners are asked to tone down an informal register to a more formal or neutral register. It is expected that the learners will have a higher receptive understanding of informal variants than productive, which aligns with the task requirements. In addition, as discussed in Section 2.5.4, learners are agentive and may decide to choose or avoid producing informal language in the L2 for a multitude of reasons depending on, for example, their individual aspirations and imagined communities. Thus, tasking the learners with toning down the register

respects their individual learning trajectories by focusing on receptive rather than productive skills in relation to informal Spanish.

5.3.5 Skills and Strategies Required

The final consideration before embarking on task design was identification of the skills and strategies which would be required for the translation tasks. Section 3.5.2 highlighted the complex nature of translation as a communicative activity, where language users mediate between other language users, ideas and/or forms of input. As illustrated in Figure 14, mediation always consists of receptive and productive activities (e.g., a person reads a text (receptive) and writes a translation of it (productive)), but can also include interaction, for example, if a person explains or translates a text for another person.

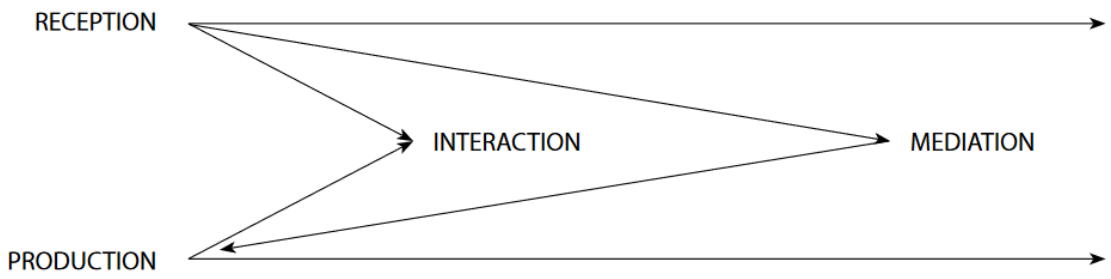


Figure 14. The relationship between reception, production, interaction and mediation (CEFRCV, Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30)

Mediating a text, mediating concepts and mediating communication are the three principal mediation activities outlined in the CEFRCV (see Figure 15). In the enrichment programme, mediating a text in the form of translating texts required the learners to employ appropriate mediation strategies, that is, techniques for clarifying meaning and facilitating understanding (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 117). The CEFRCV identifies two primary mediation strategies: strategies to explain a new concept and strategies to simplify a text (see Figure 15). For the tasks in the enrichment programme, explaining a new concept is a particularly relevant strategy, specifically because learners engage with i) linking a new concept to previous knowledge; and ii) adapting language where necessary (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 118). As shorter and relatively structurally simple texts were deliberately chosen for the translation tasks to maintain a focus on the nature of the language used, there was little need for learners to employ strategies to further simplify the texts.

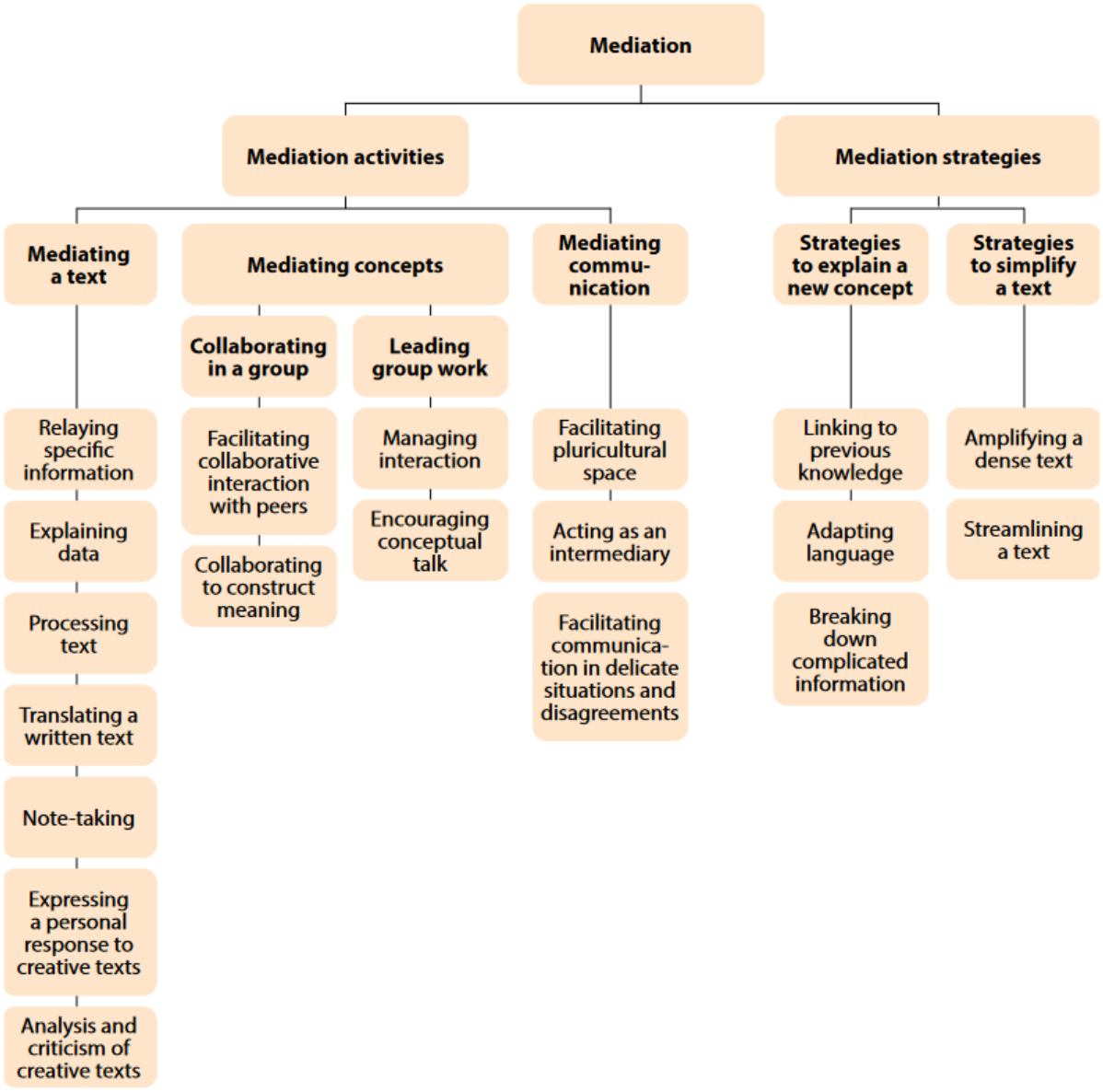


Figure 15. Mediation activities and strategies (CEFRCV, Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90)

Regarding the strategies to explain a new concept, the act of translating is essentially linking new knowledge, (e.g., new L2 vocabulary) to previous knowledge (equivalent L1 terms). As part of the in-class discussion, learners acting as intermediaries for their peers can also link examples of usage of L2 terms to usage patterns in the L1 to highlight with whom certain terms would be used. With respect to adapting language, when translating, learners employ a shift in language or register in order to convey the original content of the ST in a new form.

In addition to mediating a text, the translation tasks also facilitate the mediation of concepts and the mediation of communication through the in-class discussions. Mediating concepts occurs through collaborating in pairs, groups and as a whole class when responding to the discussion questions. Skills required for such mediation include the conscious management of one's role

and contributions to the group; co-constructing ideas (e.g., reflecting on the connotations of specific sociolinguistic variants); and asking peers to explain their thinking and identifying inconsistencies in their thought processes (e.g., analysing with whom specific sociolinguistic variants could/would be used) (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 109). Finally, in terms of mediating communication, learners are able to act as an intermediary by i) explaining informal terms that they have previously encountered in the L2; ii) explaining regional uses of Irish English that their classmates may not be familiar with; or iii) slang that their teacher may not know.

The mediation skills and strategies discussed thus far are interdependent with other communicative activities and strategies. This is particularly evident if we consider the B2-C1 descriptors from the CEFRCV in relation to mediating a text (see Table 7 below).

C1	Can translate (into Language B) abstract texts on social, academic and professional subjects in their field (written in Language A), successfully conveying evaluative aspects and arguments, including many of the implications associated with them, though some expression may be over-influenced by the original.
B2.2	Can produce clearly organised translations (from Language A into Language B) that reflect normal language usage but may be over-influenced by the order, paragraphing, punctuation and particular formulations of the original.
B2.1	Can produce translations (into Language B) that closely follow the sentence and paragraph structure of the original text (in Language A), conveying the main points of the source text accurately, though the translation may read awkwardly.

Table 7. Descriptors for translating a written text in writing (CEFRCV, Council of Europe, 2020, p. 103)

Implicit in these descriptors for translating a written text in writing in Table 7 above, are receptive skills (reading and comprehending the ST) and productive (rewriting the text in the target language/variety). With regard to the particular types of receptive skills required when translating an informal conversation, such as those in the ST of the translation activities in this study, we can turn to the reading correspondence scale in the CEFRCV. As outlined in Table 8 below, certain receptive skills from this scale are especially relevant for understanding a written informal conversation.

C1	– Can understand implicit as well as explicit attitudes, emotions and opinions expressed in e-mails, discussion forums, vlogs/blogs, etc., provided there are opportunities for rereading, and they have access to reference tools. – Can understand slang, idiomatic expressions and jokes in private correspondence.
B2	– Can understand what is said in a personal e-mail or posting even where some colloquial language is used.

Table 8. Selected descriptors from Reading Correspondence scale (CEFRCV, Council of Europe, 2020, p. 54)

As we can infer from the tables above, learners are required to draw on both receptive and productive strategies. Receptive strategies help learners identify cues and infer information, through using contextual, lexical and grammatical cues in the ST to infer the attitude, mood, intentions and identity of the speakers (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 60). There is a notable sociolinguistic component to the descriptors in Table 8, as an understanding of implicit attitudes, emotions and opinions requires knowledge of how these can be tacitly expressed through the indexical use of language. Likewise, the comprehension of slang, idioms and colloquial language requires a receptive knowledge of informal registers and sociolinguistic variants.

In terms of production, the necessary skills relate primarily to overall written production, namely the ability to "employ the structure and conventions of a variety of genres, varying the tone, style and register according to addressee, text type and theme" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 66). Similarly to the receptive skills, the productive skills also require sociolinguistic knowledge, as learners must be conscious that the language they produce is appropriate for the intended recipient and context. The (re)production of the ST in the TT also requires learners to draw on production strategies, particularly those of planning, and monitoring and repair. Planning consists of mental preparation before producing language, and in the context of the translation tasks, it relates to how to formulate what to say and considering the impact on recipients. The in-class discussion further contributed to the learners' planning by allowing them to collaborate in this process and discuss how to best translate more difficult terms or concepts. Monitoring and repair include the conscious process of revising what one has produced and verifying its accuracy and appropriateness. Allowing the learners to do the translation tasks at home rather than constraining them to a shorter in-class time period afforded learners the opportunity to use these production strategies more extensively, as they had the time to look words up, draft translations and revise and compare their TT with the ST.

As evidenced in the discussion of the receptive and productive abilities required during translation, there is a strong sociolinguistic element to these skills. This in turn reinforces the

potential for translation as a means to foster sociolinguistic competence. For the purpose of this study, I will focus specifically on the selected skills from the CEFRCV sociolinguistic appropriateness scale which are outlined below.

C1	1. Can **recognise** a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts; may, however, need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. 2. Can **understand** humour, irony and implicit cultural references and **pick up** nuances of meaning. 3. Can **use** language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage. 4. Can **adjust** their level of formality (register and style) to suit the social context: formal, informal or colloquial as appropriate, and maintain a consistent register.
B2	5. Can **recognise and interpret** sociocultural/sociolinguistic cues and consciously **modify** their linguistic forms of expression in order to express themselves appropriately in the situation. 6. Can **express** themselves confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned.
	7. Can **adjust** their expression to make some distinction between formal and informal registers but may not always do so appropriately. 8. Can **express** themselves appropriately in situations and avoid crass errors of formulation.

Table 9. Selected descriptors from the Sociolinguistic Appropriateness scale (my emphasis) (CEFRCV, Council of Europe, 2020, p. 137)

Departing from the CEFRCV's view of competence "as only existing when enacted in language use" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 34), the present study uses translation activities as an opportunity for learners to enact their sociolinguistic competence. As such, it contributes to the circular process of acquiring overall language proficiency, whereby as a result of performing activities, the learner develops competences and acquires strategies. (Council of Europe, 2020). Through tasking learners with recognising and interpreting sociolinguistic variants and linking them to relevant contexts and their equivalents in the L1, the interlinguistic translation activities (Sp-En) provide extensive opportunities for the learners to enact their receptive L2 sociolinguistic competence, namely through skills 1, 2 and 5 in Table 9. The intralinguistic translation task allows learners to enact their productive L2 sociolinguistic competence by adjusting the level of formality to the appropriate register for the situation and person(s) concerned, thus enacting

skills 3, 4, 5, 6/7/8. Further opportunities to enact productive skills are also provided in the in-class component of the tasks where learners translate specific terms interlinguistically (En-Sp) or intralinguistically (Sp-Sp).

Finally, the mediation, receptive, productive and sociolinguistic skills which have been presented so far also draw on linguistic competence, as learners need the general linguistic range, vocabulary range and control and grammatical accuracy to be able to understand and translate the text. While the discussion has centred on learners carrying out the translations as an individual, the in-class discussion component also offered the additional benefit of interaction between the learners in pair or group conversations where they express opinions in response to questions and reflect on the meaning and use of different variants. Thus, the use of translation tasks in the L2 curriculum can incorporate all four communicative language activities identified in the CEFRCV (Council of Europe, 2020) and is a holistic activity encompassing the use and development of a broad and varied skillset as outlined above.

5.3.6 Design of Tasks

The next stage in the development process was the design of the different tasks. The subsequent sections outline the pedagogical rationale which guided the selection of target language features and considerations in the selection of materials. Sociolinguistic variation and informal registers are often absent from pedagogical materials (Gutiérrez and Fairclough, 2006; Etienne and Sax, 2009). Therefore, the creation of the tasks for this thesis serves to address this paucity of materials.

5.3.6.1 A Pedagogical Norm

The target language feature in this study is informal lexical variants. The selection of this feature was guided by Valdman's pedagogical norm (1976, 2000, 2003) (see Section 3.2), which advises educators to "select and teach a form of language that is acceptable to native speakers but easier to learn than the full native language system" (Bardovi-Harlig and Gass, 2002, p. 3). The norm consists of three overarching criteria, which informed the decision process. Firstly, as highlighted in Chapter 2, informal language forms an integral part of day-to-day language, therefore the teaching of informal variants satisfies the sociolinguistic criterion, which stipulates that the features selected should be representative of authentic speech by target language users. Secondly, it has been shown that i) many L2 users want to acquire informal language (Crosling and Ward, 2002; Darling and Dannels, 2003; Dewaele, 2004b; Myles, 2009; van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a; Lazzaro-Salazar, 2013; Beaulieu *et al.*, 2018); and ii) L1 users of Spanish are accepting of L2 speakers' use of informal language (DuBois, 2019). Therefore, the

teaching of informal variants also satisfies the epilinguistic criterion, which requires that the target language features conform to the expectations of both the language learners themselves and members of the target language community. Thirdly, it has been demonstrated that even at lower levels, learners are capable of navigating register variation (Lemmerich, 2010; van Compernolle, Gomez–Laich and Weber, 2016). Furthermore, lexical variation is also arguably easier for learners to acquire than other features of register variation such as grammatical or phonological features, as many learners are still working on developing their standard grammar and pronunciation. Thus, teaching informal lexical items complies with the acquisitional criterion which relates to the level of difficulty involved in acquiring the target feature. Finally, given the positive vocabulary gains demonstrated by studies using translation in language teaching (Bruton, 2007; Laufer and Girsai, 2008; Hummel, 2010), lexical variation lends itself particularly well to translation as a learning activity. With lexical variation identified as the target feature, the next fundamental part of the design process was selecting authentic materials which promote genuine interaction amongst the students and contain relevant terms.

5.3.6.2 Material Selection

When searching for materials to be used to design the tasks, key considerations included modality, geographic variety of Spanish, text length and nature of content. It was important to have diverse multimodal materials to maintain the learners' interest and ensure that the activities were dynamic and engaging. Although the need for increased visibility of diatopic varieties in the Spanish classroom is recognised (Gutiérrez and Fairclough, 2006), the present study focused on Peninsular Spanish as many of the learners had the option the following year to study abroad in Spain as part of the Erasmus scheme, and Spain is also the nearest Spanish speaking country to Ireland. However, the tasks presented here are protypes and by modifying the source materials, the tasks can easily be adapted to focus on other varieties of Spanish. The texts selected for the tasks were between 80 and 300 words in length approximately, with a view to keeping them short to allow the learners sufficient time to work with specific aspects of informal registers. A final important consideration was the nature of the content of the materials. It was important to strike a balance between finding authentic examples of informal (including vulgar) language use in contexts which the learners could relate to, but without focusing on overly offensive or discriminatory language which could make the learners uncomfortable in class. With this in mind, materials which contained racist/sexist/homophobic or transphobic language or overly explicit sexual content were avoided.

Having taken the above into account, the materials were narrowed down to the following four: i) a clip from the feature film *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) (Scorsese, 2013); ii) a dialogue from the

novel *Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento* (Rico-Godoy, 1990, pp. 75–76); iii) a clip from the Spanish Netflix series *Élite* ('Bienvenidos', 2018); and iv) a letter from a university student featured in Briz' (2002, pp. 25–26) book on the incorporation of colloquial Spanish in L2 classroom.

The one-minute fragment from the popular film *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Scorsese, 2013, see Appendix E.2) depicts an elderly American couple watching TV. They are interrupted by the phone ringing which infuriates the man and causes him to launch into a tirade about the caller. Mid tirade, he answers the phone and swaps to a formal, upper class British accent and speaks politely to the caller, before returning to his tirade once the call has ended. This clip is a particularly interesting example for working on toning down the register in English as it contains a number of examples of strong vulgar language but in the form of insults and exclamations. For that reason, while the language needs to be modified to change the register, the subject matter does not. There is also scope to compare and contrast the Peninsular Spanish and Latin American dubbed versions of the clip which have some notable differences. As the clip is humorous and extremely vulgar, it was also a good choice for the first task as it captured the learners' attention and set the tone for the class.

The dialogue from *Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento* (Rico-Godoy, 1990, pp. 75–76) reproduces a conversation between a female reporter and a male photographer who work for the same newspaper (see Appendix E.3). In the conversation, the photographer laments the fact that he thinks his wife is aware of his affair. The reporter is critical of the affair, responding with sarcasm and expressing exasperation. This excerpt is also recommended by Briz (2002) as an accurate representation of colloquial conversation. Although the novel dates from 1990, much of the language used is still in use today therefore it was deemed useful. While names are not included in the original text, one piece of feedback from the focus group was that this made the conversation a little difficult to follow, therefore if using this text in future, it would be advisable to label the speakers.

Élite (2018) is one of the most popular Spanish language Netflix series and follows the lives of three working class teens who enrol in a prestigious private school in Spain. Many learners had not watched the series before, therefore incorporating it in class introduced these learners to a new source of contact with informal registers. Those who had already watched some or all of the series were able to draw on their previous knowledge and also help their classmates. As the show deals with themes of sex, religion, violence and drug use, particular care was taken when selecting a scene that would be appropriate for use in class. The scene selected is from the first

episode of the first series, and depicts a conversation between Samu, the protagonist, his mother, and Nano, his brother who has just been released from jail (see Appendix E.4). Initially Nano is playful and joking but the tone becomes more tense when Samu refuses his brother's suggestion to call in sick to work so that they can go out to celebrate. Although the speech in the clip is fast paced, working with the transcription of the dialogue helped to mitigate any comprehension difficulties.

The letter was chosen from a series of materials on colloquial conversations recommended for language teaching by Briz (2002), whose work focuses on the analysis of colloquial Spanish. It is a genuine letter from a student to a friend and is written in a friendly and informal style of Spanish (see Appendix E.5). The writer fills her friend in on recent events such as partying, her part time job and her college work. She also enquires about her friend's dating life. Again, while the letter dates from 1995, much of the language used remains in use today and as a letter between two students, many of the topics were of relevance to the learners. As the communication is one sided and aimed at a specific target audience (e.g., a similar aged peer), the letter lent itself particularly well to an intralinguistic translation task, whereby the learners had to change the register to make it appropriate for a grandparent.

Once the materials were selected, the tasks went through multiple iterations of design and refinement, ensuring that the sociolinguistic features of note in the ST were used advantageously in the activities. As part of the design process, earlier versions of the tasks were reviewed by colleagues and researchers from the fields of language teaching and second language acquisition. The activities were also trialled in a Spanish class with learners from the same degree programmes as the participants in this study one year prior to the official enrichment programme and data collection phase.

5.4 Pedagogical Materials for Fostering Sociolinguistic Competence

This section presents the final version of the original tasks and activities which were designed for this study. They are presented in their recommended order (e.g., the order that they were carried out with the students) as they increase in difficulty. Depending on the learners' prior experience with translation and their knowledge of sociolinguistic variation and indexicality, educators using these materials may want to use some or all of the introductory session in Section 5.4.1 to prepare the learners for the tasks, or adapt the materials to their needs. The ST for the tasks and links to AV materials can be found in Appendix E. The materials are presented here in English for discussion purposes; however, it is advised that the Spanish language versions (Appendix E) are used with learners to encourage the use of Spanish in class. Depending on the individual religious

and cultural backgrounds of their classes, educators working in different cultural contexts should ensure that the materials are not overly offensive for their learners and adapt where necessary.

The enrichment programme, as outlined in Table 10 was carried out in Semester 1 of the 2023-2024 academic year. It involved a mixture of in-class activities and translation tasks to be completed at home.

Week	Task	Materials	Activity
3	Introductory Session	– Novel extract: *Ross O'Carroll Kelly, The Miseducation Years* – Orders of Indexicality Diagram (van Compernolle, 2012) – Presentation	– Textual Analysis – Identification of different types of sociolinguistic variation
4	1	Film clip: *Wolf of Wall Street*	Intralinguistic translation (En-En)
5	2	Novel extract: *Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento*	Interlinguistic translation (Sp-En)
8	3	Series clip: *Élite*	Interlinguistic translation (Sp-En)
9	4	Letter	Intralinguistic translation (Sp-Sp)

Table 10. Overview of Enrichment Programme

A full one-hour class was dedicated to the introductory session. For the translation activities, approximately half an hour was dedicated to the in-class discussion activities, while the other half hour was used to continue with other coursework and activities on the curriculum. Learners were then asked to complete the translation tasks at home and submit them via Google Forms. The introductory session and translation tasks will be presented in further detail in the next sections.

5.4.1 Introductory Session

The introductory session served to capture the learners' attention, frame the enrichment programme and introduce the theme of sociolinguistics. While many of the learners had some previous experience with translation through their coursework, the concepts of regional and social variation were not something that they had studied in depth. Therefore, before beginning the translation tasks, a preparatory session was conducted to sensitise the students to sociolinguistic variation. The activities carried out in this one-hour class were split into three sections.

Section	1
Activities	Textual Analysis Reflection and Discussion
Materials	Novel extract: *Ross O'Carroll Kelly, The Miseducation Years*
Learning Objectives	– LO1. Identify register based on language used in English – LO2. Use socially marked language to guess information about interlocutors – LO3. Reflect on link between language and speaker identity
Duration	10 minutes

Table 11. Introductory session - section 1

In section one, students were provided with a brief paragraph in English from *Ross O'Carroll Kelly, The Miseducation Years* (Howard, 2016), which forms part of a tongue in cheek series about upper class people in a wealthy Dublin suburb in Ireland (see 1. Análisis textual, Appendix E.1 for the text). The novels are notable for being written phonetically in the Irish English accent associated with this social group. The students were asked to reflect on what they could tell about the speakers from the fragment (e.g., age, origin, social class) and how they were able to deduce this information, thus introducing the idea of the indexical nature of certain sociolinguistic variants in their L1.

Section	2
Activities	Reflection on Orders of Indexicality Discussion of Personal Language Use
Materials	Orders of Indexicality Diagram (van Compernolle, 2012, p. 66)
Learning Objectives	– LO1. Reflect on personal language use and style including use of socially marked variants – LO2. Identify how and when personal speech style changes – LO3. Identify how and when speakers might use language conventions to consciously change their speech style
Duration	10 Minutes

Table 12. Introductory session - section 2

In section two, the learners were shown van Compernolle's (2012, see Figure 16) diagram depicting how and why people use conventions of language use and stereotypes to convey a certain image or social identity, and asked to reflect on what the way they speak says about them.

Students tended to link this to more static categories such as reflecting their background or where they had lived, or the strong influence of British or American media on how they spoke.

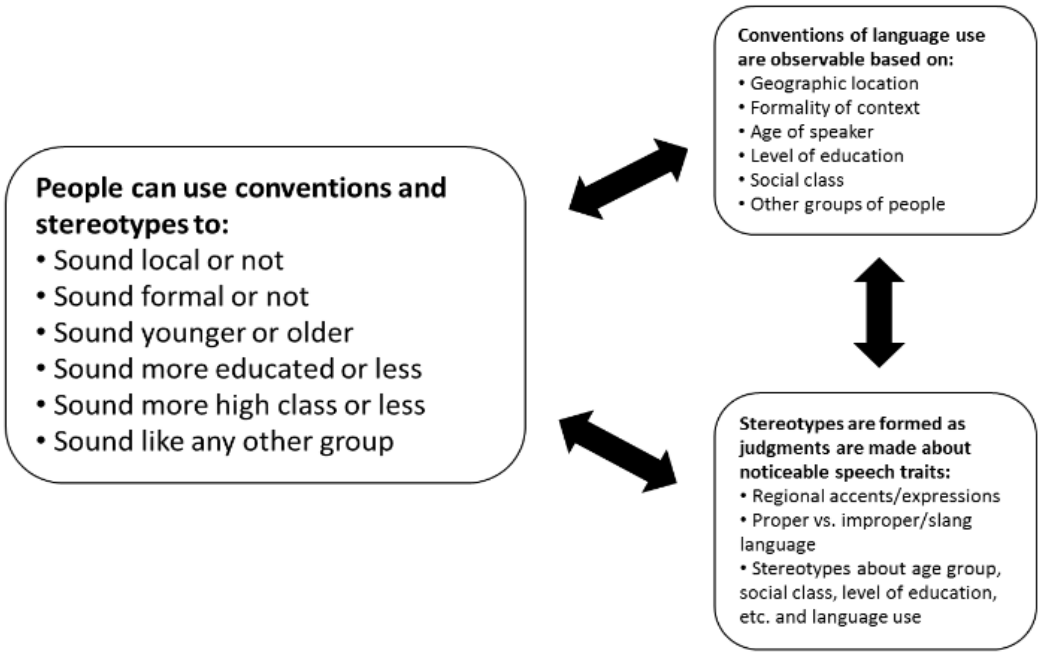


Figure 16. Orders of indexicality (van Compernolle, 2012, p.66)

Section	3
Activities	Reflection on phonetic and lexical variation in Ireland Reflection on different types of linguistic variation Sociolinguistic analysis of example of Northern Irish English
Materials	Presentation – Video: A Guide to Irish Accents – Video: Variedades de la Lengua – Series clip: Derry Girls
Learning Objectives	– LO1. Reflect on sociolinguistic variation in Ireland – LO2. Identify different Irish English lexical variants – LO3. Identify 4 types of linguistic variation with examples in English – LO4. Identify examples of linguistic variation in Spanish – LO5. Analyse example of Northern Irish English and identify diaphasic, diatopic and diastratic variants
Duration	30 minutes

Table 13. Introductory session - section 3

Section three consisted of a short presentation (see Appendix E.1) of language variation throughout Ireland with examples such as the upper-class accent associated with the southside of Dublin, and the use of the diminutive *wee* which is linked to Northern Ireland. The session also introduced the different ways in which language in general can vary: i) diachronic (over time); ii) diatopic (according to the geographic region); iii) diastratic (according to the social group such

as class or age); and iv) diaphasic (according to the social situation). Students then had to identify and categorise sociolinguistic variants from a clip from Derry Girls (2018), a popular TV show in which characters use Northern Irish English, which is particularly distinctive in terms of the accents and lexicon.

The learners enjoyed the introductory session which proved to be dynamic and interactive. It drew their attention to the ways in which they vary their own language use and highlighted their expertise in the varieties of English that they speak. In this sense, it contributed to their sense of agency and autonomy, by recognising them as expert language users in their L1 and encouraging them to use this knowledge when reflecting on the L2. The learners were happy to participate, readily volunteering personal examples of different variants and their usage. The class was conducted in a mixture of Spanish and English and helped to foster a casual environment where learners could offer up their opinion without worrying excessively about their accuracy or fluency in Spanish. Following the introductory session, the learners began Task 1 the next week in class.

5.4.2 Task 1

Task	1
Level	B2+ English/Spanish
Translation Type	– Intralinguistic (En-En) – Interlinguistic (En-Sp)
Materials	Text and Audiovisual: – Clip from *Wolf of Wall Street* – Transcription of Dialogue – See Appendix E.2
Context	Elderly couple watching TV, interrupted by phone call which angers the man who launches into a vulgar tirade.
Learning Objectives	– LO1. Identify register based on language used in English – LO2. Use socially marked language to guess information about interlocutors – LO3. Provide a toned-down translation of the ST in English – LO4. Translate specific informal terms from English to Spanish
Translation Brief	Rewrite the transcription in English to provide a PG version of the conversation. (PG = parental guidance/suitable for children aged 8+)

Table 14. Overview of Task 1

In Task 1, the learners are shown the transcription of the dialogue without being told which film it is from or provided with any further context. They are then shown the questions in Table 15 and given five minutes to discuss who they think the speakers are and note any informal language they identify in pairs or small groups (Q1-2).

Q1	Read the conversation and decide who the speakers are (e.g., their age, gender, relationship to each other). Explain your answers.
Q2	Reread the text and note any colloquial/informal/vulgar expressions.
Q3	Watch the clip and note if there are any more colloquial, informal or vulgar expressions.
Q4	Why does person A use vulgar language in this clip?
Q5	Are insults and vulgar language sometimes used in a positive sense? How? With whom? Give some examples in English

Table 15. Task 1 In-class discussion questions

Before showing the clip, the learners share their answers to Q1 and Q2 with the class to get a sense for what impression they get from the dialogue and whether they are generally in agreement. They are then shown the clip and given 10 minutes to reflect on why vulgar language is used in the clip and whether insults and vulgar language can be used positively (Q3-5) in their pairs/groups before discussing as a whole with the class.

Once the in-class discussion is complete, learners complete the translation task at home. The translation task consists of rewriting the conversation in English to provide a PG version (parental guidance/suitable for children aged 8+). That is, the learners must tone down the overall register of the dialogue. It is not specified that the learners should use a given variety of English therefore they are free to choose. The learners are then asked to translate the expressions in Table 16 from English into Spanish, to draw their attention to how depending on the context, there is not a one-size-fits-all equivalent for the word *fuck*.

1	Who the fuck
2	The fucking (TV) show
3	Fucking halfwit
4	The match was fucking brilliant
5	Fuck yeah
6	Holy fuck

Table 16. Task 1 terms with fuck

These translations also help to prepare learners for encountering variations of the term *joder* in Tasks 2 and 3, which is often translated as *fuck*. Furthermore, translating the terms interlinguistically into Spanish encourages the learners to begin drawing on their L1 sociolinguistic knowledge to inform their understanding of L2 informal variants.

During the in-class discussion, while the learners should pick up on the vulgar nature of terms such as *fuck,* it may be useful for the teacher to highlight milder or more colloquial variants such as *damn* or *cheerio*, as learners may not be as sensitive to the fact that they are informal/non-

standard. When discussing the rationale for using vulgar language and whether it can be used positively (Q4-5), the teacher can also draw the learners' attention to the value/purpose of vulgar language e.g., for expressing rage, frustration, humour, familiarity etc and also get them to reflect on their ability to use such language in Spanish and whether or not they think that it is important to be able to do so. This will help to prime the learners for the subsequent tasks, as they are conscious of the rationale behind introducing such language.

5.4.3 Task 2

Task	2
Level	B2+ English/Spanish
Translation Type	– Interlinguistic (Sp-En)
Materials	Text: – Dialogue from novel *Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento* (Rico-Godoy, 1990, pp. 75–76) – See Appendix E.3
Context	A man tells his female colleague about his affair, and she responds disapprovingly
Learning Objectives	– LO1. Identify register based on language used in Spanish – LO2. Use socially marked language to guess information about interlocutors – LO3. Translate specific informal terms – LO4. Translate the ST from Spanish to English while maintaining the informal register
Translation Brief	Translate the dialogue into English, maintaining the *same register*. Consider what target audience the text is being translated for (e.g., Irish, British, American etc). You are free to choose the audience. Please specify your choice.

Table 17. Overview of Task 2

In Task 2, the pre-translation activity consists of the questions outlined in Table 18 below. Learners are given the dialogue and asked to work on a number of subtasks, guided by different questions. In Qs 1-2, learners are asked to read the dialogue and guess information about the speakers and what register is used. They then compare their answers with each other/the class and see if they are in agreement and check what sociolinguistic features of language they have picked up on in Spanish. Following this, they reread the text, noting any informal variants, cultural references or difficult terms (Q3), and either in pairs or individually, they translate specific terms from Spanish into English and reflect on whether their translations pertain to a particular variety of English (Q4-5). The terms that they are asked to translate in Q4 were identified as potentially being more difficult for the learners therefore including them here allowed the learners to

compare and contrast different translations in class, to better prepare them for dealing with these terms in their own translations at home. Q5 also encourages them to reflect on the effect of choosing one sociolinguistic variant over another in terms of locating the text within a given variety of English.

Q1	Who are the speakers in this text (e.g., their age, gender, relationship to each other)?
Q2	What register is used? Explain your answer.
Q3	Reread the text and note the following: - Colloquial, informal or vulgar words or expressions - Cultural references - Words and expressions which are difficult to understand
Q4	How would you translate the following words/expressions into English? - *Ya será menos* - *Un cabrón* - *Largarse* - *Ahí te pudras*
Q5	Do your answers to Q4 belong to a particular variety of English (e.g., Irish English, British English, American English, etc.)?

Table 18. Task 2 In-class discussion questions

For the translation of the full conversation, learners are asked to maintain the informal register of the ST and to specify the variety of English (e.g., Irish, British, American etc) that they have chosen for their translation. The aim of including the geographic consideration was to encourage learners to situate their translations in a specific context and use sociolinguistic variation to index aspects of that context. However, many learners did not name a specific variety, and their translations did not noticeably pertain to a given variety. Future iterations of the task could therefore place more emphasis on this component.

5.4.4 Task 3

Task	3
Level	B2+ English/Spanish
Translation Type	– Interlinguistic (Sp-En) – Intralinguistic (Sp-Sp)
Materials	Text and Audiovisual: – Transcription of excerpt from Élite (S01 Ep01 00:15:10 - 00:16:03) – Video of excerpt – See Appendix E.4
Context	Reunion between the protagonist, his mother and his brother, who has just been released from jail
Learning Objectives	– LO1. Identify register based on language used in Spanish – LO2. Use socially marked language to guess information about interlocutors – LO3. Translate specific informal terms – LO4. Identify a strategy for the creation of a colloquial term and compare strategy with L1 usage – L05. Find synonyms for informal terms in Spanish (Sp-Sp)
Translation Brief	How would you translate the script of this excerpt to English for an Irish audience, if it was to be adapted to Ireland? Remember it would be for a young audience. Provide your translation below.

Table 19. Overview of Task 3

In Task 3, learners are first presented with the transcription of the dialogue with no further information/context. Based on the language used, they are asked to guess information about the speakers and the register being used (Q1 in Table 20).

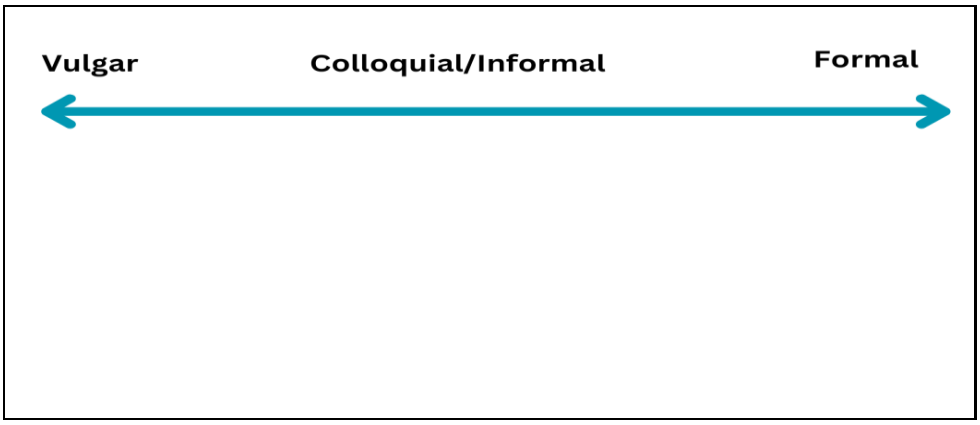
Q1	Read the conversation and try to guess who the speakers are (e.g., their age/gender/relationship to each other). Afterwards, watch the clip and check your answers.
Q2	Reread the text and note the following: - Colloquial, informal or vulgar words or expressions - Cultural references - Words and expressions which are difficult to understand
Q3	What does the word *Pijolandía* refer to? Is it a standard Spanish word? How is it formed? Does the same strategy exist in English to create similar words?
Q4	How would you translate the following terms into English? - *liarse a tortas* - *no te hace ni puta gracia* - *no te jode* - *tío*
Q5	Copy the table below and place the Spanish terms from Q4 on the table according to their level of (in)formality. 
Q6	Find synonyms or alternatives (in Spanish) for the terms from Q4, including terms which are more formal/informal and add them to the table.

Table 20. Task 3 In-class discussion questions

Having read the dialogue and completed Q1, the learners are then shown the clip where they can check their answers. At this point it may be useful to check if the learners are familiar with the Netflix series and provide some further information about the show in general and also the specific context of this conversation. The learners then reread the text, noting any informal variants, cultural references or difficult terms (Q2), reflect on how a particular term from the ST has been created (Q3), translate specific terms from Spanish into English (Q4), grade these terms based on their (in)formality (Q5) and find synonyms in Spanish for these terms (Q6). Qs 2-6 can be completed either individually or in pairs, but it is important to provide the opportunity to feedback the answers together as a class so that the students can learn from one another. This is particularly beneficial for Q6 as learners can add their classmates' suggestions to the table to increase their vocabulary bank. As in Task 2, the terms in Q4 were identified as potentially being more challenging therefore addressing these in class helps to support the students in exploring

their equivalents in English. It may also be useful to ask learners to translate these terms for different varieties of English in class and compare how their classmates perceive the terms.

Finally, for the translation task, learners are asked to translate the dialogue for an Irish audience, maintaining a similar register. It is worth highlighting to the learners that they can be creative with their translations and really draw on their L1 knowledge of slang and vulgar language in Ireland to translate the dialogue using non-standard language. It was expected that learners would be more comfortable using Irish English than other varieties of English, and would hopefully incorporate more Irish English variants in this task.

5.4.5 Task 4

Task	4
Level	B2+ English/Spanish
Translation Type	– Intralinguistic (Sp-Sp) – Interlinguistic (Sp-En)
Materials	Text: – Letter from college student to a friend (Briz, 2002, pp. 25–26) – See Appendix E.5
Context	Female college student catches up with her friend, discussing partying, her part time job, college and dating
Learning Objectives	– LO1. Identify register based on language used in Spanish – LO2. Use socially marked language to guess information about interlocutors – LO3. Translate specific informal terms from Spanish to English – LO4. Identify terms which would be (in)appropriate for use with parents/grandparents in Spanish – LO5. Tone down the register of the ST to render it appropriate for a grandparent
Translation Brief	Imagine the writer is now writing to a grandparent instead. Rewrite the letter in **Spanish** making any changes which you think are necessary to language and/or content.

Table 21. Overview of Task 4

Task 4 is the final task in the series of activities. Building on from the previous tasks, learners are first asked to guess information about the speakers, identify the topics they are discussing and the register used (Qs1-2 in Table 22).

Q1	Who are the speakers in this text (e.g., age/gender/relationship between them) and what are they talking about?
Q2	What register is used? Explain your answer.
Q3	Reread the text and note the following: - Colloquial, informal or vulgar words or expressions - Cultural references - Words are expressions which are difficult to understand
Q4	How would you transfer the following expressions to English, maintaining a similar register? - *Vamos de culo* - *Choto* - *Acabamos todos muy mal, unas llorando, otros liados…* - *Lo pasamos de puta madre* - *Y el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete…* - *(yo) estaba ya un poco hecha mierda* - *Todas mis amigas se pusieron ciegas* - *Se fue una con uno y <<ñaca-ñaca>>, de nuevo lío* - *pasta*
Q5	Which of these terms would you use/not use with your parents and/or grandparents? Why? Compare your answers with your classmate: are there terms for which you have different answers?

Table 22. Task 4 In-class discussion questions

They are then asked to reread the text, noting any informal variants, cultural references or difficult terms (Q3), translate specific terms from Spanish into English (Q4) and reflect on which of these terms they would use with a parent and/or grandparent (Q5) before comparing their answers with the class. Although the learners had to translate this text intralinguistically in Spanish, by toning down the register, Q4 asks the learners to translate specific terms from Spanish to English and maintain the register. The reason for this is to allow learners to link the informal terms in Spanish with their informal equivalents in English, and draw on their L1 sociolinguistic knowledge to inform their decisions for Q5, where they must decide which of the terms they would use with parents/grandparents. Therefore, it is particularly useful when discussing Qs 4-5 as a class to ask learners to compare and contrast their answers and reflect on any differences of opinion that they may have, as these differences may highlight the learners' individual sociocultural and sociolinguistic norms.

Having completed the in-class discussion, the learners then rewrite the letter to a grandparent by toning down the register. They are free to make some changes to the content where they deem necessary, but the overall message should remain the same.

5.5 Summary

This chapter reiterated the value of translation activities in providing opportunities for learners to enact and thus develop their L2 sociolinguistic competence. It highlighted how translation draws learners' attention to the relationship between form and meaning, and requires the use of specific receptive and productive skills and strategies as well as mediation competencies. It also underscored the sociolinguistic elements of these skills and strategies and identified the receptive and productive aspects of sociolinguistic competence on the CEFRCV sociolinguistic appropriateness scale which translation tasks address. It provided a worked example of the application of Pedregosa and Sánchez Cuadrado's (2022) guide for developing mediation activities which was used to inform the design of the tasks in this enrichment programme. Finally, it presented the original tasks which were designed for this study and outlined how these prototypes can be implemented in the L2 classroom. These tasks constitute an important contribution to the field of Translation in Language Teaching as they address the gap between the academic literature calling for increased implementation of translation in language teaching and its apparent underutilisation in the classroom (McLaughlin, 2022). The next chapter turns to the analysis and discussion of the translations that the learners produced in response to these activities in order to answer RQs 1 and 2 and shed further light on the benefits of translation in fostering sociolinguistic competence.

Chapter 6: Translation Activities as a Sociolinguistic Playground – Analysis and Discussion of Translation Tasks

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the learners' emerging sociolinguistic competence in their responses to the four translation tasks, and addresses RQ1: *How do learners navigate register in their translations of lexical sociolinguistic variants?* and RQ2: *In what ways can translation tasks foster sociolinguistic competence?* RQ1 will be addressed in Section 6.2 while RQ2 will be addressed in Section 6.3, with Section 6.4 providing the summary and conclusions of the analysis and discussion for RQ1 and RQ2. The data used for these questions were the learners' translations of the sociolinguistic variants of interest for the four translation tasks which were carried out during the enrichment programme. The translations of these terms were analysed using the original framework designed for this study (see Section 4.6.2), which facilitated i) the categorisation of the terms and their translations according to the grade of informality; ii) the observation of the transfer/non-transfer of the informal load of the ST term; and iii) the observation of recurring patterns in the learners' translations.

6.2 Learners' Navigation of Register Through Translation

In Section 2.4.1, sociolinguistic competence was defined as the ability to understand and/or produce variable structures in relation to social norms and to interpret linguistic and extralinguistic information. The translation techniques used by the learners when translating the sociolinguistic variants of interest offer insights into the learners' understanding of informal variants in the ST and their ability to translate, reproduce or adapt them in relation to social norms according to the translation brief. When translating, the learners had to interpret the linguistic information provided in the form of the ST, as well as the extralinguistic information such as the speakers, the relationship between them, the context and the target audience of their own translations.

A significant finding to emerge from these tasks is that there was *no* instance of a translation using a register that was out of place (e.g., excessively formal or excessively vulgar). While there were no instances of an inappropriate register being used, there were instances of terms being toned down, omitted or neutralised in cases where it was not strictly necessary, as will be discussed throughout the chapter. However, all of the translations were contextually appropriate, indicating that the learners were able to successfully navigate register across all

four tasks. That is, they successfully drew on their sociolinguistic competence to interpret the ST and reproduce or adapt it in their TT in line with the social norms of the translation brief.

The present study adapted Ávila-Cabrera's (2020, p. 129) taxonomy of translation techniques for the transfer of offensive and taboo language, extending the concept of transfer to include colloquial language (see Table 23 below), as explained in Section 4.6.2. Therefore, the subsequent discussion refers to the transfer of the *informal* load (the level of informality), including both vulgar and colloquial language, rather than just vulgar language. The translation techniques are divided into two broad categories: transfer and non-transfer. The transfer techniques include toning up, maintaining and toning down the informal load. The non-transfer techniques are neutralisation (e.g., using a standard/formal term) and omission.

Transfer Type	Translation Technique	Description of Technique
Transfer	Toned Up	Translated using a variant that is more informal than the ST term
	Maintained	Translated using a term with a similar level of informality as the ST term
	Toned Down	Translated using a term that is less informal than the ST
Non-transfer	Neutralised	Translated using a standard/formal variant
	Omitted	Omitted the informal term

Table 23. Summary of translation techniques

As the target social norms varied depending on the task, for the present discussion, the tasks will be grouped according to the translation brief; whether the register had to be maintained or neutralised as outlined in Table 24. Section 6.2.1 will examine the tasks where learners had to transfer the informal register of the ST and Section 6.2.2 will centre on the tasks where learners toned down or neutralised the ST.

Task	Translation Brief	Language(s) and Direction of Translation	Discussion Section
1	Tone down/neutralise	English -> English	6.2.2
2	Transfer informal register	Spanish -> English	6.2.1
3	Transfer informal register	Spanish -> English	6.2.1
4	Tone down/neutralise	Spanish -> Spanish	6.2.2

Table 24. Overview of translation briefs and direction of translation

6.2.1 Transferring the Informal Register

In Tasks 2 and 3, learners had to translate from Spanish into English and transfer the informal register of the source text. All of the sociolinguistic variants of interest in the Spanish ST in these tasks came under the categories of either *strong* or *colloquial* on the framework used to categorise the informal load of the sociolinguistic variants (see Table 5, Section 4.6.2). The same framework was also used to categorise each of the learners' translations of the variants. Once the informal load of all of the translations was categorised, they could then be compared with the ST to see to what extent and in what ways the informal register had been transferred.

Overall, in both tasks the learners tended to transfer the informal register of the strong terms in the majority of instances, although they did so to a greater extent in Task 2 than in Task 3. Much lower rates of transfer were observed for the colloquial terms, with learners also frequently neutralising these terms in both tasks. While the lower rates of transfer for the colloquial terms might indicate that learners are less sensitive to the nuances of mildly marked colloquial variants vs neutral language, it is likely that terminological differences between Spanish and English played a role. It is also possible that the dictionaries/translation resources used by learners influenced their translations. Interestingly, in many cases, translations which were marked as errors still displayed an awareness of register even though they conveyed the wrong meaning.

6.2.1.1 Task 2. Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento: Interlingual: L2– L1

Task 2 (see Appendix E.3 for full text) was an interlingual (Spanish - English) translation task, where learners had to translate an extract from the novel *Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento* (Rico-Godoy, 1990). Table 25 indicates the contextualised terms of interest identified in the ST, their possible English translations and the corresponding categorisation according to the analytical framework presented in Section 4.6.2.

ST Term	Potential English Translation	Category
tú lo que eres es un **cabrón**	What you are is a **bastard**	strong
No estoy raro, **estoy jodido**	I'm not being weird, **I'm fucked**	
Y además me deja así, tirado; **ahí te pudras**	And she leaves me like that, stranded; **go to hell**	colloquial
tú la conoces porque trabaja en Radio Nacional, una **chiquilla joven**	You know her because she works in Radio Nacional, a **young girl**	
tu mujer **está hasta el gorro** de que le pongas los cuernos	Your wife **has had it up to here** with you cheating on her	
A ver, cuéntame, **hijo mío**	Let's see, tell me, **son**	
Una mujer no puede abandonar a su marido y **largarse** de casa	A woman can't abandon her husband and **take off** out of the house like that	
Pues porque las **tías** sois la pera	Well because **you girls** are unreal	
tu mujer está hasta el gorro de que **le pongas los cuernos**	Your wife has had it up to here with **you cheating on her**	
Y además **me deja así, tirado**; ahí te pudras	And **she leaves me like that, stranded**; go to hell	
dice que soy un **muermo** y que no la hablo	She says I'm a **bore** and I don't talk to her	
Pues porque las tías **sois la pera**	Well because you girls **are unreal**	
Desde hace unos meses salgo con una **tía**	I've been going out with a **girl** for the last few months	
¿Y cómo quieres que se vaya, **tío**?	And how do you want her to go, **man?**	
- mi mujer, que dice que se ha ido de casa, que se quiere separar. **- ya será menos**	**-**my wife, she says she's left the house, that she wants to split up **- as if**	

Table 25. Terms of interest in Task 2 ST

In this task, learners were asked to transfer the informal register when translating from Spanish into English. One learner's submission was incomplete; therefore 21 responses were analysed. There were 15 terms of interest in the ST meaning that there was a total of 315 instances of translation analysed. Table 26 indicates an overview of the translation techniques used by the learners in their translations of the various terms.

Task 2. Total Instances = 315					
Transfer	54.60%		Non-transfer	37.14%	
Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Neutralised	Omitted	Error
3.17%	50.48%	0.95%	31.43%	5.71%	8.25%

Table 26. Overview of translation techniques in Task 2

In just over half of the instances (54.60%), the informal register of the ST term was transferred to the TT. At a glance, this figure could suggest that learners struggled to successfully navigate the register in their translations, however that was not the case. A consideration of the transfer rates in relation to the register level of the ST term (e.g., how the learners dealt with strong/moderate terms vs colloquial terms) yields interesting insights, showing that the learners transferred the informal load of the strong/moderate terms far more frequently than they did for colloquial terms.

Task 2	Transfer				Non-transfer				
Register Category	Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Total	Neutralised	Omitted	Total	Error	Total Instances
strong/mod	2.38%	85.71%	7.14%	95.24%	2.38%	0.00%	2.38%	2.38%	42
colloquial	3.30%	45.05%	0.00%	48.35%	35.90%	6.59%	42.49%	9.16%	273

Table 27. Category overview of Task 2 translation techniques

As shown in Table 27, 95.24% of the instances of strong terms were transferred. In 85.71% of the instances, the informal load was maintained and 2.38% of instances it was toned up. Only 7.14% of the instances were toned down. This shows that the learners were clearly able to understand these terms in the ST, recognise and interpret their informal load and reproduce it in relation to the social norms of an informal context in the TT. It is also indicative of the high tolerance in Irish English for taboo terms (Farr and Murphy, 2009; Murphy, 2009), as learners are comfortable with using vulgar language in their English translations. Indeed, one learner even toned up *cabrón* (#2.1, see Table 28) and provided the translation *cunt,* which was the only instance of the use of a very strong term across all four tasks. Therefore, despite the fact that vulgar language is generally deemed inappropriate for educational settings, the learners seem to have had no issue in using it in their translations and indeed have embraced it.

By contrast, of the 273 instances of translation of a colloquial term, 48.35% of the translations transferred the informal load. There was a clear tendency to neutralise the colloquial terms, which was done in 35.9% of instances. This could suggest that the learners struggled more with transferring the informal load of colloquial terms than strong/moderate terms, however, further examination of the techniques on a term-by-term basis (see Table 28) indicates that there are other factors influencing how the learners navigate register.

Ref	ST Term	Transfer			Non-transfer		Error	Total
		Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Neutralised	Omitted		
2.1	cabrón	1	19	1	0	0	0	21
2.2	estoy jodido	0	17	2	1	0	1	21
2.3	ahí te pudras	5	5	0	0	3	8	21
2.4	chiquilla joven	0	8	0	13	0	0	21
2.5	está hasta el gorro	0	17	0	2	0	2	21
2.6	hijo mío	0	17	0	0	4	0	21
2.7	largarse	1	1	0	19	0	0	21
2.8	las tías	0	2	0	15	2	2	21
2.9	le pongas los cuernos	1	18	0	0	2	0	21
2.10	me deja así, tirado	0	14	0	5	1	1	21
2.11	muermo	1	3	0	14	0	3	21
2.12	sois la pera	0	8	0	5	1	7	21
2.13	tía	0	4	0	17	0	0	21
2.14	tío	0	17	0	0	4	0	21
2.15	ya será menos	1	9	0	8	1	2	21
	Total	10	159	3	99	18	26	315

Table 28. Individual term translation techniques in Task 2

Translations of the idioms were largely influenced by congruency between Spanish and English. *Estar hasta el gorro,* literally meaning *to be up to one's hat* has multiple functionally equivalent idioms in English including *to be sick (and tired) of*, and *to be fed up with*, both of which learners used in their translations. While the idioms in English are structurally different to the Spanish expression, they maintain the same meaning. Interestingly, the two errors for this term also used idioms, and therefore maintained the informal load of the ST term. The idioms chosen were *to be up to her eyeballs* and *to be up to her neck*. Here, rather than focusing on functional equivalence, the learners have focused on equivalence in form, resulting in the incorrect meaning. Both the correct and incorrect translations demonstrate the natural activation of the L1 when processing idiomatic or formulaic language in the L2 (Carrol, Conklin and Gyllstad, 2016), which learners then draw on to inform their translations. Although *poner los cuernos a alguien* does not have an equivalent idiom in English, the colloquial expression *to cheat on someone* is widely used, functionally equivalent and also the first translation provided by resources such as wordreference.com, the Collins dictionary and DeepL.

Me deja así, tirado (#2.10) was frequently translated as *she leaves me like that, just like that* (with some slight variation of the structure of the phrase), with the colloquial expression *just like that* serving to indicate disapproval. In other cases, the more neutral translation *she leaves me like this, stranded* was suggested. Two learners combined this expression with the subsequent *ahí te pudras* (#2.3) (*go rot/rot in hell),* translating it as *leaving me to rot* and *she also leaves me like this,*

stranded; rotting. In both cases although they have combined the expressions, they have maintained the idiomatic/figurative use of rotting (the Cambridge dictionary lists being left to rot in hell/prison as an idiom) and the wording is not excessively clumsy or awkward therefore the translations were accepted.

Terms whose informal load they generally did not transfer were *chiquilla joven, largarse, las tías, muermo* and *tía,* which contrasts with the high transfer rates for *hijo mío* and *tío*. Thus, there is a clear pattern in the treatment of gender-based familiariser vocatives, with the informality of the male terms (*hijo mío, tío*) being transferred, while the informality of the female terms (*chiquilla joven, las tías, tía*) is not. However, this is likely due to differing usage of such terms between English and Spanish, with the use of vocatives being particularly common in Spanish (Kleinknecht, 2013). In English, while male vocatives are more commonly used for males, their use is not confined to male speakers and addresses (Kiesling (2004) on *dude*, Rendle-Short (2010) on *mate*, Murphy and Farr (2012) on *lads*). Although a similar pattern has been observed in Spanish (Alba-Juez (2009) on *tío/macho*, Palacios (2002) on *güey*), female specific vocatives such as *tía* are nonetheless still frequently used in Spanish (Alba-Juez, 2009). By contrast, the scarcity of feminine familiarisers in English corpora both suggests much less frequent usage of such terms and has also possibly contributed to the lack of studies on their usage (Flesch, 2023). However, the few instances of maintaining the informal load of female vocatives generally tended to use Irish English variants to do so, such as *young one (chiquilla joven), moth (tía)* and *yous (tías)*. *Moth* (also *mot/mott*), means girl or young woman (Share, 2008, p. 245), while *yous* is widely used in Irish English (particularly in Dublin) in place of the second person plural *you* (Share, 2008, p. 409).

Largarse was the most frequently neutralised term, which can perhaps be explained by many online dictionaries providing the translation of the standard verb *to leave*. Another possible reason is the fact that the term is a standalone verb rather than an idiom or verb phrase as is the case with the other terms in this task which contain verbs. The tools used by the learners were also potentially a factor in the translation of *muermo*. Wordreference.com suggests the translations *drip* and *wet fish* for a person but these terms are arguably not very common amongst young people. It also suggests *drag* which was an informal suggestion from one student, and then the neutral *bore* and *boring,* both of which were frequently provided as translation solutions. *Boring* is the first term suggested by The Collins Dictionary, which also suggests the term *wet fish* as well. Therefore, when the translations provided by dictionaries do not align with the sociolinguistic repertoires of the learners in their L1 (e.g., the informal terms provided are

outdated and not used by younger people) they opted for a neutral translation instead of offering their own informal term.

One of the terms with the highest number of errors was *ahí te pudras/go to hell (#2.3)* which is a figurative expression. This term seems to have been the most difficult term for the learners to translate, although the errors appear in general to stem from difficulties with wording rather than difficulties with meaning. Other attempts at maintaining the colloquial use of rot in *ahí te pudras* resulted in the translations *there you go to rot,* and *there you are, rotting*, both of which sound unnatural in English. Furthermore, a Google search of these expressions returned zero results for *there you go to rot*, and six results for *there you are, rotting*, underscoring how unnatural the wording is; hence these translations were marked as errors. It is quite possible that learners used machine translation for this sentence as many of the more unnatural sounding translations are very similar to results from Deep L (*leaves me like this, lying there; there you rot/leaves me like this, lying there; you rot)* and Google Translate (*He leaves me like this, stranded; there you rot*). The final error for this term was *she can go to hell*. Although *go to hell* is an appropriate translation, *ahí te pudras* is the speaker's interpretation of his wife's attitude or sentiment towards him, therefore the subject in *she can go to hell* is incorrect, thus the meaning is inexact. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the learner has maintained a similar register and chosen the appropriate idiom. In sum, despite the wording errors discussed here, these attempts still illustrate the receptive component of the learners' sociolinguistic competence in the L2 as they evidence that they have correctly interpreted the ST but rather are struggling with finding an appropriate equivalent.

For the purpose of analysis, *me deja así, tirado;* and *ahí te pudras* were considered separately as there were numerous instances of a learner correctly translating one of the terms but not the other. Nevertheless, it is useful to examine them together in some cases, such as the three instances of omission for *ahí te pudras*. In each of these instances, the learners introduced a different expression as shown below in Table 29 (accompanied with the preceding translation for *me deja así tirado* for context). In each example, the new expression departs considerably from the ST and the original terms' referential meanings. For this reason, they were classed as being instances of omission and addition. In example 1, *me deja así, tirado* was also omitted and *anyways that's the story* was added.

Source Text	(Y además me deja así, tirado;) ahí te pudras
English Translation	(And she leaves me just like that, stranded;) go to hell
Example	**Learner Translations**
1	*(Anyways, that's the story.) Off with you.*
2	*(And then she'll leave me like that, just like that;) not in a million years!*
3	*(And she's leavin' me high and dry;) it's just heartless.*

Table 29. Omission and addition for ahí te pudras

While these translations do not convey quite the same meaning as the ST, the wording is natural, and they maintain an informal tone. When struggling with the more difficult translation of *ahí te pudras*, these learners have opted for a more creative solution to avoid having to specifically translate the term in question. Therefore, while Laufer and Girsai (2008) argue that translation is a form of pushed output, requiring learners to interact with problematic words or structures, the above examples evidence that learners can and do still avoid problematic terms on occasion. In this task, this was somewhat mitigated by the in-class component which specifically asked learners to translate *ahí te pudras* however in order to improve the task's function as a form of pushed output, it may be necessary to highlight certain terms which learners have to translate.

Sois la pera, another figurative expression, also received a higher number of errors. *Ser la pera* has a dual meaning and depending on the context, it can refer to something/someone being exceptional or noteworthy for either very good or very bad reasons, and in this case is used in a negative sense. While many learners provided translations which maintained this dual meaning, such as *something else, unreal* and *unbelievable*, some of the erroneous ones opted for positive translations such as *amazing/the best*. Only one error was due to a literal translation of *pera* as *pear*. These errors using a positive translation underscore the need for the three sub-competences to work in harmony: linguistically, these translations are correct, sociolinguistically they are an appropriate register, however pragmatically, they do not convey the intended meaning of the ST. They also suggest that perhaps the learners simply looked the term up in isolation without paying attention to the broader context of the ST.

Overall, it appears that it was easier for learners to maintain the informal load of strong/moderate terms than colloquial terms. On the one hand, this may indicate that strong/moderate terms are much more salient for the learners and therefore easier to both recognise and transfer their informal load. On the other hand, terminological differences between Spanish and English with regard to the use of gender-based vocatives was a clear influencing factor, with the informal load

of masculine vocatives generally being maintained while feminine ones were neutralised. Translation resources may also have contributed to the lower transfer rate of informality for certain colloquial terms such as *muermo* and *largarse* with learners either opting for the neutral translation provided by dictionaries as the informal ones were outdated, or opting for the neutral translation as it was the only one provided by the dictionary. In both cases, there seems to be a reticence amongst the learners to be bolder and more creative and use alternative colloquial variants from their own L1 sociolinguistic repertoires. Errors in the translation of the figurative expression *ahí te pudras* demonstrate an effort to maintain a colloquial register through idiomatic usage of the term *rot* in the translations in English, albeit with unnatural phrasing. Likewise, errors for the other figurative expression *sois la pera* also attempted to transfer the informality of this term, but often opted for a contextually incorrect meaning. The translations also evidence use of the L1 as scaffolding, with learners linking *ahí te pudras* with the figurative use of *rot* in English. There is only one instance of a learner attempting to do this with *pera* as it is not used in this sense in English. This suggests that perhaps it is easier for learners to maintain figurative or idiomatic usage of language when the same key terms are used in both the L2 and the L1. Even when there are instance of learners avoiding translating a specific term such as *ahí te pudras*, they have endeavoured to transfer the informal tone by adding a colloquial alternative. Although the alternative departs considerably from the ST in terms of referential meaning, it indicates that they have used receptive sociolinguistic skills and correctly interpreted the informal load of the ST. Finally, although learners were free to select an English variety of their choice for the translation, there are not many instances of specific use of Irish English/variants from other varieties of English. However, a number of the instances of use of Irish English variants are clustered in the translations relating to women (*una tía/tías/ una chiquilla joven*).

6.2.1.2 Task 3. Élite: Interlingual: L2 – L1

In Task 3 (see Appendix E.4), learners worked with a dialogue from a clip from the first episode of the first season of the popular Spanish Netflix series *Élite* ('Bienvenidos', 2018). Like Task 2, it was an interlingual translation task where learners had to translate from Spanish to English and transfer the informal register of the ST, however this time they were asked to translate for an Irish audience. 11 terms of interest were identified in the ST and all participants completed the task correctly therefore 22 responses were analysed, giving a total of 242 instances of translation of the terms of interest. Table 30 outlines the ST terms of interest along with their possible translations and register category.

ST Term	Potential English Translation	Category
Joder. Qué bien esto, ¿eh?	**Fuck.** How nice is this?	Strong
¿No te hace ni puta gracia verme?	**Aren't you fucking happy to see me?**	
No, sigo allí, **no te jode**.	No, I'm still in there, **no shit.**	
Míralo. Si parece un ministro. **Hermanito. Hermaniitooo.**	Look at him, he looks like a politician. **Bro. Little broooo.**	Colloquial
Madre mía, irá bien en Pijolandia, ¿no?	**God,** things are going well in Poshland right?	
A mí me largaron	They took me away/they got rid of me/they fired me	
me lío a tortas con quien haga falta	**I'll beat up** anyone I have to	
Samu, **yo no me largué**	Samu, **I didn't take off**	
Madre mía, irá bien en **Pijolandia**, ¿no?	God, things are going well in **Poshland** right?	
Es el trabajo que tenemos desde que **te largaste**	It's the job we've had since **you took off**	
¿Pero qué haces aquí, **tío**?	But what are you doing here **bro**?	

Table 30. Terms of interest in Task 3 ST

As in Task 2, learners transferred the informal register of the ST in just over half (55.37%) of the instances of translation of the ST terms of interest (see Table 31) and there was a slightly lower error rate with only 4.96% of the translations being marked as errors.

Task 3. Total Instances = 242					
Transfer	55.37%		Non-transfer	39.67%	
Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Neutralised	Omitted	Error
8.26%	39.26%	7.85%	33.47%	6.20%	4.96%

Table 31. Overview of translation techniques in Task 3

Initially, the transfer rates might suggest that the learners were only moderately successful in maintaining the register in these tasks, however, a more fine-grained analysis with qualitative insights from the translations again illustrates some interesting patterns in how the learners navigated register in their translations of these terms. In general, the learners' translations were more faithful to the register of the ST when dealing with strong/moderate terms than with colloquial terms. This may indicate that the stronger variants were easier for learners to recognise and also easier to find direct equivalents for, although the term *no te jode* proved more difficult in this regard. While higher than expected rates of non-transfer were observed for colloquial terms, in many cases this can be explained by terminological differences between Spanish and English, particularly with regard to gender-specific common nouns. Tools used by the learners may also have contributed to the tendency to neutralise terms such as *largarse*, with learners opting for the first meaning listed in the dictionary. However, there are still many terms

whose informality the learners successfully transferred. Indeed, when terms *were* transferred, in general, learners tended to maintain the informal load rather than toning up or down (although *madre mía, me lío, a tortas, joder* and *no te jode* were exceptions to this). Interestingly, despite the unnatural wording or incorrect meanings in the erroneous translations, there are multiple instances where learners still demonstrate awareness of the informal load of the ST term and endeavour to transfer it into their TT.

Like Task 2, there was a notable difference between the transfer of the informal load of the ST term for strong terms and for colloquial terms, with learners tending to transfer the informal load more often for the strong terms than for the colloquial terms (see Table 32). However, in this task they often toned down the register when transferring the informal load of the strong terms (e.g., used a less vulgar term) whereas in Task 2 they tended to maintain it (e.g., by providing a translation that had a similar level of vulgarity). The frequency of transferring the informal load for strong terms was also not quite as high as that of Task 2, suggesting that they might have found the strong terms in this text more difficult to translate. The translation brief may also have played a role as learners were told to translate for a young audience, and it is possible that some learners interpreted this in a similar sense to Task 1 where they had to translate the text for a child audience. The informal load of colloquial terms was transferred slightly more often (50.57% of instances) than it was in Task 2 and there was also a higher number of instances of toning up the colloquial terms, where learners used a term that was more vulgar than the ST term.

Task 3	Transfer				Non-transfer				
Register Category	Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Total	Neutralised	Omitted	Total	Error	Total Instances
strong/mod	0.00%	39.39%	28.79%	68.18%	7.58%	16.67%	24.24%	7.58%	66
colloquial	11.36%	39.20%	0.00%	50.57%	43.18%	2.27%	45.45%	3.98%	176

Table 32. Category overview of Task 3 translation techniques

With regard to the strong terms, Table 33 illustrates the translation techniques on a term-by-term basis, where we can see that although learners still transferred the informal load of the strong terms quite frequently, rather than generally maintaining the load as they did in Task 2, they often toned it down, particularly for *joder/fuck(#3.1)* and *no te jode/no shit(#3.3)*. The informal load for *no te hace ni puta gracia verme/aren't you fucking happy to see me (#3.2)* and *no te jode* was not transferred in many instances. As the learners tended to maintain *estoy jodido/I'm fucked (#2.2)* in Task 2, it is therefore surprising to see this pattern of toning down the related terms of *joder* and *no te jode* here, as they have already shown that they are familiar with and capable of maintaining this term. Thus, this suggests that the translation brief was an influencing factor.

Ref	ST Term	Transfer			Non-transfer		Error	Total
		Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Neutralised	Omitted		
3.1	joder	0	12	7	0	3	0	22
3.2	no te hace ni puta gracia verme	0	12	1	0	7	2	22
3.3	no te jode	0	2	11	5	1	3	22
3.4	hermanito...hermaniiitooo	0	13	0	9	0	0	22
3.5	madre mía	11	3	0	6	0	2	22
3.6	me largaron	0	14	0	7	0	1	22
3.7	me lío a tortas	9	4	0	8	0	1	22
3.8	no me largué	0	0	0	22	0	0	22
3.9	pijolandia	0	16	0	3	0	3	22
3.10	te largaste	0	1	0	21	0	0	22
3.11	tío	0	18	0	0	4	0	22
	Total	20	95	19	81	15	12	242

Table 33. Individual term translation techniques in Task 3

While the brief may also have contributed to the tendency to tone down or neutralise *no te hace ni puta gracia verme,* the learners could also have struggled with the fact that there is not a one-to-one equivalent for *fuck* in Spanish. In this task *joder* can be translated as *fuck,* but *puta* which is morphologically unrelated to *joder* can be translated as *fucking,* therefore this may have been a point of confusion. If the omission was due to confusion about how to translate the term, this would again somewhat contradict Laufer and Girsai's (2008) argument that translation is a form of pushed output as learners have simply opted to omit a problematic term in their translations and not transfer the informal load of this term.

Translations of the term *no te jode* reflect the simultaneous activation of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence. Regardless of the register level chosen for this term, the successful translations of *no te jode* all managed to maintain the pragmatic feature of sarcasm from the ST. There was also a considerable amount of variation amongst the translations provided for *no te jode,* possibly as there is no literal/direct translation for the expression. This seems to have forced the learners to reflect more on appropriate equivalents and resulted in more individual approaches. This term was toned down even more frequently than the other two strong terms in this task, with six learners providing the *mild* translation *no shit*. Although this translation is much milder, pragmatically it maintains a level of vulgar sarcasm and sounds natural in the context. Thus, even when unable to establish exact sociolinguistic equivalence, the learners have established pragmatic equivalence.

In line with the tendency observed in Task 2 to neutralise *largarse/to take off (#2.7),* the conjugated forms of this verb *no me largué/I didn't take off (#3.8)* and *te largaste/you took off (#3.10)* were also neutralised in almost every instance, which again can likely be attributed to the resources used by learners when translating. However, the same tendency to neutralise was not observed with the term *me largaron/they took me away (#3.6)* which elicited a range of translations*;* although, it must be noted that here the verb *largar* is not used in a reflexive sense, which may have been an influencing factor. There was also some ambiguity as to the specific meaning in this context. The speaker Nano, (aged in his 20s) has recently been released from prison, but when he says *a mí me largaron,* it is unclear whether he is referring to being taken away to prison, or whether he is referring to the work his brother mentions in the previous line and that he was fired from it. Although it is probable that he is referring to being taken away to prison, as learners were mainly relying on the text (although the in-class discussion did include a description of the context), translations relating to being fired were also accepted. Translations which maintained the informal load tended to opt for the meaning of being fired. The one error for this term was the translation *I was dumped,* which although is a potential translation of the expression *me largaron,* conveys the incorrect meaning in this context. However, again as *I was dumped* is a colloquial expression, this translation indicates an effort to transfer the informal load.

Also following the pattern observed in Task 2 was the treatment of the term *tío/bro,* which was maintained in almost every instance. In a similar vein, learners frequently maintained the informal load of *hermanito, hermanitoooo* by translating this using *little/lil bro*. However, there were also nine instances of this term being neutralised as *little brother*. Translation tools may have played a role here as this is the translation provided by Google Translate and DeepL. It is also possible that some learners were not sensitive to the fact that the diminutive *-ito* suffix is used here affectionately and is informal.

Interestingly, the terms *madre mía/goodness (#3.5)* and *me lío a tortas/I'll beat up (#3.7)* were toned up rather frequently. This contrasts with both the tendency to tone down the strong terms in this task, and the generally few instances of toning up in Task 2. In the case of *madre mía,* this was due to using slightly stronger religious phrases. Given the high tolerance for religious references in Irish English (O'Keeffe and Adolphs, 2008), the learners may not have even considered their translations such as *(oh) my god, mother of god,* and *jaysus* as being mildly vulgar. The translations for *me lío a tortas,* were quite varied. While this expression is colloquial in Spanish, learners frequently translated it using mildly vulgar expressions such as *beat the shit/hell/crap out of* and the Irish English *bate the shite out of*. However, the toning up in these

instances does not go so far as to tone up the overall informality of the context and indeed helps to maintain it, as the expressions provided by the learners still sound natural in this context. The one error with this term was due to inexact meaning: the translation provided was to *have a go at* however this refers to a verbal criticism rather than a physical assault. Nonetheless, this is a colloquial expression therefore the learner has attempted to maintain the informal load of the ST term.

The learners generally maintained the informal load of *Pijolandia* in their translations by creating their own terms such as *poshland, fancyland* or *snobland* or using the idiom *with the high and mighty*. While this term was neutralised in three instances, two of the neutral translations were particularly creative. One translated *Pijolandia* as *southside*, referencing the stereotype that the southside of Dublin city is a posh and affluent area, and the other was *St Colomba's,* the name of a prestigious Dublin school in the southside, again drawing on the elite southside stereotype. Three translations were marked as errors here; *Pijoland, how are Poli* and *Leprechaun land*. In the first, the learner does not appear to be aware of what *pijo* means and therefore hasn't translated the term, and in the second it is unclear what *Poli* means. Although *Leprechaun Land* is possibly an attempt to localise the translation in Ireland, it does not convey the connotations of poshness in the ST therefore it was also marked as an error.

Similar to Task 2, there were a number of errors which still demonstrated an effort to transfer the informal load of the ST term despite the meaning in the TT being incorrect or inaccurate. Examples include *you didn't bother your arse to come and see me* for *no te hace ni puta gracia verme/aren't you fucking delighted to see me (#3.2)* and *don't kid yourself* for *no te jode/no shit (#3.3)*. In the first example, the vulgar tone has been maintained whilst in the second it has been toned down, but nonetheless an effort was made to transfer it.

Like Task 2, there are a number of patterns in how learners navigate register in their translations in this task. Overall, they tend to transfer the informal load of strong terms more frequently than colloquial terms although there are differences in how the individual strong terms are treated. The slightly increased tendency to tone down or not transfer the informal load of strong terms is likely due to being instructed to translate for a younger audience and/or potential difficulties with specific terms. The juxtaposition of *joder* and *puta* in the text may have caused confusion as despite being morphologically unrelated, they can be translated as *fuck* and *fucking* respectively. The lack of direct equivalent for *no te jode* in English also resulted in this term frequently being toned down or neutralised. While the same level of embracement of taboo terms as that observed in Task 2 does not occur in Task 3, the translations do align with the general tolerance

for religious terms in Irish English, with numerous cases of toning up using religious terms O'Keeffe and Adolphs (2008). Finally, there are numerous instances of errors where while an incorrect term has been provided, the register has been maintained, thus indicating that the learner has correctly interpreted the ST term and its informal load but has struggled to find an appropriate equivalent.

6.2.2 Toning Down/Neutralising the Register

Tasks 1 and 4 were intralingual translation tasks in English and Spanish respectively, with learners being asked to tone down the register, that is, translate from an informal register to a more neutral or polite register. Task 1 required the learners to rewrite a vulgar dialogue so that it was appropriate for children aged 8 and above, while Task 4 consisted of a letter from a female college student to a friend, which learners had to rewrite to make appropriate for a grandparent. As stated at the beginning of Section 6.2, one of the most striking things about the findings was that there was no instance of an overly vulgar translation being provided in these tasks, demonstrating that the learners were able to successfully navigate register in line with translation brief, drawing on their sociolinguistic knowledge to render the TT appropriate for the new target audience.

6.2.2.1 Task 1. The Wolf of Wall Street: Intralingual: L1 – L1

Task 1 consisted of an intralingual translation exercise in English, where learners had to rewrite a dialogue (see Appendix E.2) of a clip from the feature film *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Scorsese, 2013) to provide a Parental Guidance (PG) certificate version - appropriate for children aged 8 and over (Irish Film Classification Office, 2024). That is, they had to tone down or neutralise a vulgar register. Table 34 below outlines the ST terms of interest and their register categorisations.

ST Term	Category
fucking halfwit	strong
the fucking Equalizer	
they have the fucking…	
who the fuck	
god damn it	mild
has the god damn gall	
damn it	very mild
cheerio	colloquial
right-oh	

Table 34. Terms of interest in Task 1 ST

Of the 22 responses collected, three were discarded as learners provided a translation in Spanish rather than in English. Therefore 19 translations of the nine terms in Table 35 were analysed, resulting in 171 instances of translation. The higher rates of non-transfer and the significant rates of maintaining and toning down the register (see Table 35) are indicative of the learners' advanced sociolinguistic competence in the L1, which enabled them to successfully navigate the nuances of the different levels of informality of the ST terms: in line with the translation brief, they were able to identify which variants needed to be toned down or not transferred to make the text suitable for a child audience, but also which variants were not so vulgar as to require neutralisation or omission and could therefore be transferred.

Task 1. Total Instances = 171					
Transfer	45.61%		Non-transfer	54.39%	
Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Neutralised	Omitted	Error
0.00%	22.81%	22.81%	33.33%	21.05%	0.00%

Table 35. Overview of translation techniques in Task 1

This nuanced approach is clearly visible if we consider the translation techniques employed by the learners in relation to the various categories of register (see Table 36). Here we can see that they correctly deemed strong/moderate terms as being inappropriate and therefore toned them down or did not transfer the informal load to the ST. There was a degree of variation in their approach to the mild and very mild terms, with some learners deeming this informal load as being appropriate and therefore maintaining it while others toned it down, or frequently did not transfer it. Finally, in the vast majority of cases, learners maintained the informal load of colloquial terms.

Task 1	Transfer				Non-transfer				
Register Category	Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Total	Neutralised	Omitted	Total	Error	Total Instances
strong/mod	0.00%	0.00%	30.26%	30.26%	27.63%	42.11%	69.74%	0.00%	76
mild/very mild	0.00%	14.04%	28.07%	42.11%	52.63%	5.26%	57.89%	0.00%	57
colloquial	0.00%	81.58%	0.00%	81.58%	15.79%	2.63%	18.42%	0.00%	38

Table 36. Category overview of Task 1 translation techniques

The learners' approach to the individual terms highlights the subjective nature of informal language. For example, the insult *fucking halfwit (#1.2,* see Table 37) was either toned down or neutralised. Within the toned-down translations provided, some retained a degree of vulgarity (*bleeding dope, what a douchebag*) while some were simply colloquial (*not the brightest bulb in the box, silly goose*). Although the term *douchebag* could be perceived as a little strong for a PG version of the scene, PG guidance permits a degree of strong language as long as it is infrequent (Irish Film Classification Office, 2024), therefore the term is acceptable in this context. The learners tended to neutralise the term *halfwit* much more often, with the neutral translations still

using insults, but they were standard language variants such as *fool, idiot* or *imbecile*. This variation in register level chosen indicates the learners' differing opinions as to what level of vulgarity is permissible in this context. However, none of their translations are contextually inappropriate.

		Transfer			Non-transfer			
Ref	ST Term	Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Neutralised	Omitted	Error	Total
1.1	fucking halfwit	0	0	6	13	0	0	19
1.2	the fucking Equalizer	0	0	4	0	15	0	19
1.3	they have the fucking…	0	0	4	7	8	0	19
1.4	who the fuck	0	0	9	1	9	0	19
1.5	god damn it	0	5	7	6	1	0	19
1.6	has the god damn gall	0	0	3	14	2	0	19
1.7	damn it!	0	3	6	10	0	0	19
1.8	cheerio	0	16	0	3	0	0	19
1.9	right-oh	0	15	0	3	1	0	19
	Total	0	39	39	57	36	0	171

Table 37. Individual term translation techniques in Task 1

There was a slightly higher rate of transfer for mild and very mild variants. Although *god damn it* was often toned down using colloquial variants (*gosh darn it, jeez, holy moly* etc), it was also maintained in five instances through similarly mildly vulgar terms such as *bloody hell,* or very *oh my god* or the Irish English variant *ah jaysus*. While *god damn it* was adapted in every translation including the instances where the same informal load was maintained, *damn it* was maintained unchanged three times. That is, *god damn it* did not appear in any TT, whereas *damn it* appeared in three TT. This indicates the high degree of sensitivity that the learners have to register in their L1 – despite these two terms being so similar, the subtle difference is enough that no learner left *god damn it* unchanged, therefore they were unanimous in that this term was too strong for a child audience yet *damn it* was perceived as ever so slightly less vulgar and therefore three learners viewed it as permissible.

The fact that the learners opted to transfer the informal load of the vulgar ST terms (#1.1 - #1.7) quite frequently, either through toning it down or maintaining it, shows the value that they place on such language, whether consciously or not. They could have translated using neutral variants for all of these terms, yet their translations suggest that some level of informal terms are integral to the context of this conversation. Indeed, the most straightforward option to render the strong terms appropriate for a child audience would have been to simply remove the word *fuck(ing)* from terms 1.1 – 1.4 in Table 37. Yet, in many cases the learners used milder or colloquial variants to tone down the ST term. This in turn indicates their (implicit) awareness of the meaning making

capacity of sociolinguistic variation in their L1 and its ability to lend colour and shape to the context that it is used in.

While it was not specified that a given variety of English should be used in this task, a degree of diatopic variation was observed. Some learners incorporated particularly Irish English variants into their productions, such as *bleedin(g), flipping* and *jaysus*. At the same time, perhaps influenced by the fact that the film is American, other learners used expressions that would be more common in American English such as *has the dang nerve*, *(gosh) darn it* and *holy moly*. Another point of interest was that the largest range of variation in translations for this specific task was observed in the translations of the insult *fucking halfwit* (#1.1) and the exclamations *god damn it* (#1.5) and *damn it* (#1.7).

6.2.2.2 Task 4. La Carta: Intralingual: L2 – L2

In the final translation task (see Appendix E.5), learners were given a letter written in Spanish by a female university student and addressed to a friend, where she fills her in on college life. This was an intralingual translation task, and they were instructed to rewrite the letter to a grandparent in Spanish, making the necessary adjustments. Table 38 outlines the terms, a possible translation (in a similar register) and the register of the ST term.

ST Term	**Potential English Translation**	**Category**
La verdad es que estuvo muy bien, **nos lo pasamos de PUTA MADRE**	It was really good, **we had a FUCKING BRILLIANT time**	Strong
yo no podía beber porque **estaba ya un poco hecha mierda** del día anterior	I couldn't drink because **I was still fucked** from the day before	Moderate
sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete, nos fuimos mis amigas y yo de cena con un amigo	**Saturday night, dressed up and on the pull,** my friends and I went for dinner with a friend	Mild
..quiero..pedirte perdón por tardar tanto en escribirte, pero por aquí **vamos de culo**	I want to say sorry for taking so long to write to you, **we're flat out** here	
Me alegro de que te vaya todo tan bien y de que te lo estés pasando tan bien, pero, **¿ya hay choto a la vista?**	I'm delighted everything is going so well for you and that you're having such a good time, but **any guys on the scene?**	

¡Hola **Cari**! ¿Qué tal?	Hey **hun**! How are things?	Colloquial
Bueno **chica** como ves todo sigue su curso normal	So **girl** as you can see, nothing new here	
nos fuimos a cenar a un sitio **muy guay**	We went for dinner in a **really cool** place	
yo pues intentaba que no hicieran una barbaridad, pero en un momento de despiste se fue una con uno y **«ñaca-ñaca»,** de nuevo lío	I tried to make sure no one did anything stupid but in a moment of distraction two of them went off and…**hanky panky**..another hook up	
Así que gano un poquito de **pasta**	That way I earn a bit of **cash**	
todas mis amigas **se pusieron ciegas**	All my friends **got blind drunk**	

Table 38. Terms of interest in Task 4 ST

Two of the 22 responses were discarded as the learners translated the text to English, leaving a total of 20 translations which were analysed for this task. There were 11 ST terms of interest, however *cari* was used twice in the text therefore there was a total of 240 instances of translation.

In contrast with Task 1, in the vast majority of instances in this task, learners did not transfer the informal load of the ST terms (see Table 39). While the high rate of non-transferral aligns with the overall translation brief to tone down the register, the learners have possibly neutralised or omitted the informal load more than is necessary, indicating that their productive L2 sociolinguistic competence is still very much under development. Rather than being able to adopt a nuanced approach as they did in the L1 in Task 1 and tone down certain variants, they tended to simply not transfer the informal load in the L2. This suggests that their linguistic repertoire is dominated by standard language, meaning that they are not familiar with colloquial variants which they could use to tone down the vulgar terms in the ST. It also indicates an air of caution in relation to informal language in the L2, causing them to avoid using it (Dewaele and Regan, 2001). This pattern further aligns with the broader literature documenting instructed L2 learners' tendency towards monostylistic communication (Regan, 1995, 2004; Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi, 2004; Nadasdi, Mougeon and Rehner, 2005; Mougeon, Nadasdi and Rehner, 2010). The nature of the content of the letter, which contains references to sex and being drunk also contributed to the high number of omissions.

Task 4. Total Instances = 240					
Transfer	25.00%		Non-transfer	71.67%	
Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Neutralised	Omitted	Error
0.00%	23.75%	1.25%	36.67%	35.00%	3.33%

Table 39. Overview of translation techniques in Task 4

If we consider the translation techniques by category (see Table 40), we can see that like in Task 1, there was *no* instance of toning up, and also no instance of maintaining a strong/moderate term. Therefore, in this task the learners have successfully adapted the register to the target audience. Again, similarly to Task 1, most instances where transfer did occur were for colloquial terms, although there were far fewer instances in this task. While scarce, there were a few instances of learners toning down both strong/moderate variants and mild/very mild variants.

Task 4	Transfer				Non-transfer				
Register Category	Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Total	Neutralised	Omitted	Total	Error	Total Instances
strong/mod	0.00%	0.00%	5.00%	5.00%	65.00%	27.50%	92.50%	2.50%	40
mild/very mild	0.00%	8.33%	1.67%	10.00%	30.00%	48.33%	78.33%	11.67%	60
colloquial	0.00%	37.14%	0.00%	37.14%	31.43%	31.43%	62.86%	0.00%	140

Table 40. Category overview of Task 4 translation techniques

With regard to non-transfer, there were particularly high rates of omission across all the categories of variants, especially the mild/very mild variants. Indeed, it is interesting that the highest rate of omission is for the mild/very mild variants rather than for the strong/moderate variants. The reason for this becomes more apparent if we consider the nature of these terms. Table 41 indicates that two of the three mild variants include sexual/dating references. *Polvete* in #4.3 relates to the mildy vulgar expression *echar un polvo* meaning to have sex, while *choto* in #4.5 is a mildly vulgar way of referring to a young man, with the writer asking her friend if she's dating anyone. Interestingly, five learners maintained the expression *el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete* as it was, suggesting that perhaps they were not aware of the sexual connotation of *polvo*.

As the brief was to rewrite the letter to a grandparent, the high rate of omission for *ya hay choto a la vista* is logical, as it would be unlikely for the learner to be asking a grandparent about dating, even using more standard language. However, one learner did translate this expression as *ya hay abuelo a la vista/any grandad in sight,* indicating that they have recognised the informal load of the term *choto* and the need to tone it down, although pragmatically it would be unusual to ask this question.

Ref	ST Term	Transfer			Non-transfer		Error	Total
		Toned Up	Maintained	Toned Down	Neutralised	Omitted		
4.1	nos lo pasamos de puta madre	0	0	2	16	1	1	20
4.2	estaba hecha mierda	0	0	0	10	10	0	20
4.3	el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete	0	5	0	5	10	0	20
4.4	vamos de culo	0	0	1	12	2	5	20
4.5	ya hay choto a la vista	0	0	0	1	17	2	20
4.6	cari	0	16	0	17	7	0	40
4.7	chica	0	7	0	4	9	0	20
4.8	muy guay	0	9	0	8	3	0	20
4.9	ñaca-ñaca	0	4	0	2	14	0	20
4.10	pasta	0	12	0	8	0	0	20
4.11	se pusieron ciegas	0	4	0	5	11	0	20
	Total	0	57	3	88	84	8	240

Table 41. Individual term translation techniques in Task 4

Ñaca-ñaca (#4.9), another term relating to sex was also frequently omitted, as were terms relating to being hungover (*estaba hecha mierda, #4.2*) and being drunk (*se pusieron ciegas, #4.11*). Such cases of omission likely relate to the learners viewing these as taboo topics for an older generation. With the passing of referendums on abortion (2018) and same-sex marriage (2015), Ireland has undergone a seismic social shift in the last few decades, as we enter what has been termed a "post-Catholic" era (McGonigle, 2013). However, such changes are relatively recent, and for much of the country's history, the Catholic church's influence was such that values of "chastity, virginity, and modesty…piety and sobriety" were firmly embedded in Irish society (Inglis, 2005, p. 2). Therefore, while the learners belong to the more open and progressive "post-Catholic" Ireland, their omission of these terms demonstrates an awareness that their grandparents are from a culture where these topics were not discussed. As such, these techniques of omission are indicative of the learners' sociocultural competence as they mediate between the cultures of young and old.

In certain cases of omission, another interesting pattern emerged. Although *ya hay choto a la vista* had the highest rate of omission, it also had the highest number of additions, where learners added new content (see Table 42). In general, instead of this question, learners substituted it with a neutral question asking if their grandparent had any news, or one particularly creative solution translation which asked if the grandparents had managed to install their new TV by themselves.

Ref	ST Term	Omission	Addition
4.1	nos lo pasamos de puta madre	1	0
4.2	estaba hecha mierda	10	4
4.3	el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete	10	2
4.4	vamos de culo	2	0
4.5	ya hay choto a la vista	17	11
4.6	cari	7	0
4.7	chica	9	0
4.8	muy guay	3	0
4.9	ñaca-ñaca	14	0
4.10	pasta	0	0
4.11	se pusieron ciegas	11	2

Table 42. Omission and addition in Task 4

The instances of omission and addition for #4.2 *estaba hecha mierda* were also creative. In the ST, the speaker explains that she was not drinking while out with friends, with *estaba hecha mierda* referring to her being hungover and/or exhausted from the night before. Learners offered various other excuses such was wanting to be responsible, or having to drive. Likewise, their additions for *se pusieron ciegas* were also creative, using euphemisms saying that their friends were a little irresponsible or had a great time. While such instances of additional use of language which is neutral in terms of register, they evidence the flexible use of language for social purposes, including allusive usage, which is listed under the C1 sociolinguistic appropriateness descriptor (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 137).

A final point of interest is that two of the colloquial variants were maintained quite frequently: *cari #4.6* (maintained in 16 instances) and *pasta #4.10* (maintained in 12 instances). *Pasta* meaning *cash,* was generally maintained unchanged, perhaps indicating that learners were more familiar with this term and recognised that while colloquial, it is not inappropriate to use with a grandparent. Meanwhile, many of the translations for *cari* (an abbreviation of *cariño*, a term of endearment) used *abuelito/a*. That is, they added the diminutive *-ito* to the Spanish word for grandparent. This was a structure that they had encountered in Task 3 (*#3.4 hermanito*), however in Task 3 their translations in English of this term were frequently neutralised and did not reflect that this suffix was used as an informal term of endearment. Therefore, the learners' production of this suffix here indicates progress, and that they have internalised the informal load of this term and can now even produce it appropriately.

Overall, while the nature of the content certainly contributed to the higher rates of omission, the generally high rates of non-transfer and neutralisation align with broader tendencies amongst learners to avoid non-standard language in the L2 (Dewaele and Regan, 2001; Kinginger and

Farrell, 2004). Although the nature of the task required the learners to tone down the vulgar components of the letter, given that the communication is between two family members, a degree of informal language would be both permitted and expected due to the closeness of the relationship. However, there is very little toning down of language, suggesting the learners still struggle with the productive component of sociolinguistic competence in the L2.

6.2.3 Key Findings for Learners' Navigation of Register

Returning to the question of how learners navigate register in their translations of informal lexical items (RQ1), based on the discussion thus far, we can draw a number of conclusions. Firstly, with regard to maintaining an informal register, the higher transfer rates for strong/moderate terms do not necessarily indicate that the learners were less able to transfer the informal load of colloquial terms. Rather, for a number of the colloquial terms, they were constrained by terminological differences between the L2 and the L1, where there was no equivalent with similar usage for the ST term. Idioms which have a direct equivalent were easily transferred while more figurative language occasionally posed a problem, with learners appearing to understand the meaning and register but struggling to transfer it in a natural sounding way. Where learners did transfer colloquial terms, overall, they tended to maintain rather than tone up or down, indicating that they correctly interpreted the informal load of the ST and were able to reproduce it in relation to social norms in the L1.

When it came to toning down the register, the learners tended to transfer the informal load of the variants more in Task 1 (English intralingual) than in Task 4 (Spanish intralingual). This can be partially attributed to a higher degree of sociolinguistic competence in the L1 whereby the learners were better able to gauge the appropriateness of which variants could be maintained and how to tone down other variants without necessarily neutralising or omitting them. The content of the ST was also an influencing factor, with learners frequently omitting references to sex, alcohol and being hungover in Task 4. Such omissions are still indicative of sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence, as they indicate the learners' awareness of taboo topics, particularly with an older generation. Furthermore, in many cases learners added content to compensate for that which they omitted, and although the register of the additional content was neutral, the usage was often allusive, which is a feature of advanced sociolinguistic competence. Therefore, while the learners certainly found the productive component more challenging, there are still frequent examples of their emerging sociolinguistic competence.

Thus far, the discussion has centred on insights offered by the translation techniques used by the learners. The next section will turn to other patterns which emerged in the learners'

translations across all four tasks, and what these indicate about the ways in which translation tasks can foster sociolinguistic competence.

6.3 Fostering Sociolinguistic Competence

This section now turns to RQ2 *In what ways can translation tasks foster sociolinguistic competence?* When considering the opportunities that the tasks provided for the use and development of sociolinguistic competence, three key patterns were observed in the data. Firstly, learners tend to make use of diatopic variants, thereby situating their translations in a specific geographic context. In some cases, they also made use of cultural references to further localise their texts, demonstrating an awareness of orders of indexicality and the associations between language and social categories such as regional identity (Silverstein, 2003). Secondly, the tasks accommodated and encouraged individual variation both in terms of the translations provided and to a certain extent, the register used. The act of translating positioned the learner as an expert mediator between languages and language varieties, calling on them to use their sociolinguistic competence to provide translations that they felt were appropriate for the context. Finally, the tasks also facilitated the learners' agency and creativity when dealing with extralinguistic components such as social conventions of politeness and appropriateness.

6.3.1 Contextualisation

In Task 1, learners were asked to rewrite a vulgar dialogue from the film *The Wolf of Wall Street* to make it appropriate for a child audience. Many of the learners incorporated American English variants such as *dang, gosh, darn it* and *holy moly* into their translations. Although it was not specified that they should use a given variety of English, it is possible that they were influenced by the ST as it is an American film. Therefore, they were consciously or unconsciously reinforcing the geographical context of the scene by using American variants. However, there were also a number of Irish English variants such as *bleeding dope, bleeding Equalizer* and *ah jaysus*. Such instances evidence the learners inserting their own sense of linguistic identity as speakers of Irish English in their translations (Hickey, 2009).

Task 2 allowed learners to select which variety of English they wanted to translate into. The learners mainly chose Irish English although some chose British English, and some learners did not specify in their answers which variety they had chosen. In general, the translations which specified British English contain less diatopic variants than the Irish English ones. That is, while the learners maintained an informal register, there are few, if any variants in their translations which are specific to British English. In a number of cases, the learners who did not specify a

variety of English nonetheless included Irish English variants in their translations. The Irish variants in this task primarily occurred in the expressions for women (*young one/wan* for *chiquilla joven*; *moth* for *tía*) and the translations of the expression of disbelief/exaggeration *ya será menos* (*ah sure it can't be that bad, ah sure things will work out, ah g'way outta that, get out of it, it'll be grand*). The term *bird* also appeared as a translation for *tía*, in both Irish English and British English translations. Despite the dominance of American and British Englishes in the mainstream media, it seems that learners tended towards their own variety, and embraced the opportunity to introduce Irish English variants. This demonstrates both a favourable attitude towards Irish English and a sense of linguistic identity. While older generations may have associated a certain stigma with local varieties of English due to the prevalence of British or American English standard language ideologies, today's younger speakers are aware of Irish English as a unique and independent variety in its own right (Hickey, 2009).

In Task 3, the learners had to translate a dialogue from *Élite* for an Irish audience. Here, Irish variants mainly occurred in the translations for the exclamation *madre mía* (*jaysus*); *liarse a tortas* (*to batter, to scrap, to bate the shit out of*); *no te jode* (*eejit)* and *joder* (*jaysus)*. While *eejit* (idiot in Irish English) has a different meaning to *no te jode* (which can be translated as *obviously/no shit*), it maintains the sarcastic/mocking tone in this context. Responses to this task also contained some inventive localisation efforts. One learner translated *hermanito, hermanitooo* as *Little brother, Pádraig, my boy*. Although there is no name used in the ST, the learner here has inserted the very Irish name Pádraig presumably with a view to further emphasise the Irish context. Translations of *Pijolandia* (*Poshland)* included *the Southside*, *St Columba's* and *Leprechaun Land*. Although this last translation was marked as an error as it does not carry the connotations of prestige implied in the ST, it still constitutes an effort to localise the text. *The Southside* and *St Columba's* were particularly creative translations, as *the Southside* references the supposed rivalry between North and South Dublin with the Southside being perceived as being more upper class, while *St Columba's* is the name of a prestigious private boarding school in Dublin.

Task 4 required learners to translate intralingually in Spanish, transforming the informal and vulgar tone of a letter to a friend to a register more appropriate for a grandparent. It was not specified that the learners should use a specific variety of Spanish in their translations and as they were tasked with toning down the register in their L2, it was not expected that diatopic variants would be used. Nonetheless, it was interesting to note that two diatopic variants were observed in the terms of endearment for grandparents: *Iaia* which means grandmother in Catalan (used elsewhere in Spain with the spelling *Yaya*), and *Tata* which means grandfather in some

Latin American varieties of Spanish. This suggests potential for the future use of translation to explore diatopic variation in the L2 and draw the learners' attention to the richness and diversity of the different varieties of Spanish.

It appears that learners were not only comfortable incorporating Irish variants into their translations, but they embraced the opportunity to do so and even when they had the option to use other varieties, they still tended towards Irish English. The ST may however influence this as there were a number of American variants used in Task 1. The examples discussed here also highlight the closely entwined nature of regional and social variation (Durkin, 2012; Lucek and Garnett, 2020), as it is difficult to provide an informal or colloquial translation without situating that informal or colloquial variety in a given geographic context. In translating the ST, the learners have successfully managed to understand lexical variants in relation to the social norms of the ST, and then reproduce these variants in accordance with a set of social (and geographic) norms in the TL. Furthermore, the use of cultural references as a means to localise the text as demonstrated in Task 3 indicate the potential for translation to explore not only the sociolinguistic elements but also sociocultural.

The examples discussed here indicate that one of the ways in which the tasks facilitated the learners' sociolinguistic competence was that it encouraged them to draw upon their sociolinguistic knowledge of regional varieties and also their sociocultural knowledge of extralinguistic information. The result was that learners created their own highly contextualised framework against which they could reference sociolinguistic variants from the ST.

6.3.2 Individual Variation

The variation in the translations demonstrates the opportunity that the tasks provided for learners to develop their own sociostylistic framework of reference, relating terms in the ST to terms from their own sociolinguistic repertoires. While linguistic competence tends to conform more to a binary correct/incorrect evaluation, sociolinguistic competence is much more nuanced: e.g., there is only one "correct" way to conjugate the first-person singular of the verb to hear, but there are many correct/appropriate exclamations that can be used in a specific context and vary according to the interlocutor's personal preferences. These options may vary at a lexical level, but also in terms of their degree of (in)formality/vulgarity. Using the ST as scaffolding, translation tasks provide learners with the opportunity to explore the range of options available to them in a given context. Such an approach aligns with Kramsch's (2002, p. 71) call for a pedagogical norm which considers "how much choice do learners have in selecting one grammatical or lexical form over the other and how aware are they of the meaning potential

of each choice?". That is, translation draws learners' attention to this very choice and its connotations.

Learners introduced their own stylistic choices when translating, highlighting how translation can facilitate individual variation. In doing so, it allows learners to enact the subjective, individual and stylistic aspects of sociolinguistic competence. Depending on the term in question, different levels of individual variation were observed in the learners' translations. For example, the term *le pongas los cuernos* was translated as *cheating* in 17 of 21 instances, however for other terms, there was much less concurrence in the translations provided.

Terms which elicited a wider range of translations included exclamations: *god damn it* (T1), *damn it* (T1), *madre mía* (T3) and *joder* (T3); multiword expressions: *ya será menos* (T2), *no te jode* (T3), *me lio a tortas* (T3), *vamos de culo* (T4), *lo pasamos de puta madre* (T4); insults: *fucking halfwit* (T1), *un muermo* (T2), *un cabrón* (T2); idioms: *sois la pera* (T2), neologisms: *Pijolandia* (T3); gender specific common nouns: *tío* (T2, T3); and adjective phrases: *muy guay* (T4).

It is possible that translation type may play a role in this as in the case of insults and exclamations, more variation was observed in the intralingual translations in English (Task 1) than in the interlingual translations (Tasks 2 and 3). The learners' translations for all three of these tasks were produced in English therefore linguistic competence should not have been a limiting factor. Toning down or neutralising a translation may have offered learners a wider range of options rather than being bound by equivalence of both register and meaning as was the case for the interlingual translations. Nonetheless, the fact that the above selection of terms contains more vulgar terms than colloquial terms aligns with the highly variable nature of swearing, which is heavily influenced by cultural differences, intra-speaker variation (the same speaker's variable use of swearing depending on context and fellow speakers) and inter-speaker variation (differences between speakers based on personality and sociobiographical factors) (Dewaele, 2016). Thus, translation facilitates personal choice in the variable use of such terms.

Another potential influencing factor in the range of variation is the level of congruency (e.g., same form and meaning) between L1 and L2 multiword expressions. For example, there is not a one for one functional equivalent for expressions such as *ya será menos* and *no te jode* in English. Therefore, these terms resulted in particularly diverse translations, with learners' translations seeming to focus on maintaining the pragmatic function of these expressions rather than a similar structure. Similarly, there are no idioms in English which use the pear imagery like the term *ser la pera*. While there are functionally equivalent expressions (e.g., to be unbelievable/unreal) these expressions are not fixed or idiomatic and therefore the learners had

a broader range of options to choose from when translating. For the expression *ahí te pudras/rot in hell*, there is a degree of overlap between the L1 and the L2 in the imagery/metaphor used, resulting in learners frequently focusing on maintaining the figurative use of rot, at the expense of providing a natural sounding translation. Thus, learners' loyalty to the ST in Spanish is such that it trumps their L1 expertise and causes them to use phrasing which they would not produce naturally in authentic communication. While the idiom *estar hasta el gorro* doesn't have a fully congruent idiom in English, there are a number of direct functionally equivalent idioms such as *fed up with* or *sick (and tired) of*, which the learners tended to use. These examples align with the argument that congruency can have a facilitative effect when learners encounter formulaic language in the L2, as L1 knowledge is automatically activated when learners process formulaic L2 language such as idioms, even if the L2 idiom does not exist in the L1 (Carrol, Conklin and Gyllstad, 2016). In these tasks, when there was a greater level of congruency (be it in terms of function or imagery), it resulted in more homogenous translations. Therefore, translation can exploit this facilitatory effect in a reverse manner, as when there are lower levels of congruency between the L2 terms and their L1 equivalents, translation requires learners to interact with formulaic language at a microlevel when trying to understand and reproduce it, resulting in a diverse array of interpretations.

Finally, familiariser vocatives for males (e.g., *tío*) elicted a much wider range of translations than their female counterparts, most likely due to the lack of and less frequent usage of colloquial terms for women in English. For example, *tía* which is the female equivalent of *tío,* is frequently used in Peninsular Spanish (Alba-Juez, 2009), however, feminine familiarisers are scarce in English corpora (Flesch, 2023). This suggests that for the translations provided by the learners for *tío* (*man, bud, mate bro, lad*), there is no direct female equivalent with similar usage patterns. Therefore, when translating *tío*, learners had a much wider range of options to choose from in English.

In sum, the translation tasks encouraged the learners to explore the choices available to them when translating the lexical variants, and what these choices meant. The variety in the translations provided indicates that they were able to choose stylistic variants which felt appropriate for them individually. In cases of multiword expressions and formulaic language, there was greater variation amongst the translations for terms where there was less congruency between the L1 and the L2, highlighting the way in which translation forced the learners to interact with these expressions at a granular level and get to the core of their meaning.

6.3.3 Agency and Creativity

Learner agency and creativity was another interesting theme to emerge from the data. Examples which were discussed in Section 6.3.1 include the learners' agentive insertion of their linguistic identity by using Irish English variants even where Irish English was not specified as the target variety, and their creative approaches to localising the texts through referencing Irish names and places. However, the intralingual task in Spanish (Task 4) seems to have been even more effective at encouraging agency and creativity. In addition to the sociolinguistic knowledge required to identify and tone down the relevant sociolinguistic variants in this task, learners also had to draw on their knowledge of sociocultural norms in relation to which topics can be discussed with grandparents. However, as discussed in the previous section, translation tasks can also facilitate the subjective element of these norms – while some learners retained references to being hungover, albeit in more neutral terms, others omitted or replaced these references. This aligns with the learners' own sociolinguistic and sociocultural norms: some may feel that it is not inappropriate to discuss these topics with a grandparent while for others it is perfectly acceptable. Therefore, this task allowed learners to exert their sociolinguistic agency, and by extension, sociocultural agency, as their choices in terms of what to say and how to say it contributes to the co-construction of the communicative context (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a).

The learners' creativity is particularly evident in many of their approaches to dealing with the taboo topics in Task 4 such as sex, dating, drinking and being hungover. When omitting such references, learners often made innovative efforts to substitute them with euphemisms, or else introduced alternative components. In such instances, not only were they often toning down or neutralising the register, but they were also toning down the content in accordance with sociocultural norms in relation to topics which are appropriate for a grandparent. For example, translations for *estaba hecha mierda (I was destroyed/fucked)* included sociolinguistically toned-down expressions such as *estar cansado/a (to be tired), sentirse mal/no encontrarse bien (to feel unwell), estar destrozado (to be destroyed)* as well as the more elaborate excuses of wanting to be responsible after the previous night and having an assignment to submit the following day. Likewise, toned down translations of *se pusieron ciegas ((my friends) got blind drunk),* included the neutral *mis amigas se emborrachaban (my friends got drunk)* as well as more allusive translations saying that they friends had a good time, ended up feeling the effects of the drinks or were a little irresponsible. One learner's translation summarised the antics of the night out described in the ST in the phrase *fue un momento divertido, aunque algo loco (it was fun although a bit crazy)*. Most learners introduced a more neutral question in lieu of *ya hay choto*

a la vista, simply asking if their grandparent had any news, however one learner was more inventive and instead enquired if their grandparents had managed to set up their new TV by themselves. By enacting their sociolinguistic agency and adopting creative sociocultural strategies in these examples, the learners are in turn developing sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence as acquiring related strategies as part of the circular process of acquiring proficiency (Council of Europe, 2020).

6.4 Summary and Conclusions

The analysis of the data from the translation tasks focused on answering RQ1: *How do learners navigate register in their translation of lexical sociolinguistic variants?* (see Section 6.2) and RQ2: *In what ways can translation tasks foster sociolinguistic competence?* (see Section 6.3).

In relation to RQ1, the translation techniques used by the learners offered insights as to how they understood informal variants in the ST and their ability to translate, reproduce or adapt them in relation to social norms according to the translation brief. A key finding was that there was no instance of a sociolinguistically inappropriate translation. While in some instances learners may have toned a variant down unnecessarily, the effect was never such that it was deemed to be inappropriate in context. Furthermore, there were no instances of an excessively strong or vulgar register being used in any of the translations. Therefore, in this regard, the learners have successfully enacted their sociolinguistic competence in every translation of a lexical variant. When transferring the informal register (Tasks 2 and 3), learners transferred the informal load more frequently for strong terms than they did for colloquial terms. On the one hand this may indicate that more vulgar terms are more salient for the learners, and transferring and maintaining the informal load also aligns with the high tolerance for taboo language in Irish English (Farr and Murphy, 2009; Murphy, 2009). However, the lower transfer rates of colloquial language do not seem to indicate a lack of recognition of the ST register by the learners, but rather that they were constrained by terminological differences between Spanish and English, and at times were influenced by the either standard language or outdated translations provided by translation resources. A particularly interesting finding was that often, erroneous translations still demonstrated an effort to transfer the register of the ST term, and even when the referential meaning was incorrect, the register was appropriate.

When tasked with toning down or neutralising the register in English (Task 1) and Spanish (Task 4), the learners were more comfortable with transferring the informal load of the ST term in the English translations than in the Spanish translations, highlighting their increased sensitivity to the subtle differences of informality in the L1. The fact that they frequently chose to transfer the

informal load of the ST in Task 1 through toning down rather than always neutralising or omitting, demonstrates their L1 awareness of the importance of informal language and how it can add colour and shape to the context in which it is used. Although the fact that the learners' L2 sociolinguistic competence is still under development certainly contributed to the increased rates of non-transfer in Task 4, the ST content also played a role, with taboo topics of sex and alcohol frequently being omitted. Such omissions are indicative of sociolinguistic and sociocultural awareness, especially sensitivity in relation to the appropriateness of this content in the context of addressing a grandparent. Furthermore, many learners added content to compensate for elements which they omitted, and this additional content was often allusive, a type of usage which is associated with advanced sociolinguistic competence. Therefore, while it is evident that learners find the productive components of sociolinguistic competence more challenging than the receptive components, there are numerous examples of their emerging sociolinguistic competence in action.

This thesis defines sociolinguistic competence as the ability to understand and/or produce variable structures in relation to social norms and to interpret linguistic and extralinguistic information. Regarding the ways in which translation tasks can foster this competence (RQ2), through providing the learners with opportunities to enact it, a number of interesting patterns emerged. Firstly, when contextualising the texts, learners drew on diatopic variants. In some cases, they did this even when they were not specifically asked to, and used either Irish English variants or variants from other varieties of English which served to situate the TT in a specific region. They also made use of sociocultural references which helped to further embed the text in the region. Secondly, translation facilitated their variable interpretations of the variable structures: generally, the learner translations displayed variation both in terms of the specific lexical items and their corresponding register. While diverse in form and register, the translations still conformed with the social norms of the translation briefs. Therefore, translation allows learners to enact the individual, subjective and stylistic component of sociolinguistic competence and select their personal preference within the constraints of the translation brief. Finally, translation activities encouraged the learners to enact their sociolinguistic agency and be creative in their translations. This was manifest in their innovative sociocultural references to the stereotypical rivalry between North and South Dublin, and their inventive and sometimes humorous additions to the letter to their grandparent, evidencing allusive use of the L2. Thus, the translation activities served as a sociolinguistic playground for the learners where they could experiment with the meaning making capacity of language.

The discussion thus far has focused on the patterns which were observed in the translations themselves; however, another core component of this investigation was the learners' voices. The next chapter now turns to the learners' perceptions of their sociolinguistic abilities, their preferences for informal language and their experience of the enrichment programme.

Chapter 7: Learner Voices – Analysis and Discussion of Questionnaires and Focus Group

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of the enrichment programme from the learners' perspective and provides results for RQ3: *Do learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and preferences for informal language change after a translation-based enrichment programme?* and RQ4: *What do learner insights indicate about their experience of exploring sociolinguistic variation through translation?* The quantitative data for RQ3 was collected in the pre- and post-questionnaires and was supplemented with qualitative insights from the focus group. The findings for RQ3 are discussed using descriptive statistics, while RQ4 is examined in relation to the main themes to emerge from the thematic analysis that followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. Section 7.2 addresses RQ3, with subsections dedicated to each of the four sections of the questionnaires while Section 7.3 addresses RQ4, discussing each of the themes individually. Section 7.4 then provides a summary of the chapter.

7.2 Self-Perceived Sociolinguistic Abilities and Language Preferences

Prior to commencing the translation activities, the learners rated their sociolinguistic abilities in English very highly, but lacked confidence in their abilities in Spanish. Perceived competence has been shown to be a key factor affecting learners' willingness to communicate (Baker and MacIntyre, 2000). Therefore, low levels of perceived competence in Spanish in turn impact the learners' willingness to use the L2. The learners also indicated a preference for informal language use in their day-to-day lives, a sentiment that also extended to its inclusion in L2 education, even though politeness was an important factor influencing language use. This cognizance of politeness is a strong feature of Irish English, which in comparison with other varieties of English, is generally less direct and tends to mark politeness extensively (Farr and O'Keeffe, 2002; Barron and Schneider, 2005; Schneider, 2005; Barron, 2008).

Following the completion of the enrichment programme, the biggest change noted was in the learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish, with learners rating their sociolinguistic skills considerably higher. This is extremely important due to its impact on their willingness to communicate in the L2. As the acquisition of proficiency depends on the cyclical process of learners performing communicative activities and thereby developing competences

and acquiring strategies (Council of Europe, 2020), then learners' willingness to engage in communication in the L2 is fundamental to their language learning.

There was a slight increase in learners' evaluation of their self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English, demonstrating an increased metalinguistic awareness of their sociolinguistic abilities in the L1 and their language use. The enrichment programme also contributed to maintaining positive sentiments towards day-to-day use of informal language and its inclusion in the L2 curriculum, with responses in these categories remaining consistently positive. The opinions expressed by the four focus group participants tended to align with the trends described here, with the learners citing increased awareness of informal registers in Spanish and how and with whom to use them. They were also unanimous in their appreciation of incorporating such registers in the classroom.

The next sections delve deeper into the results for the individual sections of the pre- and post-questionnaires, drawing on the findings from the focus group where relevant. As outlined in Section 4.5.1, the questionnaires consisted of four sections, each with five statements, and focused on the following: i) learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English; ii) learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish; iii) learners' preferences for (in)formal language; and iv) learners' attitudes towards informal language in L2 education. The statements in the first two sections were designed for this study and based on Lasan and Rehner's (2018) interview question on sociolinguistic variation and personality and intentions, and selected can-do descriptors from the CEFRCV sociolinguistic appropriateness scale (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 137). The questions for the third and fourth sections were drawn from van Compernolle's (2016) attitudes towards linguistic variation survey and the same author's (2017) preferences for (in)formal language survey. Learners responded on Likert scale with the options *strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree and strongly disagree*. All 22 participants responded to the pre- and post-questionnaires (n=22) as illustrated in Figures 17-20.

7.2.1 Self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English

Table 43 outlines the can-do statements which learners responded to in the first part of the questionnaire. The statements relate to both receptive and productive abilities.

#	Statement
S1	I can **recognise** someone's social identity (e.g., gen Z/college student/older person), and intentions (e.g., to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity), based on the words and structures they use when communicating in English.
S2	I can **reflect** my social identity (e.g., gen Z/college student/older person) and intentions (e.g., to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity) based on the words and structures I use when communicating in English.
S3	I can **use** English easily with different audiences (children, peers, lecturers etc).
S4	I can **identify** a wide range of formal vs neutral vs informal language in English.
S5	I can **adapt** my language to the social context as needed (by using a colloquial, standard or formal register) when I communicate in English.

Table 43. Statements in section A of pre-/post-questionnaires: self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English

The learners' responses to these statements in both the pre- and post-questionnaires are illustrated in Figure 17 below.

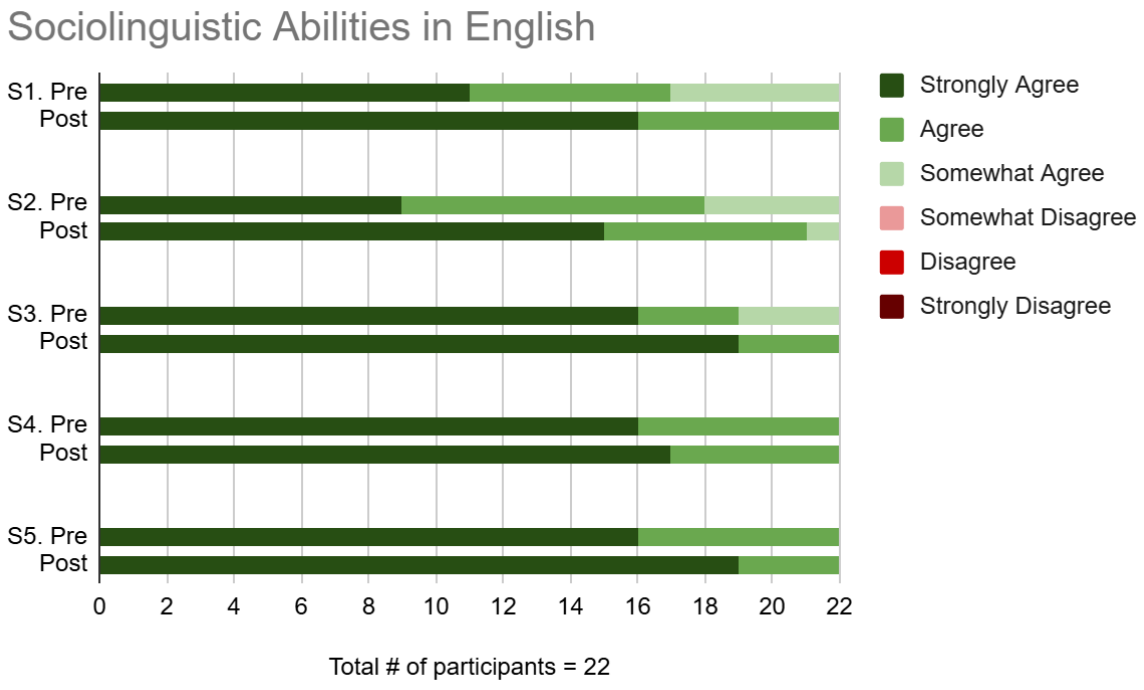


Figure 17. Pre- and post-results for self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English

The learners' advanced proficiency in the L1 is reflected in their high levels of confidence in their sociolinguistic abilities in English: all learners attested that they were capable of recognising and reflecting social identities through language use, identifying a wide range of (in)formal variants and varying their language according to context. Learners were slightly more comfortable with categorising language and linking it to specific contexts than expressing and perceiving identity based on language variation. That is, they ranked themselves more highly in their abilities to use English with different audiences (S3); identify a wide range of (in)formal variants (S4); and adapt their language to the social context (S5) than they did for recognising another speaker's social identity based on the language they used (S1), or transmitting their own social identity (S2). This suggests that even in the L1, the learners may not be aware of the indexical potential of language variation, and the ways in which linguistic forms can evoke or index features, characteristics and categories from the social world (Silverstein, 2003; Eckert, 2019). By extension, they may also be unaware of speakers' agency in choosing linguistic variants which transmit a certain identity or contribute to the co-construction of context. The slightly higher level of confidence expressed in relation to identifying (in)formal variants and varying language according to context or audience in the L1 was echoed in the focus group, with learners readily listing contexts where slang is appropriate and who they can use it with in English.

Nonetheless, there was a general shift towards stronger affirmative responses in the post-questionnaire. This change is not surprising as the enrichment programme afforded opportunities to reflect on sociolinguistic variation both in a broader sense throughout the tasks, and/or through specifically looking at sociolinguistic variation in English in the introductory session and Task 1. The introductory session drew learners' attention to their assumptions about socially marked linguistic variants in Irish English (e.g., *roysh, goys, like,* see Appendix E.1) which are associated with upper-class South Dublin. Having highlighted the conscious and unconscious social judgements that language variation can incur, they were introduced to the concept of indexicality and the different ways in which language can vary. By focusing on intralinguistic variation in the L1, the introductory session and Task 1 promoted critical reflection on the 'self' and 'other' from a sociolinguistic perspective, improving the learners' critical language awareness (Abe and Shapiro, 2021). This metacognitive awareness was then further enhanced by the translation tasks, which situated the learners between their own linguistic communities and those of the L2, as mediating between languages and cultures makes learners more conscious of themselves as language users (Elorza, 2008; Fois, 2020). The introduction of the concept of indexicality, coupled with the in-class questions which asked learners to reflect on the language being used and who the speakers might be, encouraged learners to explore the

relationship between language and identity. This new knowledge likely contributed to the slightly higher increase in stronger affirmative responses to being able to recognise and reflect social identities in comparison with being able to vary language according to context and audience and recognise (in)formal variants. Thus, while the increase in *strongly agree* and *agree* answers does not necessarily reflect an *actual* increase in the learners' sociolinguistic abilities in English, it indicates an increased *awareness* of the role of sociolinguistic variation and what the learners can do with language in the L1.

7.2.2 Self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish

Interestingly, the learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish (see Figure 18) were much more varied than those in English. In this section the learners responded to the same statements as the previous section, however this time in relation to Spanish (see Table 44).

#	Statement
S6	I can **recognise** someone's social identity (e.g., gen Z/college student/older person), and intentions (e.g., to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity), based on the words and structures they use when communicating in Spanish.
S7	I can **reflect** my social identity (e.g., gen Z/college student/older person) and intentions (e.g., to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity) based on the words and structures I use when communicating in Spanish.
S8	I can **use** Spanish easily with different audiences (children, peers, lecturers etc).
S9	I can **identify** a wide range of formal vs neutral vs informal language in Spanish.
S10	I can **adapt** my language to the social context as needed (by using a colloquial, standard or formal register) when I communicate in Spanish.

Table 44. Statements in section B of pre-/post-questionnaires: self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish

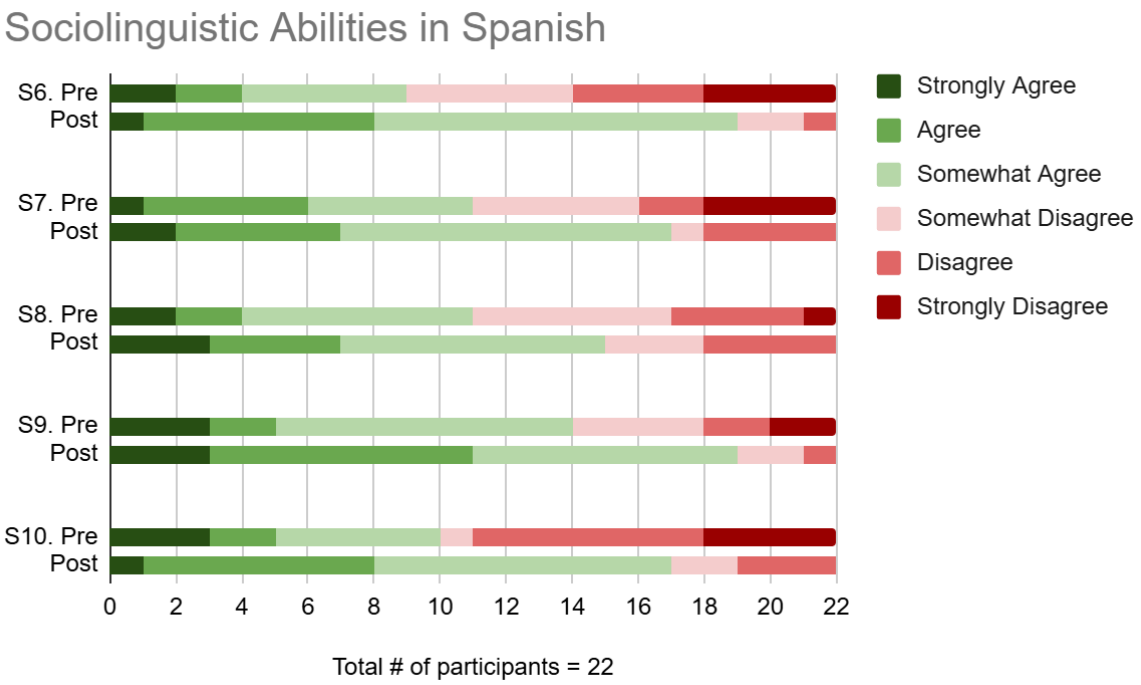


Figure 18. Pre- and post- results for self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish

The wide range of responses is due in part to the composition of the class: some learners had only been studying Spanish as a foreign language for two years whilst others had also studied it at post-primary level for up to six years. This range in abilities meant that overall, the learners expressed much less confidence in their sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish than they did in English, with over half of the learners responding negatively to each of the statements on the pre-questionnaire, apart from the ability to identify a range of (in)formal variants (S9). The slightly higher level of confidence in their ability to identify different variants suggests that their receptive competence is more advanced than their productive competence in this regard. While the learners may have encountered informal variants through Spanish language media or Spanish speaking peers, it is likely that as instructed learners, for many of them, their opportunities to interact with such language in depth or explore using it have been limited by the frequent omission of non-standard varieties from teacher talk and learning materials (Rehner and Mougeon, 2003; Etienne and Sax, 2009; Yang and Rehner, 2015).

Following the enrichment programme, there was a notable increase in positive responses for all five statements, with the changes being much more pronounced in relation to Spanish than they were for English. An increase in perceived confidence can have a profound impact on the learners' willingness to communicate, and Baker and MacIntyre (2000) go so far as to argue that it is not the individual's actual competence that counts, but rather their perception of it, as this

is what will determine whether or not they choose to communicate in the L2. This improved willingness to communicate was corroborated in the focus group, where participants reflected that while they previously would have felt incapable of approaching a Spanish-speaking peer, they now felt better equipped to engage in authentic communication outside the classroom. As well as having an improved understanding of what language they can use with peers, the focus group participants cite being more aware of what language would be contextually inappropriate for use with older people or lecturers.

On the post-questionnaires, the learners rated themselves most highly in terms of their receptive abilities: the ability to recognise others' social identities (S6) and the ability to identify a wide range of (in)formal variants (S9). This aligns with the slightly greater emphasis on receptive skills in the tasks. As each in-class discussion required the learners to speculate on the identity of the speakers solely based on the language used in the ST, learners were given repeated opportunities to practice both of these receptive abilities. Indeed, the most pronounced change was in relation to the ability to recognise social identities based on the words and structures which a speaker uses, indicating that the learners have internalised the concept of indexicality and are able to draw on it to interpret speaker identities. This understanding of indexicality also helped them to feel more confident in reflecting their own social identities in the L2, with a marked increase in positive responses to relation to this ability on the post-questionnaires. The increase in the self-perceived ability to reflect one's own identity was also noted in the focus group, with one participant commenting that having the possibility of being able to use slang in Spanish made her feel more like herself. Thus, by providing opportunities to interact with and navigate informal registers, the tasks have contributed to the learners' sense of being L2 users in their own right (Cook, 1992), their understanding of language as a social semiotic system (Kramsch, 2006; Blyth and Dalola, 2020) and their ability to appropriate L2 linguistic resources in a way that is meaningful for them as agentive language users (van Compernolle and Williams, 2012a; Council of Europe, 2020).

7.2.3 Preferences for (in)formal language

The third part of the questionnaires focused on learners' preferences for the use of (in)formal language, and consisted of the statements outlined in Table 45.

#	Statement
S11	I often use informal or everyday language when meeting someone for the first time.
S12	As a rule of thumb, it is better to use overly polite language than to risk being too informal.
S13	I prefer it when people I don't know well or at all use more formal language with me.
S14	The sooner I start using more informal language with a new acquaintance, the more comfortable I am with our relationship.
S15	When I meet someone for the first time, I prefer to use polite and/or formal language.

Table 45. Statements in section C of pre-/post-questionnaires: preferences for (in)formal language

As illustrated in Figure 19, learner responses remained quite consistent in this section. The majority of learners reported general preferences for informal language in their day-to-day lives, although politeness was a factor taken into account when deciding to use it with people they did not know. This pattern reflects the value placed on politeness amongst speakers of Irish English (Kallen, 2005), which also seems to be a guiding factor in the L2, with the learners making multiple references in the focus group to not being rude, and that it would be inappropriate to use slang with teachers and professors.

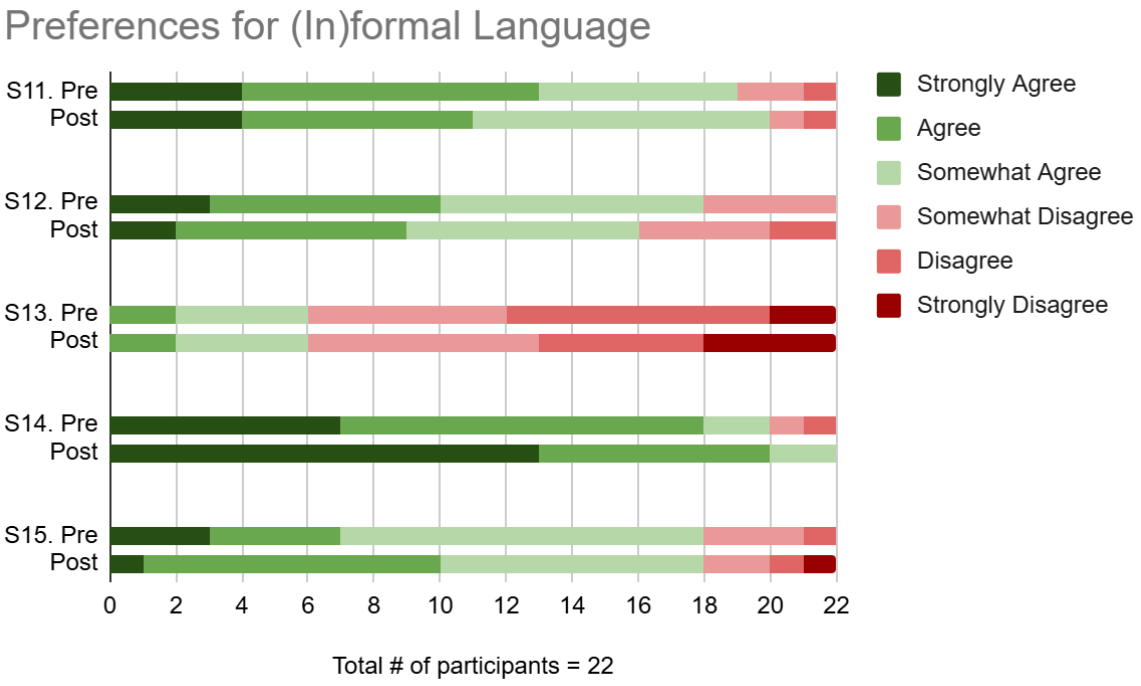


Figure 19. Pre- and post- results for preferences for (in)formal language

One participant also expressed relief at as well as having learned new vocabulary in Spanish, she had also learned the appropriate context for its use, and was therefore less likely to offend certain people. While the learners might err on the side of caution and use more formal language with new people, they do not appear to expect others to reciprocate this, with most learners not being in favour of someone they do not know well or at all using more formal language with them. Indeed, in the focus group, the learners commented that they would view it positively if an Erasmus student were to use slang with them. The focus group also highlighted learners' everyday use of slang which they perceived as being easy and comfortable to use, particularly with peers. In this sense, they are conscious of the role of informal language in establishing and maintaining group affiliation with other young people (Damirjian, 2025).

The sustained positive sentiment towards the use of informal language when communicating with others serves to highlight the covert prestige that the learners associate with such non-standard language. In the focus group, learners both recognised their own frequent use of slang in their L1, and linked this variety to young people. They described how increased knowledge of informal registers in the L2 made them feel more capable of interacting with Spanish-speaking peers. Therefore, the learners' consistent preferences for informal language attest the positive value which they attribute to this variety. Indeed, one noticeable change was an increase in the number of learners who felt strongly that using more informal language with new acquaintances implies that they are more comfortable with their relationship. This increase suggests an enhanced awareness of the role of informal language in forming interpersonal relationships. Thus, in addition to the continued conferral of covert prestige on this variety, the learners also have an increased appreciation of its sociolinguistic interpersonal function. Therefore, despite the overt prestige conferred on the standard variety by society, particularly in the area of education, learners are conscious of how the covert prestige of non-standard varieties such as informal language can aid in establishing group affiliation (Trudgill, 1972).

7.2.4 Attitudes towards linguistic variation in L2 Education

The fourth and final section of the questionnaire consisted of the statements in Table 46 which related to learners' attitudes towards linguistic variation in L2 education.

#	Statement
S16	A good foreign language course is one which focuses mainly on standard and/or formal language.
S17	When learning a foreign language, it is important to learn how to use the language to create close or informal relationships with people.
S18	When learning a foreign language, it is important to focus on standard or formal language, even if native speakers don't always use this language.
S19	A good foreign language course is one which teaches informal or colloquial language in addition to formal language.
S20	When learning a foreign language, it is important to focus on how native speakers use the language in everyday situations, even if standard or formal language is not always used.

Table 46. Statements in section D of pre-/post-questionnaires: attitudes towards linguistic variation in L2 education

Similarly to the previous section, responses in this section remained quite consistent on the pre- and post-questionnaires and overall, the learners were positive towards linguistic variation in L2 education (see Figure 20). However, there were some discrepancies in the results, indicating that the learners were conflicted about how much focus informal language should be given.

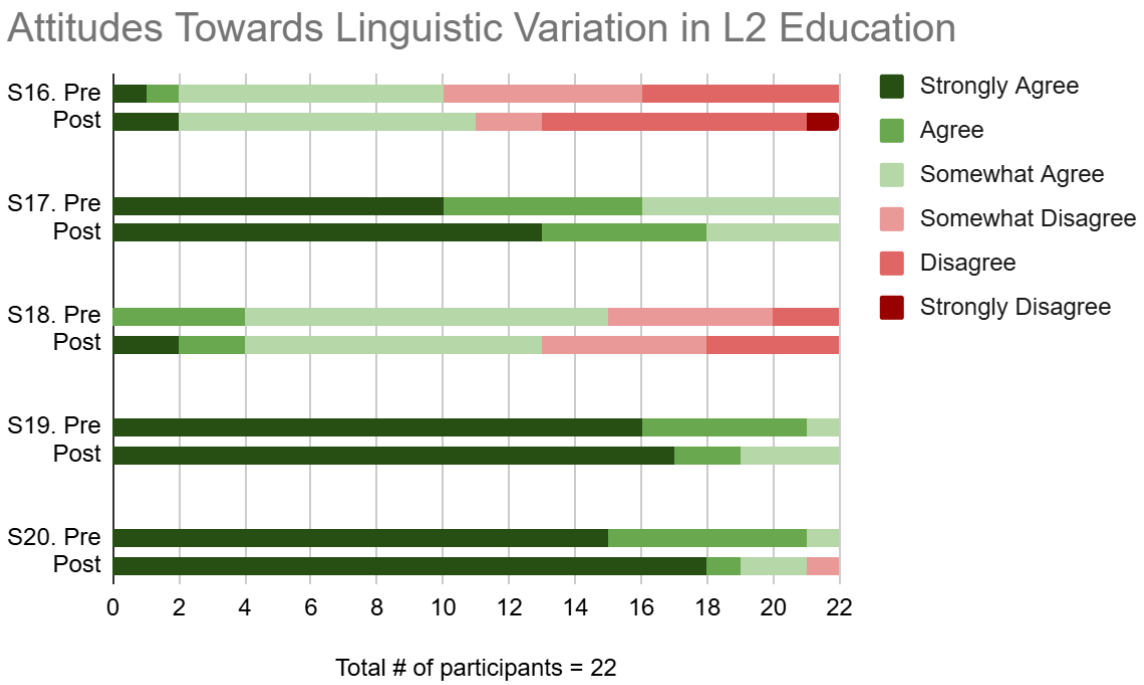


Figure 20. Pre- and post- results for attitudes towards linguistic variation in L2 education

The learners unanimously agreed that informal language is an important part of a L2 course, and that it is important to learn how to use the L2 to create close or informal relationships. At the same time, there was almost an even split of affirmative and negative responses in relation to whether a L2 course should focus mainly on standard and/or formal language. Therefore, although they recognise the utility of informal language and its value in establishing interpersonal relationships, they are divided on whether standard language should be prioritised in the classroom.

This conflict is further evident in the significant number of learners who agreed that when learning a L2, it is important to focus on standard or formal language even if native speakers don't always use this language. Although this number dropped slightly following the enrichment programme, indicating an increased appreciation for informal language, two learners became more resolute in their preference for standard language in L2 education. Thus, despite the preferences indicated for informal language in the previous section, the learners are still influenced by standard language ideology and the cultural capital the standard variety promises. Language learning constitutes an investment made by the language learner in the linguistic market, and the responses of the learners here indicate that many of them feel that this investment can be made more profitable by acquiring the prestige variety, which is associated with social and economic power (Bourdieu, 1991).

Although approximately half of the learners believed that a L2 course should focus on standard or formal language, almost all of them agreed that it is important to focus on how native speakers use the language even if this diverges from the standard. At the surface, this might suggest a dichotomy between the overt prestige of the standard and the covert prestige of everyday informal varieties. Indeed, Lefkowitz and Hedgcock (2002) argue that learners' aspirations to emulate standard varieties can sometimes be outweighed by their desire to establish group affiliation and solidarity. However, these seemingly contradictory opinions also underscore the varied existing, potential and future affiliations to real and imagined communities which the learners seek to maintain and/or establish (Norton, 2013). The learners may value the role of the standard in the professional and educational sphere, whilst simultaneously recognising how informal language will enable them to interact with members of the target language community. As such, they are aware of the utility of both standard and informal varieties in their future communication with various groups.

In light of the duality of the value placed on both the standard variety and informal varieties, an important component seems to have been finding the appropriate balance between the two. The pre-existing positive attitudes towards the inclusion of informal language in the L2 classroom likely meant that the learners were more predisposed to engage with the tasks and content. Simultaneously, the fact that learner sentiment remained quite consistent suggests that the programme struck an appropriate balance, introducing a sufficient amount of informal content to be deemed useful but not so much that it was perceived negatively or detracted from their desire to also learn standard language. Of the 22 hours of class time during the semester, one hour was dedicated to the introductory session, with the in-class part of each of the four translation tasks generally taking approximately half an hour. It also indicates the learners' acceptance of informal registers in a formal environment. Outside of class, it was estimated that each task took approximately 1 – 1.5 hours to complete. Therefore proportionally, informal language did not become the dominant focus of their course. Indeed, the focus group suggests that learners greatly welcomed the inclusion of these registers and were conscious of their relevance when communicating with Spanish-speaking peers in the future. Thus, increased knowledge of what they consider to be authentic language has in turn improved their confidence in the L2 and their self-perceived ability to interact in informal contexts.

7.2.5 Key Findings for Self-Perceived Sociolinguistic Abilities and Language Preferences

RQ3 asked *Do learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and preferences for informal language change after a translation-based enrichment programme?* The answer to this question is yes, with greater changes being observed in relation to sociolinguistic abilities than for language preferences. The most significant changes which occurred following the enrichment programme were in relation to the learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish, with learners rating themselves much more highly in both receptive and productive skills after completing the translation tasks. This is an extremely important finding, as self-perceived competence is highly influential on learners' willingness to communicate (Baker and MacIntyre, 2000). The acquisition of proficiency is a cyclical process and in order to acquire competence and communicative strategies, learners must engage in communicative activities (Council of Europe, 2020), therefore their willingness to communicate is a determining factor in their success at learning a language. The increase was slightly more pronounced for receptive abilities than it was for productive abilities, demonstrating the influence of task design. The tasks in the enrichment programme were designed to focus more on receptive skills which lead to this pattern emerging. In particular, the tasks provided learners with repeated opportunities to explore the links between language and identity, thus improving their understanding of the ways in which language can index social categories. Indeed, a particularly marked increase occurred in the learners' self-perceived abilities to recognise and reflect social identity in both English and Spanish, demonstrating an enhanced awareness of the meaning making capacity of sociolinguistic variation in the L1 and the L2. The increase in the learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English, also indicated that the translation tasks helped to increase their metacognitive awareness of themselves as language users and the L1 linguistic communities to which they belong (Elorza, 2008; Norton, 2013; Fois, 2020).

The learners expressed a high degree of preference for the use of informal language in their everyday lives. Their sustained positive attitude towards informal varieties demonstrated the covert prestige which they contribute to these varieties as well as their recognition of their role in establishing group affiliation, particularly with other young people. The influence of Irish culture and Irish English was also evident, as politeness was an important factor which influenced their language use and preferences (Kallen, 2005).

The fact that the learners value informal language both in general and in a language learning environment most likely influenced how receptive they were to the tasks and their enjoyment of

them. Furthermore, the generally positive responses on the post-questionnaire suggest that following the translation tasks, they continued to view informal language as important and valued its inclusion in L2 education. However, the learners continue to perceive standard/formal language as being of importance and recognise the utility of it along with its social and economic power. Nonetheless, the positive responses indicate that the enrichment programme struck an appropriate balance and introduced enough of a focus on informal language to be of use and interest to the learners but not so much that it detracted from their learning of the standard variety. The next section addresses RQ4 and further explores the learners' perspectives in relation to the enrichment programme through data from the focus group.

7.3 Learner Insights into Exploring Sociolinguistic Variation Through Translation

Thus far, we have seen that following the completion of the tasks, learners expressed greater confidence in their sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish and to a lesser extent English. They also maintained a positive attitude towards informal language and its presence in the L2 curriculum. Learner translations of specific sociolinguistic variants demonstrated that in general, they were able to deal with register in accordance with the social norms of the target audience. The translations also provided opportunities for the learners to engage their sociolinguistic agency in introducing specific diatopic variants, variants which aligned with their own sociostylistic tendencies and the types of extralinguistic content which could be omitted or included, as they were free to choose the lexical variants which they felt were most appropriate to the context.

RQ4 *What do learner insights indicate about their experience of exploring sociolinguistic variation through translation?* draws on the focus group data to provide a crucial, more in depth understanding of the learners' experience of the tasks, which is key in lending the learners' voices to the findings of RQs1 – 3. The learner insights were categories into three themes which will be discussed in the subsequent sections: i) L2 Identity; ii) "Coming to that class was actually so refreshing" – Enjoyment and Motivation; and iii) Considerations for Educators.

7.3.1 L2 Identity

Identity is both fluid (Block, 2009) and socially enacted (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004; Kiesling, 2013). Crucially, it relates to how an individual thinks of themselves in relation to others, "whether these others are real or imagined" (Kiesling, 2013, p. 450). This process of defining oneself in relation to others was evident in the way in which the focus group participants spoke about themselves, making multiple references to their lack of experience with Spanish, particularly in comparison

with their more experienced classmates. While the classmates constitute real others, the learners also mention imaginary others, that is, hypothetical speakers of the target language whom they have not met, such as Spanish speakers of a similar age. Thus far, they have felt uncomfortable or unable to interact with such imaginary others, as they are still working on the basics of the language. Participant 2 suggested that they viewed these basics as being separate or distinct from real world communication:

> If you had told me, go over to that random Spanish girl your age and have a conversation with her, like you may-- I would just be like, "I can't. Like I actually can't," because, again, we know the classroom-based typical of grammar and vocab and, you know, all those sorts of things. [P.2]

The above quote also demonstrates how the learner's beginner identity or a perceived lack of confidence impedes her willingness to communicate with speakers of the target language (Baker and MacIntyre, 2000). However, the learner was referencing her perceived abilities prior to the enrichment programme, and recognises that she would be more confident now such a situation. This acknowledgement of change reflects another key component of identity - that it is under constant (re)construction (Block, 2009), further evidenced by other learners also describing how feeling more comfortable now with Spanish means that they feel better equipped to approach a Spanish-speaking peer in an appropriate manner. As such, their "beginner" identity is not static, and they are cognizant of their progress.

Closely linked to the concept of identity is that of imagined communities. Imagined communities are real and/or imagined groups of language users, which transcend time and space. Learners' actual and desired membership of such groups influences their learning trajectories (Pavlenko and Norton, 2007). Participants in the focus group are aware of their frequent use of slang in their L1, recognising that it marks them as members of a community of young people. Consequently, a lack of knowledge of this register in the L2 has meant that they have felt excluded from and unable to access the community/ies of young Spanish speakers. They also reported that not knowing slang could make them feel "stiff" and "robotic" in the L2, therefore impacting their sense of being legitimate users of the L2.

In addition to Spanish-speaking peers, the learners also identify Erasmus students as fellow members of the imagined communities of young people that they belong to. While the learners' perceived lack of knowledge of informal registers has constituted an obstacle to their membership of the L2 community, they recognise how such knowledge can afford L2 learners of English access to the community of Irish young people:

> If someone, an Erasmus student, came here and came up to us and said, "Well, what's the craic?" there and then you'd feel a lot more, "God, I will talk to this person." They're so like comfortable as well. [P1]

P2 echoed this sentiment, commenting that as a native speaker, it catches their attention when Erasmus students use Irish English slang. Therefore, although they themselves had not yet been able to enjoy the benefits of knowledge of informal and colloquial language in terms of in-group membership, they had first hand examples of its potential in this regard. As such, they were conscious of the role that less formal registers may play in their futures and their interactions with peers. In particular, they highlighted its utility in terms of integrating should they go on Erasmus to Spain or live in a Spanish-speaking country.

> Like if people were to go, to go on Erasmus in Spain, say, like you're not gonna integrate with a group of Spanish people unless you're able to hold that conversation with them. Like you can't really approach a group of girls or boys our age and go to them and just start talking as if we would be talking to like a teacher, like someone really formal. [P.2]

It is interesting to note that in the above excerpt, the learner addresses future plans in rather general terms, using the second person or saying *if* rather than when. Indeed, throughout the entire conversation, none of the learners expressed a definite intention to live/study in Spain. A lack of concrete plans in relation to their future use of Spanish may indicate that their L2 future selves are still under construction as they continue to develop their general proficiency in Spanish (Pavlenko and Norton, 2007). Nonetheless, the improvement in their perceived sociolinguistic competence in the L2 means that they feel more willing to and more capable of communicating with speakers of the L2 and therefore better equipped to access these imagined communities. In this sense, they have invested in various possible and imagined identities (Norton, 2013), any and all of which they can choose to realise in the future as an agentive language user.

7.3.2 “Coming to that class was actually so refreshing” - Enjoyment and Motivation

Enjoyment is a positive emotional state which combines happiness, fun, challenge, a sense of pride and a sense of meaning (Dewaele and Li, 2021). It has also been conceptualised as an emotion which fuels L2 learning and enhances L2 performance (Dewaele, 2022). While boredom is not the exact opposite of enjoyment, there is a negative correlation between the two, meaning

that learners who experience boredom are less likely to have high levels of enjoyment (Li, 2022). This is evident in the learners' descriptions of their previous language learning experiences, particularly their experience at school, which they viewed as formulaic and regimented. P2 commented that although the content changed at university, many classes still seemed to follow the same structure as schools, and that there was a strong focus on grammar which almost led to a "dread" of attending repetitive classes. The learners contrast the boredom and negative aspects of previous learning with the translation tasks, underscoring their enjoyment of the enrichment programme in the present study:

> ..coming to that class was actually so refreshing in a way that it wasn't just like, "Okay, do this reading comprehension," where it was so interactive and just a new way of teaching, really. [P3]

The novelty of the activities as a contributing factor in their enjoyment and motivation was a primary theme of the conversation, with this new approach constituting a welcome break from more traditional methods such as grammar exercises, reading and listening comprehensions. Indeed, novelty is a key feature of activities which are particularly effective at inducing enjoyment, along with learner autonomy and challenges (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014). One of the ways in which the translation tasks encouraged learner autonomy was through classroom discussions, with one learner voicing appreciation for the fact that there was no right or wrong answer in these discussions. As such, the learners were empowered to give their opinion. At the same time, the learners described the tasks as being challenging but not overwhelming, therefore they seemed to pose the appropriate level of difficulty.

The informal nature of both the classroom interaction and the target language itself also contributed to piquing the learners' interest and making the class fun for them:

> Yeah, it being interactive and it being so casual as well. Like, we used to be in class like fully like cursing and stuff like that, and it's like, when would you ever... Like that made it just casual, and like it got a laugh out of everyone, so. [P3]

Despite the learners indicating multiple times that they viewed slang as being something that is not used with teachers or in class, its introduction has contributed to creating a more comprehensive experience for learners, fostering a fun and informal atmosphere in what they perceive to be a formal and regimented environment. One participant commented that it makes

them want to do even better in Spanish and that it seemed to them that the teacher enjoyed teaching the class, and therefore that other language teachers would most likely also enjoy teaching this content. While the area of teacher enthusiasm was not directly explored in this investigation, these comments align with the positive relationship demonstrated between student emotion, student engagement and perceived teacher enthusiasm (Dewaele and Li, 2021).

In addition to enjoyment, another contributing factor to learner motivation that was identified was real world application. The learners were clear in their appreciation of getting to work with what they viewed as everyday language. The learners' jokes about previously being able to tell people what is in their pencil case or that they have one dog or a brother, reflect a perceived discord between formulaic classroom language and "normal conversation". P2 draws comparisons with the Irish language, commenting on how a degree of linguistic competence in the language does not necessarily correlate with being able to have a conversation. The learners also reflect on their learning of other languages like French and German (which they had studied at school prior to continuing to study them at university) and note that despite having spent much more time learning these languages, they also feel like they lack knowledge of informal and colloquial registers in these languages. They view such registers as broadening the range of topics, contexts and people with which they can engage.

> Why should you only be able to talk to a specific group of people or about a specific thing, specific things? You know. Like if you're learning a language, why wouldn't we get the whole of it? [P2]

As illustrated by P2, their language learning almost seems incomplete without a holistic approach which includes informal and colloquial languages as well as formal or standard language. This echoes views expressed by participants in Beaulieu's (2018) study on language learners' developing sociolinguistic repertoires, where L2 learners expressed disappointment at informal variants only being introduced when they had already reached an advanced level. Therefore, despite the prevalence of standard language ideologies and the overt prestige of the standard variety, learners are also motivated by the covert prestige of informal and colloquial registers which constitute the vernacular of the L2.

Another real-world application which emerged in the discussion was the linking of the language class with the overall undergraduate course. All four learners were studying applied language and translation studies and were positive about translation being incorporated into their general language classes rather than only being a specific separate module. Furthermore, they gave a

glowing appraisal of the tasks and were adamant that they should continue to form part of the class in future years.

7.3.3 Considerations for Educators

While the learners were generally positive about their experience of the translation activities, that is not to say that they did not find them challenging. Elements which seem to have presented difficulties were i) new vocabulary; ii) the appearance of the text; and iii) recognition of their own agency. These elements are discussed here in order to highlight aspects which should be considered in future iterations or adaptions of tasks or enrichment programmes such as those presented in this study.

The quantity of new vocabulary was occasionally daunting although the in-class discussion prior to commencing the translations helped to mitigate this. The nature of the vocabulary also meant that learners could not always look up meanings in the traditional way, as some terms weren't in online dictionaries or forums.

The structure of the text played a role in first impressions of the tasks, with learners citing that the length of text could be off putting, and a lack of labelling of interlocutors made the conversations difficult to follow. However, the omission of interlocutor names was intentional so as to not influence the learners' exploration of the potential identities indexed by the sociolinguistic variants in the ST. Nonetheless, future iterations of the tasks could possibly use numbers instead.

One particular challenge that was identified was the learners' recognition of their own agency in language and register choice, although the learners themselves did not explicitly articulate this. The learners were aware of the typical rules of thumb in relation to formal vs informal language and describe previously associating the use of informal language with the potential to be rude. While they indicate now being more comfortable with and aware of the options available to them in informal contexts, they appear to view these contexts as being somewhat static, with set accompanying registers:

> ... this is a clear separate way of talking to a specific group of people who I know. Like it could be my sister, my friends, anything like that. I'm not letting that cross over then into, say, talking to a teacher [P.2]

Here, P2 views the fellow interlocutor(s) as being the variable which dictates register choice rather than it being a dynamic process guided by all interlocutors, including herself. She also seems to consider the interlocutor category as fixed, with informal language being classified as

inappropriate for a teacher. However, depending on the teacher and the level of informality of the language used, it could be perfectly acceptable to use informal language and even slang. By contrast, when commenting on using slang and informal language in the L1, P4 *does* recognise register choice as emerging from the interaction rather than solely being based on the other interlocutors:

> Just depending on who you're really speaking to, I suppose. You'd gauge off like your interaction with them, what tone of language should I use? What like slang am I gonna use here? Or is it a formal conversation, really? [P4]

Therefore, it is possible that even when aware of the informal choices available to them, learners might be reluctant in the L2 to co-construct the context through their language choices, and therefore continue to resort to broad rules of thumb in terms of which registers are to be used in which context. It is possible that more advanced students would have indicated an increased awareness of their agency, as the participants in the focus group had only spent two years studying Spanish. Nonetheless, this observation suggests that it would be worth placing greater emphasis on alerting the learners to their agency in future iterations of the tasks.

Context was one of the aspects that learners spoke positively about in relation to the translation tasks, along with variety, in-class discussion and the use of the L1 in the classroom. They appreciated both having examples of the language grounded in conversations, and the variety of contexts presented. Variety was also key in terms of the materials and task design. The learners liked that the materials were multimodal and alternated from task to task as well as the fact that the translation tasks themselves were not the exact same each time. One piece of interesting feedback was that the repetition of vocabulary was useful, despite the fact that there was not, in reality, much repetition of the terms throughout the tasks. However, an improvement in vocabulary has been shown to be a positive outcome of the use of translation in language teaching (Bruton, 2007; Laufer and Girsai, 2008; Hummel, 2010).

The in-class discussion was another positive highlighted by the learners. They appreciated that rather than there being a right or wrong answer, they were able to simply offer opinions. The discussion also helped them to feel more prepared for and less daunted by the translation task, and also provided a safe space for spontaneous oral production where they could learn from their peers. During the in-class component, learners had to deduce information about the interlocutors from the translation materials and discuss the meanings of specific variants, before later doing the translation task at home. In this sense, the in-class discussion promoted various mediation activities whereby learners mediated a text, mediated concepts through collaborating

in pair and group discussions and in some cases mediated communication whereby some learners acted as an intermediary for other learners and offered explanations and interpretations of the ST (Council of Europe, 2020, pp. 90–116).

The use of the L1 in the classroom seems to have been both a source of comfort and support for the learners. One learner commented that they would have been overwhelmed if it had been just Spanish, and that the knowledge that they could use English meant that they were happy to participate more. As such, facilitating the use of the L1 helped to reduce anxiety and cognitive overload in the classroom (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Bruen and Kelly, 2017). Furthermore, the L1 served as a conceptual reference for contextualising Spanish language:

> So we were able to see first-hand in like our language, "Oh, that's what you would use." But then like-- Like you had the comparison of, "Okay, now I know when you'd say it and who you'd say it to." [P2].

Rather than linking new L2 words directly to their referential concepts, learners often link them to L1 words which represent L1 concepts (Dagut, 1977; Ellis, 1997; Jiang, 2004). P2's above quote illustrates evidence of this process occurring, whereby the learners were able to link L2 sociolinguistic variants to L1 counterparts, which in turn gave them access to the conceptual framework of the contexts the L2 term could be used in. Being able to contrast and compare the ST and translations provided a more complete understanding of the new vocabulary - rather than just learning the meaning of new terms, they have contextualised examples of how, when and with whom these terms can be used, which they can cross reference with examples in their L1. Thus, the L1 serves as important scaffolding for not only meaning but also context, with learners using translation and their L1 cultural schema to enhance their L2 understanding (Kim, 2013).

7.4 Summary

This study set out to improve the L2 sociolinguistic competence of learners of Spanish as a foreign language using translation activities. RQ3 indicated that following the completion of the translation activities, learners rated their sociolinguistic abilities in both Spanish and to a lesser extent, English, more positively. This improvement in their self-perceived abilities is indicative of improved confidence, willingness to communicate and metalinguistic awareness, all of which are integral to their language learning journey. Furthermore, the continued positive attitudes towards informal language and its inclusion in the L2 curriculum suggest that learners were receptive to and valued working with this register, despite the widespread prestige of standard varieties.

Finally, with regard to RQ4, one of the key insights from the focus group was the level of enjoyment that the learners got from the activities, and how they contributed to their general motivation in learning Spanish. They welcomed the change from previous language classes which they described as regimented and formulaic, and were particularly conscious of the everyday or real-world application of informal language. The novelty of both the translation tasks and the target language were also key factors in the learners' enjoyment of the enrichment programme. In addition to enjoyment and motivation, the focus group also offered insights on the learners' L2 identities under construction. Although they identified as "beginners", their identity was not fixed, and they were conscious of the progress they made. Furthermore, they were also conscious of their possible and imagined future identities as members of communities of the target language, and how their new knowledge of informal registers would aid them in establishing affiliations with these communities. From a pedagogical standpoint, the learners' insights offered some useful advice for future iterations of the tasks, highlighting both the challenges and affordances of the enrichment programme. Based on the learner insights, the implementation of the enrichment programme can certainly be considered a success: they are extremely enthusiastic about the opportunity to focus on informal language, appreciated the novelty of the tasks and the authentic multimodal materials and unanimously recommend that the programme remains part of the module for future cohorts of students.

The next and final chapter considers the implications of the findings discussed thus far, and makes recommendations for future related research.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Future Directions

8.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of this thesis was to investigate how useful translation activities are as a means to foster learners' L2 sociolinguistic competence. The use of translation in language education has been revisited considerably in the last few decades, and its value has been increasingly recognised, particularly in light of the growing interest in multilingual and plurilingual pedagogies (Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez and Pintado Gutiérrez, 2021). However, there have been few, if any investigations applying translation specifically to sociolinguistic competence. This competence was defined in Section 2.4.1 as the ability to understand and/or produce variable structures in relation to social norms and to interpret linguistic and extralinguistic information. The study adopted a convergent mixed methods design which was embedded in a single group pre-/post- programme evaluation design. The enrichment programme, consisting of an introductory session and four translation tasks was designed and implemented in an upper intermediate a class of 22 learners of Spanish as a foreign language. Data collected included i) a pre-/post-questionnaire on self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and language preferences; ii) learner translations produced in the tasks; and iii) a focus group. This final chapter revisits the research questions which underpin the investigation, demonstrating the impact of the translation tasks designed for this study. It also discusses the limitations of the study before highlighting the pedagogical, empirical and methodological contributions made by the thesis and concluding with future research recommendations.

8.2 Research Questions Revisited

The four RQs below which guided this study focused on two main areas: learner responses to the translation tasks and the learners' voices (through the questionnaires and the focus group). RQ1 and RQ2 focused on the data gathered from the translation tasks, looking at patterns in how the learners navigated register and the opportunities that translation provided for fostering sociolinguistic competence. RQ3 and RQ4 focused on the questionnaires and the focus group and explored changes in learners' perceptions of their sociolinguistic abilities and preferences for (in)formal language, along with their experience of the enrichment programme. The following sections revisit these questions individually and highlight the key findings.

8.2.1 RQ1: How do learners navigate register in their translations of lexical sociolinguistic variants?

The learners' navigation of register was explored through the translation techniques they used, by observing how often and in what ways they transferred the informal load of the selected ST terms in their translations. A key finding was that across all four translation tasks, learners provided a sociolinguistically appropriate answer in every instance. That is, there was no instance of a learner using an excessively formal or vulgar term in their translation, regardless of whether they had to maintain or tone down the register inter- or intralingually.

In the interlingual tasks, where learners had to translate from their L2 to their L1 and transfer the informal load of the ST, they tended to transfer the informal load more often for strong terms than for colloquial terms, and translated using similarly strong terms e.g., they maintained a similar level of vulgarity. This difference in transfer rates indicates that the learners readily recognised strong terms in the L2 and were able to link them to equivalent terms and concepts in the L1. While the lower rate of transfer for the colloquial terms suggests that learners found it more difficult to pick up on the nuances of more mildly marked language, there were also other factors at play. Terminological differences between English and Spanish resulted in the informal load being transferred much less frequently for female vocatives vs male vocatives, likely due to differing usage patterns for such terms between English and Spanish (Alba-Juez, 2009; Kleinknecht, 2013; Flesch, 2023). Figurative language also proved more difficult for the learners to translate in some instances. Although few in number, there were some instances where learners toned up a colloquial term in their translations and provided a mildly vulgar translation through using religious terms. These instances, combined with the high levels of transfer for the strong terms align with the generally high tolerance for taboo language and religious references in Irish English. A final interesting pattern in the learners' navigation of register was in the nature of their errors. There were frequent examples of errors where the learners provided a translation which transferred the register of the ST but had an incorrect meaning or unnatural sounding phrasing. Such examples demonstrate their sociolinguistic competence in action even when their linguistic competence leads to errors.

When toning down or neutralising the register for the intralingual translation activities, there was a notable difference in the learners' translations in their L1 and their L2, evidencing their differing levels of sociolinguistic competence in the two languages. In English, they adopted a more nuanced approach, and in many instances transferred the informal load of ST terms, including strong terms, although they toned it down to make it appropriate. In some instances, they were

also able to identify mildly vulgar variants which could be maintained. By contrast, in the intralingual translation task in Spanish, they rarely transferred the informal load of the ST terms. This was certainly in part due to their less developed sociolinguistic competence in the L2, as they lacked the vocabulary in Spanish to tone down the translations using colloquial terms rather than neutralising them. However, the content of the ST also played a role, with learners tending to omit any references to topics which might be considered offensive by a grandparent such as sex or alcohol. Therefore, the omissions are still indicative of sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence as they are the result of the learners assessing the content of the ST to gauge its appropriateness for an older person. There were also a number of instances where learners added new content in place of the omitted content, with their additions demonstrating creative and allusive use of the L2.

Overall, the learners demonstrated effective receptive skills when navigating register in their translations of the lexical variants, and were able to correctly interpret the register of the ST. However, it seems that they still find the productive element of the tasks more difficult, as evidenced in their tendency to not transfer the informal load.

8.2.2 RQ2: In what ways can translation activities foster sociolinguistic competence?

Further analysis of the learners' translations revealed various opportunities that the translations provided for the learners to enact their sociolinguistic competence. Firstly, they were able to draw on diatopic variants and cultural references to contextualise their translations and in some cases did so even when not directed to, underscoring the closely entwined nature of regional and social variation. In general, the most marked diatopic variants which were used were Irish English variants, highlighting the learners' embracement of their own linguistic identity as users of Irish English. Interestingly, there were also two instances of learners producing diatopic variants in Spanish, demonstrating translation's potential for exploring marginalised regional varieties in the L2. Another way in which the learners contextualised their translations was through using placenames and cultural references, demonstrating that in addition to sociolinguistic competence, translation encouraged them to draw on sociocultural knowledge. Through employing their comprehensive L1 sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge, the learners constructed their own highly contextualised framework to scaffold the L2 sociolinguistic variants which they encountered in the translation tasks.

A second way that the translation tasks fostered sociolinguistic competence was through facilitating individual variation, as each sociolinguistic variant could be translated in a wide range

of ways. Translation therefore allowed the learners to explore the range of options available to them, and the sociostylistic impact of choosing one variant over another. Although guided by the translation brief, learners were free to pick variants which they felt were most appropriate in the context, thus translation facilitated a degree of personal choice. As well as facilitating individual variation, in some cases translation also actively encouraged it. In the absence of a direct equivalent such as a corresponding idiom, translation asked the learners to capture the essence of the ST term in their own words. For example, for multiword expressions and formulaic language where there were lower levels of direct equivalence or congruency between the L1 and the L2, translation required learners to examine the functional meaning of the ST term at a granular level and then try to reproduce this meaning in the TT.

Finally, translation provided opportunities for learners to exert their sociolinguistic agency and creativity in the TT. There were numerous instances of learners making the translations their own by using variants which reflected their own linguistic identity and beliefs, such as using Irish English variants or toning up ST variants while still using an appropriate register. Sociolinguistic agency relates to the socioculturally mediated act of using the symbolic and social mean-making capacities of language, thereby contributing to the construction of the communicative context. In this sense, the learners' translation choices constituted agentive decisions which influenced the sociostylistic impact and context of the TT. Their creativity was particularly evident in their intralingual translations in Spanish and their approach to dealing with topics which could be considered taboo for older people. While many references to such topics were omitted, learners also added new content, compensating for the omissions with more contextually appropriate and in some cases humorous additions. Not only did these instances constitute creative sociocultural strategies, but they also demonstrated allusive usage of language which is an advanced sociolinguistic skill.

8.2.3 RQ3: Do learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities and preference for informal language change after a translation-based enrichment programme?

Following the enrichment programme, learners expressed much more confidence in their sociolinguistic abilities in Spanish in both receptive and productive skills. This was an extremely important development as perceived competence is a determining factor in learners' willingness to communicate, and it is vital that learners engage in communicative activities in order to practise and acquire strategies and competencies. The role of perceived confidence is evident in the learners' claims that previously they would have felt unable to engage with Spanish-speaking

peers whereas now they felt that they could engage with them in an authentic manner. One of the biggest changes observed was in relation to the ability to *recognise* a speaker's social identity based on the language they use. This, coupled with the noticeable increase in confidence in the ability to *reflect* social identity, suggests that learners have begun to internalise the concept of indexicality and the way in which sociolinguistic variation can be used to convey and interpret identity.

This improved understanding of indexicality is also evident in the learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English, with the learners again rating themselves more positively in their abilities to recognise and reflect social identity following the enrichment programme. The general increase in each of the self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities in English illustrates an overall improved metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness of themselves as language users and the ways in which they use sociolinguistic variation to navigate the linguistic communities to which they belong.

Learners' preferences for informal language in day-to-day use as well as in language education remained quite consistent. They expressed a high degree of preference for using informal language in everyday situations, although politeness was an important factor, with both of these features aligning with the values of informality and politeness in Irish English. The learners' sustained positive sentiment towards informal language is evidence of the covert prestige that they associate with these varieties, despite the widespread dominance of standard language. This covert prestige is due to the role of informal language in establishing group affiliation, particularly amongst young people. Indeed, one of the more pronounced increases was in relation to the number of learners who strongly agreed that the sooner they started using informal language with a new acquaintance, the more comfortable they were with the relationship. This highlights an improved awareness of the interpersonal function of informal language following the enrichment programme.

With regard to the inclusion of informal language in the L2 curriculum, learner opinions remained relatively consistent, prior to and following the enrichment programme, and overall were accepting of informal language in the curriculum. Interestingly, within the responses there seemed to be somewhat conflicting attitudes. While the learners very much valued informal language being incorporated into L2 education, they also continued to value a focus on standard and formal language. While this may suggest that standard language ideology remains prevalent, it is also indicative of multiple overlapping ideologies and the individual and varied trajectories of the learners. Some may value the role of informal language in establishing interpersonal

relationships, others may value the role of the standard for professional purposes and indeed many may value both, recognising their utility in interacting in a wide range of contexts. The fact that learner sentiment remained consistent indicates that the enrichment programme struck an appropriate balance and introduced sufficient informal language that it was useful, but not so much that it detracted from their desire to also focus on standard language. The learners' preexisting preferences for informal language and its place in the L2 classroom also likely influenced how receptive they were to the enrichment programme.

8.2.4 RQ4: What do learner insights indicate about their experience of exploring sociolinguistic variation through translation?

The learners' insights into their experience of the enrichment programme were categorised into three themes: L2 identity, enjoyment and motivation, and considerations for educators.

For participants in the focus group, their identity as beginners in the L2 had a considerable impact on their perceived competence in Spanish, meaning that prior to the enrichment programme, they had felt incapable of having a conversation with a Spanish-speaking peer. However, they were strongly aware of the role of informal language in both the L1 and the L2 in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships with other young people, and recognised how they viewed Erasmus students positively when they knew elements of Irish English slang. Thus, a lack of knowledge of informal registers had constituted a barrier to accessing imagined communities of young Spanish speakers. Although they retain the identity of beginner in the L2, the fluid nature of this identity is evident in their recognition of the progress that they have made throughout the enrichment programme and their references to future integration in imagined communities when on Erasmus or living in Spain. In this sense, rather than being 'outsiders', they now conceptualise themselves as emerging members of the target language communities.

The tasks were a resounding success in terms of how they were received by the learners, with participants citing the novelty of both the focus on informal language and the use of translation as being motivating factors. In contrast with their previous language learning experiences, which they viewed as formulaic, and grammar focused, they described these classes as fun and enjoyable. They also believed that it was not just the learners who enjoyed the classes and their content, but also the teacher, and felt that other teachers would enjoy delivering similar content too. Comparisons with other languages they were learning underscored the widespread tendency to omit informal language from the L2 classroom, as despite having studied other languages such as German or French for a longer period, their knowledge of informal registers in these languages was also lacking. Such was their enjoyment of the enrichment programme that

not only did they recommend that it remain a permanent feature of the Spanish module, they also suggested that it be included in other language classes too. One element which specifically contributed to motivation and enjoyment was the perceived real-world benefit of the content and activities. As outlined in relation to L2 identity, the learners recognised the role of informal language in engaging with speakers of Spanish, and also appreciated how the use of translation activities linked to other elements of their undergraduate studies.

The learner insights also provided valuable feedback for future iterations of the tasks, highlighting challenges such as the text appearance and new vocabulary. One notable challenge which emerged was their recognition of their own agency, as the learners hint at still relying on broad rules of thumb for identifying with whom informal registers can be used. Thus, particularly when working with learners with lower proficiency levels, it would be worth highlighting their agency to them. Amongst the positives cited by the learners, the variety of multimodal materials and translation types helped to maintain their interest, and the highly contextualised examples, in-class discussion and use of the L1 as support were all identified as being extremely helpful.

8.3 Limitations

While the aim of the present thesis is to make significant contributions to the field, it must be recognised that there were some limitations. As is common with evaluation programmes, there was no control or comparison group, meaning that it was difficult to account for factors such as maturation (the tendency for learners to improve in their educational outcomes over time due to increasing maturity) or test effects (improvements resulting from the test itself such as participants remembering questions or reflecting on questions after the test) (Marsden and Torgerson, 2012). However, these factors were somewhat mitigated by the mixed methods approach, with the focus group and learner translations allowing for a more multifaceted analysis. As the research was conducted in a real-world environment, it was necessary to work with an intact class in the interests of minimising disruption to the learners, and not depriving learners of potentially beneficial content. Nonetheless, future studies with further scope and resources could implement a comparison group with a separate set of activities against which to compare the translation activities. A larger sample size would also increase the generalisability of the results and facilitate inferential statistical analysis of the results.

Another limitation of the study is that it did not fully explore the learners' knowledge of languages other than English and Spanish, and their corresponding levels in these other languages in terms of their impact on the learners' acquisition of L2 Spanish. Expanding the focus to include learners' multilingual backgrounds and their exposure to different linguistic varieties would

provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors influence their experiences with language and developing their sociolinguistic competence.

An issue which impacts many investigations of learner productions these days is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine translation (MT). Although the learners were explicitly instructed to not use AI or MT, some instances of possible usage were identified, however it is impossible to say for sure. Indeed, this is an area that future studies could exploit, by asking learners to analyse AI or MT translations and explore how they deal with register.

A final limitation was the composition of the focus group. Participants were asked to self-volunteer to take part, resulting in five female volunteers. In an effort to both increase representation, and overrecruit in order to surpass the ideal minimum number of six participants (Johnson and Christensen, 2014; Krueger and Casey, 2015), three male members of the class were contacted by the researcher and asked if they would consider taking part. One male student agreed to do so, bringing the total number to six. Unfortunately, due to timetabling, only five students were available at any one time for the focus group, so the decision was made to proceed with five participants, of which four attended on the day, all of whom were female and Irish. The four participants were also all from the beginner cohort therefore their opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the more advanced learners in the class or those with immigrant backgrounds. The opportunity to conduct more focus groups with different learners would have provided further qualitative insights, facilitating further exploration of promising themes from the data. For example, as discussed in Section 8.2.3, the questionnaires indicated the presence of multiple overlapping ideologies with regard to language variation. Future studies could use focus groups or interviews to examine how these ideologies interact with variables such as the language learners' level in Spanish or their knowledge of other languages.

8.4 Contributions

Despite the limitations discussed, this thesis has made a number of pedagogical, empirical and methodological contributions in relation to advancing the use of translation in language teaching and exploring new avenues for developing sociolinguistic competence.

8.4.1 Pedagogical Contributions

The enrichment programme consists of an original series of activities and translation tasks which were designed specifically to foster sociolinguistic competence. These activities, which the present thesis demonstrated to be successful, are outlined such that they are ready for other educators to implement in their Spanish classes. Furthermore, they serve as prototypes and by

adapting the content, can easily be used in different pedagogical contexts, like the teaching of other languages and varieties in Higher or Post-primary Education. One important theme that emerged from the focus group was that the enrichment programme contributed to the learners' motivation and enjoyment of the class, and as well as having fun, they also felt more comfortable participating in class as they were able to rely on the L1 where necessary. Therefore, the activities also contribute to fostering a positive and inclusive pedagogical environment. This leads us to the relevance of the pedagogical contributions of this thesis beyond the classroom. *Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017 – 2026* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) set out a number of target outcomes including i) improving learners' attitudes to foreign language learning; ii) improving the quality of foreign language teaching at all levels; iii) increasing the number of graduates reaching the "Independent User" standard; and iv) increasing the number of participants in Erasmus+. By departing from traditional language teaching approaches which the focus group participants described as formulaic, the enrichment programme contributed to creating a positive and enjoyable experience of foreign language learning at university. It also enhanced the quality of foreign language teaching by adopting an innovative approach to content and didactic resources, which was based on empirical research in the field. As sociolinguistic knowledge of register variation is recognised in the CEFRCV as pertaining to the B1/B2 level and above (Council of Europe, 2020), the enrichment programme addressed an important component necessary to reach this level. Finally, this focus on informal register helped the learners to feel more confident in their abilities to interact with target language communities. Indeed, the focus group participants highlighted the relevance of the informal registers that they had learned as a means to integrate with peers while on their Erasmus year. Therefore, enrichment programmes such as the one in this study can potentially contribute to the uptake of the Erasmus year abroad option by making learners feel better equipped for the challenge of immersing themselves in a foreign language and culture. Thus, the pedagogical contributions of this thesis are relevant not only in the field of L2 education, but also at a national policy level.

8.4.2 Empirical Contributions

One of the key empirical contributions that this thesis makes is identifying a pedagogical gap and relating it to existing theoretical frameworks and practical exercises – few in both cases. In my thesis I therefore propose an applied and practical example of how to address the implementation problem, that is the gap between academic recognition of the value of translation in language teaching and its actual use in the L2 classroom. Furthermore, my proposal constitutes a novel application of translation. Although there are rare instances of

translation tasks which focus on register, such as those proposed by Carreres, Noriega-Sánchez and Calduch (2018) to the best of my knowledge translation has not thus far been used specifically with a view to fostering L2 sociolinguistic competence in line with the CEFR descriptors. By intersecting register variation, explicit instruction, lexical variables and L2 Spanish, this study also provides empirical evidence in an underexplored but important crossroads in the acquisition of L2 sociolinguistic variation. As discussed in Section 2.5.1, many of the studies in this area focus on grammatical variables in L2 French (Dewaele, 2002; Rehner, Mougeon and Nadasdi, 2003; Howard, 2006; Donaldson, 2017), with considerably fewer studies centring on L2 Spanish. Those which do focus on Spanish often investigate diatopic variation or grammatical variables (Geeslin *et al.*, 2010; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012; Knouse, 2013; Reynolds-Case, 2013). Therefore, this study serves to open a new avenue of investigation in this regard.

8.4.3 Methodological Contributions

The novelty of the pedagogical approach in this investigation also resulted in methodological contributions, as translation has not yet been explored as a means for developing sociolinguistic competence. Firstly, there was no existing framework for categorising learners' translations in this regard. Therefore, this thesis drew on i) categorisations of vulgar language for Spanish (Valdeón, 2020) and English (McEnery, 2006); ii) Ávila-Cabrera's (2020) taxonomy of translation techniques; and iii) the Translation-oriented Annotation System manual (TAS, Granger and Lefer, 2021) to create a framework which facilitated the analysis of the learners' translations. While the framework was applied to lexical variants and the languages of English and Spanish here, it could easily be adapted to focus on other languages and features of register variation.

Likewise, there was no existing questionnaire for investigating learners' self-perceived sociolinguistic abilities therefore one was created for the present study by drawing on Lasan and Rehner's (2018) interview question relating to L2 learners' understanding of sociolinguistic variation and personality and intentions, and relevant can-do descriptors from the CEFRCV Sociolinguistic Appropriateness scale (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 137). The second half of the questionnaire related to learners' preferences for (in)formal language and how important they considered it to be in the context of their L2 learning. The questions for these sections were drawn from van Compernolle's (2016) attitudes towards linguistic variation survey and the same author's (2017) preferences for (in)formal language survey. While van Compernolle used these questionnaires for a single round of data collection, the present study expanded on this and used the adapted questions for data collection at two different points, once in the pre-questionnaire and once in the post-questionnaire.

8.5 Avenues for Future Research

The interdisciplinary nature of this project means that it can serve as a starting point for a diverse range of avenues for future investigations. Firstly, in line with the recommendations of the focus group participants, future studies could implement similar enrichment programmes in other language classes in a university context. These programmes could also be designed and implemented at lower levels. While the CEFRCV (Council of Europe, 2020) and the PCIC (Instituto Cervantes, 2006) tend to only introduce more informal and colloquial registers in the more advanced proficiency levels, learners in this study and elsewhere (Beaulieu *et al.*, 2018) expressed support for sociolinguistic variation being introduced sooner. This is also echoed in the literature, with Pedrola (2021) outlining a framework highlighting features of colloquial Spanish which can be introduced at various levels and authors such as Lemmerich (2010) and French and Beaulieu (2020) demonstrating positive gains in beginner learners' sociolinguistic knowledge following explicit instruction. Simultaneously, calls for using translation activities with beginner levels (Badda Badda, 2024; Liu and Yang, 2025), further underscore the promise of a similar enrichment programme with lower levels.

By way of complementing and expanding the investigation of learner productions and learner voices in this thesis, future studies could consider incorporating teachers' voices. From the learners' perspective in this study, the incorporation of translation and informal registers was a welcome addition to the curriculum. However, given the general tendency to overlook the use of translation activities, and the paucity of materials focusing on sociolinguistic variation, it would be interesting to explore language teachers' experience of this enrichment programme. This would be particularly pertinent for newer teachers, who may be less experienced with the concepts of translation in language teaching and sociolinguistic variation. Therefore, enrichment programmes such as this one could serve as a practical guide for developing their didactic practices. Teachers' insights would also serve to provide a more rounded understanding of the potential of translation and sociolinguistically responsive pedagogies in improving the quality of foreign language teaching at all levels, which is one of the target outcomes of the *Languages Connect* strategy (Department of Education and Skills, 2017).

In light of the fact that *Languages Connect* is coming to an end in 2026, the present study could be used to inform future strategies. As highlighted in Section 2.2, although the current strategy promotes linguistic diversity in terms of multilingualism and plurilingualism, it fails to recognise intralinguistic diversity within languages and their various registers, dialects and varieties. Drawing on the sociolinguistically-responsive pedagogy advocated in this thesis, a future

strategy could work towards curriculum decolonisation through acknowledging the registers and varieties that form part of the codified, standardised languages taught at educational institutions in Ireland. This issue of regarding languages as monolithic entities is not unique to *Languages Connect*. Indeed, one criticism of the CEFR sociolinguistic appropriateness descriptors is that they reference community in the singular, and as such overlook the diverse subcommunities of a language (Fuertes Gutiérrez, Soler Montes and Klee, 2021). Furthermore, the only reference to diatopic variation is in the C1 descriptor, acknowledging that at this level a learner may need to check details if an accent is unfamiliar (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 137). Therefore, there is also scope for expanding and enhancing the existing sociolinguistic appropriateness descriptors to include specific reference to diatopic varieties and make them as explicit as the references to register.

Another target outcome of *Languages Connect* is increasing the uptake of certain languages, including Spanish, at Leaving Certificate level (the state exam taken at the end of post-primary school in Ireland). As participants in this study reported increased enjoyment and motivation, enrichment programmes such as that presented in this thesis could help to make language learning more appealing at post-primary level. The participants' appreciation for the innovative use of translation and a focus on what they perceived to be to be real-world language suggest that similar programmes could aid in improving the quality of foreign language teaching and learners' attitudes to foreign language learning at post-primary level. This in turn could contribute to improving the uptake for foreign languages at Leaving Certificate level.

Finally, although this thesis investigated the use of translation to explore sociolinguistic variation primarily in relation to register, future studies could apply the same structure to other non-standard varieties including diatopic varieties, and explore the associated indexicality and ideologies in more depth. Some studies have examined translation from the standpoint of fostering intercultural competence (Elorza, 2008; Fois, 2020), however there is scope for further investigation in this area. Translation activities could be used to explore language ideologies and lead learners to reflect on both their own ideologies and those of broader society, and how they intersect with their perspectives of equality, diversity and inclusivity. By challenging the dominance of standard language norms and introducing varied and authentic examples of non-standard language, translation activities can serve as tool to promote both an enhanced cultural awareness, and a more authentic and holistic representation of the L2 in all its variegated forms. As rightly expressed by one of the participants in this investigation, "if we're learning a language, why wouldn't we get the whole of it?"

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Approval

A.1 Confirmation of Research Ethics Approval

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY
05 July 2023

CONFIRMATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL FOR A PROJECT

Application Reference: **DCU-FHSS-2023-044**

Project Title: **Slanguages Connect: Enhancing sociolinguistic competence and self-expression in foreign language education through translation**

Project contact(s): **hannah.leonard22@mail.dcu.ie**

Let this letter certify that the proposed project identified above has been reviewed by the *Humanities & Social Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Committee* (F-REC) and has been approved as a low-risk project. The application was found to comply with university requirements and best practices for research ethics, and with GDPR guidelines and requirements where personal data is processed in the project.

A copy of the application, including appended documents related to participant consent, is archived under the reference above. Queries about this project's approval may be directed to the F-REC Chair.

Sincerely,

Dr Dónal Mulligan
donal.mulligan@dcu.ie

Chair, Faculty Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
Dublin City University

Dámh na nDaonnachtaí agus na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath

A.2 Plain Language Statement

Research Title:

Slanguages Connect: Enhancing sociolinguistic competence and self-expression in foreign language education through translation

Principal Investigators:

Hannah Leonard	Dr Lucía Pintado Gutiérrez	Dr Jennifer Martyn
hannah.leonard22@mail.dcu.ie	lucia.pintado@dcu.ie	jennifer.martyn@dcu.ie
School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies	School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies	School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Dublin City University	Dublin City University	Dublin City University

What is this research about?

This project is part of a DCU doctoral research study funded by the Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Programme. The study aims to enhance foreign language learners' understanding and use of slang and informal language through translation-related activities.

Why is this research being undertaken?

There is a lack of information on Spanish learners' use of slang and informal language. Your participation is extremely important in contributing to this area of research.

What is expected of me if I choose to participate?

This project involves six translation-related tasks which will be carried out as part of the coursework for module SP376. The tasks involve:

- Responding to an online survey about your language beliefs and your language use
- Translating a series of short texts and providing a brief written reflection on your translation choices

You will also be asked to provide some basic personal information including age, gender and programme of study.

In addition, 6 participants will be recruited to participate in a group discussion (focus group) of approximately 1 hour in duration in semester. This focus group will be audio recorded for the purpose of analysing the discussion.

You are being asked to consent to the collection and analysis of your responses to the above tasks. The results will be published in a doctoral thesis and may also be used in future presentations of findings, including conferences, seminars, workshops, journal articles, books and book chapters etc.

There is **no** obligation to participate in this project and your choice to participate/not participate will have **no** impact on your grade for this module. The activities in question form part of your regular coursework and should you choose not to participate, you will **not** be excluded from these activities; your responses will simply not be shared with the researcher for the purpose of this project.

How will my privacy be protected and how will you use and dispose of my data?

During the research project, all data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and stored in accordance with DCU's data policies (e.g. password protected in a DCU Google Drive folder or on a DCU encrypted device). Your informed consent will be sought before collecting your data and access to this data will only be granted to the investigators named above. In the study and any subsequent publications, personal data will be pseudonymised (e.g. students will be referred to as Participant 1, participant 2 etc). The audio recording from the focus group will be shared with an external transcription service provider. The provider is approved by DCU and is GDPR compliant.

All data will be destroyed by 2028. In accordance with DCU's Data Retention Policy, the electronic files will be deleted from or anonymised on all relevant systems on which they are stored. Any hard copy files will be destroyed by confidential shredding.

Should you have any concerns about your data in relation to this project you can contact the DCU Data Protection Officer – Mr. Martin Ward. Email: data.protection@dcu.ie Ph.: 7005118 / 7008257

Are there any benefits or risks involved for me as a participant?

Participating in this project offers the following benefits:

- Improving your communicative competence in a foreign language (Spanish)
- Developing your mediation skills through transferring meaning from one language to another (English to Spanish or Spanish to English)
- An opportunity to reflect on your own language use and learning

While every effort will be made to ensure that language in the tasks is culturally sensitive and appropriate, it is important to note that due to the focus on slang and informal language, swear words or taboo language that some people may find offensive may be present. You do not have to use or discuss any such language if you do not want to, or do not feel comfortable doing so.

Can I change my mind about participating in the project?

Yes! Participation in this project is on a voluntary basis, and you are free to withdraw at any stage. Withdrawing from the study will have no impact on your grade for this module.

How can I find out about the results of the project?

This doctoral study will be made available on DORAS, DCU's open access research repository (expected in 2025-2026). Results from this study will also be used in future presentations of findings including academic journal articles, conferences, workshops and book chapters etc.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you would like to find out more about this project, please contact Hannah Leonard (hannah.leonard22@mail.dcu.ie) or any of the other investigators named on this form. Should you wish to contact an independent person, you may also contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and InnovationSupport, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-7008000, e-mail: rec@dcu.ie

A.3 Questionnaire Informed Consent

Part 3. Informed Consent

By completing this section, you are consenting to your answers to the previous sections being collected for use in the doctoral research of Hannah Leonard.

If you **do not** wish to participate, you can leave this section and the next section blank and your answers from the previous sections will not be collected for data analysis.

About this survey

This survey on language beliefs, use and awareness, forms part of the doctoral research of Hannah Leonard. The project aims to enhance foreign language learners' understanding and use of slang and informal language through translation-related activities. You are being asked to consent to the collection of your answers from Parts 1, 2 and 4 of this survey for the purposes of data analysis.

Who are the researchers?

Hannah Leonard: hannah.leonard22@mail.dcu.ie

Lucía Pintado Gutiérrez: lucia.pintado@dcu.ie

Jennifer Martyn: jennifer.martyn@dcu.ie

School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies

Dublin City University

* In addition to contacting any of the above researchers, should you have any questions you can also contact an independent person at:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-7008000, e-mail: rec@dcu.ie

Participant Confidentiality

- All data will be treated with strict confidentiality and stored in a safe place (password-protected DCU Google Drive folder and DCU encrypted device).
- Only the principal investigators listed on this form will have access to the data collected.
- All data related to participants will be pseudonymised (e.g. participants will be referred to as participant 1, participant 2 etc).
- Any data will be processed in compliance with the data protection law in Ireland (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018).

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I understand the information provided

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I am aware that my responses to the survey will be collected and analysed

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I agree to participate in this study on a voluntary basis

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I consent to the use of my data for future studies as outlined in the Plain Language Statement

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I understand that I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I am aware that there will be no repercussions from withdrawing

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

I understand that this project is not connected to my class performance and my choice to participate or not will not have any impact on my mark

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

A.4 Translation Tasks Informed Consent

Informed Consent: Translation Tasks

Research Title:

Slanguages Connect: Enhancing sociolinguistic competence and self-expression in foreign language education through translation

Principal Investigators:

Hannah Leonard	Dr Lucía Pintado Gutiérrez	Dr Jennifer Martyn
hannah.leonard22@mail.dcu.ie	lucia.pintado@dcu.ie	jennifer.martyn@dcu.ie
School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies	School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies	School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Dublin City University	Dublin City University	Dublin City University

Purpose of Study:
This doctoral study aims to enhance foreign language learners' understanding and use of slang and informal language through translation-related activities.

Participant Confidentiality

- All data will be treated with strict confidentiality and stored in a safe place (password-protected DCU Google Drive folder and DCU encrypted device).
- Only the principal investigators listed on this form will have access to the data collected.
- All data related to participants will be pseudonymised (e.g. participants will be referred to as participant 1, participant 2 etc).
- Any data will be processed in compliance with the data protection law in Ireland (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018).

Further Information
In addition to the researchers named on this form, should you have any questions about this project you may also contact an independent person at:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and InnovationSupport, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-7008000, e-mail: rec@dcu.ie

Confirmation of Requirements of Participants as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

Participant – please complete the following (Select Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)	*Yes/No*
I understand the information provided	*Yes/No*
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	*Yes/No*
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	*Yes/No*
I am aware that my responses to the translation tasks will be collected and analysed	*Yes/No*
I agree to participate in this study on a voluntary basis	*Yes/No*
I am aware that swear words or taboo/offensive language may arise in the course of these activities	*Yes/No*
I understand that I am not obliged to use or discuss such language	*Yes/No*
I consent to the use of my data for future studies as outlined in the Plain Language Statement	*Yes/No*
I understand that I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point	*Yes/No*
I am aware that there will be no repercussions from withdrawing	*Yes/No*
I understand that this project is not connected to my class performance and my choice to participate or not will not have any impact on my mark	*Yes/No*

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature:_____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness:_____

Date:_____

A.5 Focus Group Informed Consent

Research Title:

Slanguages Connect: Enhancing sociolinguistic competence and self-expression in foreign language education through translation.

Principal Investigators:

Hannah Leonard	Dr Lucía Pintado Gutiérrez	Dr Jennifer Martyn
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School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies	School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies	School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Dublin City University	Dublin City University	Dublin City University

Purpose of Study:
This doctoral study aims to enhance foreign language learners' understanding and use of slang and informal language through translation-related activities. This focus group consists of a group discussion of no more than one hour. The discussion will explore key themes which emerged during the intervention including, but not limited to: i) your understanding of and beliefs about slang and informal language; ii) your opinion on the translation-related activities. The discussion will be recorded in order to facilitate data analysis.

Participant Confidentiality

- All data will be treated with strict confidentiality and stored in a safe place (password-protected DCU Google Drive folder and DCU encrypted device).
- Only the principal investigators listed on this form and an approved, GDPR compliant transcription service provider will have access to the data collected.
- All data related to participants will be pseudonymised (e.g. participants will be referred to as participant 1, participant 2 etc).
- Any data will be processed in compliance with the data protection law in Ireland (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018).

Further Information
In addition to the researchers named on this form, should you have any questions about this project you may also contact an independent person at:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and InnovationSupport, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-7008000, e-mail: rec@dcu.ie

Confirmation of Requirements of Participants as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

Participant – please complete the following (Select Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)	*Yes/No*
I understand the information provided	*Yes/No*
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	*Yes/No*
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	*Yes/No*
I am aware that this discussion will be audio recorded	*Yes/No*
I am aware that the pseudonymised audio recording will be shared with a GDPR compliant external transcription service provider	*Yes/No*
I am aware that swear words or taboo/offensive language may arise in the course of these activities	*Yes/No*
I understand that I am not obliged to use or discuss such language	*Yes/No*
I agree to participate in this study on a voluntary basis	*Yes/No*
I consent to the use of my data for future studies as outlined in the Plain Language Statement	*Yes/No*
I understand that I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point	*Yes/No*
I am aware that there will be no repercussions from withdrawing	*Yes/No*
I understand that this project is not connected to my class performance and my choice to participate or not will not have any impact on my mark	*Yes/No*

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature:_____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness:_____

Date:_____

Appendix B: Pre-/Post-questionnaire

Part 1. A. English

There are five statements in this section relating to your use of **English.** For each statement you must select **one** of the following options:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Somewhat Agree
Somewhat Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

1. I can recognise someone's social identity (e.g. gen Z/college student/older person), and intentions (e.g. to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity), based on the words and structures they use when communicating in **English**. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

2. I can reflect my social identity (e.g. gen Z/college student/older person) and intentions (e.g. to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity) based on the words and structures I use when communicating in **English**. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

3. I can use **English** easily with different audiences (children, peers, lecturers etc). *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

4. I can identify a wide range of formal vs neutral vs informal language in **English**. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5. I can adapt my language to the social context as needed (by using a colloquial, standard or formal register) when I communicate in **English**. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Part 1. B. Spanish

There are five statements in this section relating to your use of **Spanish.** For each statement you must select **one** of the following options:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Somewhat Agree
Somewhat Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

6. I can recognise someone's social identity (e.g. gen Z/college student/older person), and intentions (e.g. to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity), based on the words and structures they use when communicating in **Spanish**. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

7. I can reflect my social identity (e.g. gen Z/college student/older person) and intentions (e.g. to be funny/to shock/to show solidarity) based on the words and structures I use when communicating in **Spanish**. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

8. I can use **Spanish** easily with different audiences (children, peers, lecturers etc). *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

9. I can identify a wide range of formal vs neutral vs informal language in **Spanish**. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

10. I can adapt my language to the social context as needed (by using a colloquial, standard or formal register) when I communicate in **Spanish**. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Part 1. C. Language preferences

This section contains 5 statements which relate to your language preferences in general (not in a specific language). For each statement you must select **one** of the following options:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Somewhat Agree
Somewhat Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

11. I often use informal or everyday language when meeting someone for the first time. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

12. As a rule of thumb, it is better to use overly polite language than to risk being too informal. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

13. I prefer it when people I don't know well or at all use more formal language with me. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. The sooner I start using more informal language with a new acquaintance, the more comfortable I am with our relationship. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. When I meet someone for the first time, I prefer to use polite and/or formal language. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Part 1. D. Language learning preferences

This section contains 5 statements which relate to your language learning preferences. For each statement you must select **one** of the following options:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Somewhat Agree
Somewhat Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

16. A good foreign language course is one which focuses mainly on standard and/or formal language. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

17. When learning a foreign language, it is important to learn how to use the language to create close or informal relationships with people. *

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat Agree
- ○ Somewhat Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

18. When learning a foreign language, it is important to focus on standard or formal language, even if native speakers don't always use this language. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. A good foreign language course is one which teaches informal or colloquial language in addition to formal language. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. When learning a foreign language, it is important to focus on how native speakers use the language in everyday situations, even if standard or formal language is not always used. *

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Appendix C: Learner Translations of Lexical Sociolinguistic Variants

C.1 Task 1 - Wolf of Wall Street

Task 1 Learner Translations of Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 1 - 10 (of 19 total)

#	Who the fuck	Has the god damn gall	God damn it	the fucking Equalizer	they have the fucking...	Cheerio	Right-oh	Fucking halfwit	Damn it!
1	Who in the world	has the cheek	Oh my god!	the Equalizer	they have the nerve...	Cheerio	Right-oh	What a fool!	Ah sugar!!
2	Who	has the nerve	Jeez!	the flipping Equalizer*	they have the flipping...	Cheerio	Right-oh	She's stupid!	Gosh darn!!
3	Who	has the nerve	Ugh.	*Omission	*Omission	Cheerio	Right-oh	Ugh so annoying!	Oh no!
4	Who in their right mind	Who in their right mind would	Oh my god!	the Equalizer	they have the damn ..	Cheerio	Right-oh	What a halfwit!	Damn it!!
5	Who	has the cheek to call	Bloody hell!	the bloody Equalizer	they have the bloody....	Cheerio	Right-oh	Bloody halfwit!	Aahhh nooo!
6	Who	has the nerve to call	For goodness sake!	the Equalizer	they have the...	Cheerio	Right-oh	Silly fool!	Ugh!!
7	Who	has the audacity	Ah jaysus!	the Equalizer	they have the nerve...	Cheerio	Right-oh	So annoying!	Darn it!
8	Who on earth	has the audacity	Darn it!	The Equalizer	they have the...	Goodbye	Alright Jean	He is really not the brightest bulb in the box.!	Darn it!
9	Who the hell	has the cheek	Oh my god!	the bleeding Equalizer	they have the bleeding...	Cheerio	Right-oh	Bleeding dope!	Damn it!!
10	Who	has the gall	Ugh!	the Equalizer	they have the nerve...	Cheerio	Right-oh	What an idiot!	Ugh I know!!

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 1 Learner Translations of Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 11 - 19 (of 19 total)									
#	Who the fuck	Has the god damn gall	God damn it	the fucking Equalizer	they have the fucking...	Cheerio	Right-oh	Fucking halfwit	Damn it!
11	Who	has the audacity	*Omission	the Equalizer	and …	Cheerio	Right-oh	idiot!	Alright
12	Why would anyone call	Why would anyone call	Ugh.	The Equalizer	and now I have to-	Cheerio	Right-oh	What a headache.	Seriously?!
13	Who on earth	has the gall	Oh man!	the Equaliser	they have the nerve to...	Cheerio	Right-oh	What an imbecile!	Damn it!!
14	Who	would have the nerve	Holy moly!	the Equalizer	they have the…	Cheerio	Right-oh	What a douchebag!	Oh no!
15	Who in the world	has the nerve to call	Seriously!	The Equalizer,	they have the...	Cheerio	*Omission	What a silly person!	Oh no
16	Why on earth would somebody want to call	Why on earth would somebody want	Unbelievable!	the Equalizer	of course they call when...	Cheerio	Right-oh	What a fool!	Ah no!
17	Who	has the great idea	Seriously!	the Equalizer	they have the…	Goodbye	Alright	Fool!	Geez!!
18	Who on earth	has the nerve	Darn it!	The Equalizer	they have the...	Goodbye	Right then	Darn it, what a silly person!	Gosh darn it!
19	who the heck	has the dang nerve	Gosh darn it	the flippin Equalizer*	they have the nerve to…	Cheerio	Right-oh	silly goose	Darn it!!

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 2 Learner Translations of Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 1 - 7 (of 21 total)															
#	estoy jodido	hijo mío	ya será menos	las tías	sois la pera	soy un muermo	una tía	una chiquilla joven	cabrón	está hasta el gorro	le pongas los cuernos	tío	largarse	me deja así, tirado;	ahí te pudras
1	I'm fucked.	my son	***Omission**	the aunts	are amazing	I'm a bore	a girl	a young girl	a bastard	is fed up with	you cheating on her	mate	A woman can't abandon her husband and leave home like that.	And then she leaves me like that, just like that;	there you go to rot
2	I'm fucked.	son	Come off it.	girls	are the best	I'm a deadbeat	this girl	a young chick	a bastard	is sick of	you cheating	bro	A woman can't abandon her husband and leave home like that	she'll leave me like that, just like that,	there you go to rot.
3	I'm fucked up	my boy	She will calm down	***Omission**	***Omission**	I'm boring	a girl	a young girl	a bastard	is fed up with	you cheating on her	man	A woman can't just leave her husband and walk out of the house just like that!	she leaves me like that, just like that;	there you go to rot
4	I'm gutted	***Omission**	You're joking, really?	women	are something else	I'm no fun	this girl	She's young	a total arsehole	up to her neck	***Omission**	***Omission**	A woman can't leave her husband and piss off out of the house like that.	Anyways, that's the story. *Omission + Addition	Off with you. *Omission + Addition
5	I'm fecked.	***Omission**	- Ah g'way outta that.	you guys	are amazing	I'm boring	this girl	a young one	a bastard.	is sick of	you cheating on her	lad	A woman can't abandon her husband and leave her home like that.	And it also leaves me like this, stranded;	She can go to hell.
6	I'm fucked.	my son	- As if	***Omission**	It's something else.	I'm a bore	a bird	a young girl	a bastard	is sick and tired of	you cheating on her	mate	A wife cannot abandon her husband and leave the house just like that	she leaves me like this, stranded,	to rot in hell.
7	I'm fucked up	my son	It'll be less	you girls	are the best	I'm a bore	a girl	a young girl	a bastard	is fed up with	you cheating on her.	man	A woman can't just leave her husband and run away from home just like that.	And then she leaves me like this, just like that;	there you go to rot.

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 2 Learner Translations of Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 8 - 14 (of 21 total)																
#	estoy jodido	hijo mío	ya será menos	las tías	sois la pera	soy un muermo	una tía	una chiquilla joven	cabrón	está hasta el gorro	le pongas los cuernos	tío	largarse	me deja así, tirado;	ahí te pudras
8	I'm just in a mess.	son	ah sure things will work out.	you girls	are complicated	I'm boring	a girl	a young girl	a bastard	is fed up with	you cheating on her	man	A woman can't just leave her husband and walk out of the house just like that.	And then she leaves me like that, just like that;	rot in hell
9	I'm fucked.	my son	You're not serious	girls	are the pear.	I'm a boring	a girl	a young girl	an asshole	is sick of	you cheating on her	man	A woman can't just leave her husband and walk out of the house just like that.	she leaves me like that, just like that;	Piss off.
10	I'm fucked.	***Omission**	You're joking!	women	am i right	I'm a drag	a girl	a young one	a scumbag	is completely fed up of	your shity ways	man	A wife doesn't abandon her wife and leaves the home just like that	Leaving me to rot	Leaving me to rot
11	I'm just fucked up	son	Ah she'll come off it	you girls	are impossible	I'm a bore	a girl	a young girl	a bastard	is fed up with	you cheating on her	mate	A woman can't just abandon her husband and leave home like that	And then she'll leave me like that, just like that;	not in a million years! ***Omission + Addition**
12	I'm fucked up	my son	It will be grand.	you girls	are the devil	I'm a bore	a girl	a young girl	a bastard	is fed up with	you cheating on her	man	A woman can't just leave her husband and walk out of the house just like that	And then she leaves me like that, just like that;	there you go to rot.
13	I'm fucked.	***Omission**	It won't go that far	all you women	are nuts	I'm boring	a bird	a young wan	an arsehole	wife's sick of	you cheating on her	man	A woman can't just abandon her husband and run off like this	And she leaves me like this… lying there;	"there, rot."
14	I'm just fucked	lad	Fuck off!	the aunts	are posh	I'm dry	a girl	a young girl	a cunt	is fed up with	you cheating on her	man	A woman can't just leave her husband and walk out of the house like that.	And then she leaves me there, just like that;	there to rot.

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 2 Learner Translations of Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 15 - 21 (of 21 total)															
#	estoy jodido	hijo mío	ya será menos	las tías	sois la pera	soy un muermo	una tía	una chiquilla joven	cabrón	está hasta el gorro	le pongas los cuernos	tío	largarse	me deja así, tirado;	ahí te pudras
15	I'm fucked	son	It won't be that bad	you women	are just unbelievable.	I'm boring	a girl	a young one	an arsehole.	is fed up with	you cheating on her	***Omission**	A wife can't just abandon her husband and leave home like that.	she left me here like this	to rot in hell.
16	sure I'm grand	my son	Ah, sure it can't be that bad.	women	they're impossible.	I'm shite craic	another one	a young one	some bastard	has had enough of	you messin' around	bud	A woman can't just up and leave her husband and the house like that.	And she's leavin' me high and dry;	it's just heartless. ***Omission + Addition**
17	I'm fucked up	my son.	It'll be grand.	you girls	are the cream of the crop	I'm a borebag	this girl	a young girl	a bastard	is fed up with	you cheating on her	bro	A woman can't just leave her husband and walk out of the house like that	And then she leaves me there, just like that;	to rot in hell.
18	I'm fucked	my son	That'll be less.	you girls	are something else	I'm a bore	a girl	a young girlie	an asshole	is fed up with	you cheating on her	man	A woman can't just leave her husband and run away from home just like that	And then she leaves me like that, lying around;	there you go to rot.
19	I fucked up	son	Come off it, what!	she	because she's crazy	I'm grumpy	someone	a young girl	a prick	is up to her eyeballs	***Omission**	***Omission**	A woman cannot leave her home and husband at the same	and I'll be left to rot.	and I'll be left to rot.
20	I'm fucked	man.	Cop on.	yous	are all unreal	I'm a borebag	a bird	a youngone	a bastard	is sick of	you cheating on her	man	A woman cannot abandon her husband and leave home just like that	And she also leaves me like this, stranded;	rotting.
21	I'm fucked	lad	get out of it	the women	are a right dose	I'm dead	a moth	a young girl	a fucker	wife's had enough of	you cheating on her	***Omission**	A woman can not abandon their husband and leave the house just like that	And then she'll leave me, just like that	and there you are, rotting.

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 3 Learner Translations of Lexical Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 1 - 11 (of 22 total)											
#	Hermanito. Hermaniiitoooo	Madre mía	irá bien en Pijolandia	me lio a tortas	tío	no te hace ni puta gracia verme	no te jode	joder	te largaste	no me largué	me largaron
1	Bro. Little bro	Oh my god	all is good in fancy land?	I'll beat the shit out of whoever I have to	man	Aren't you fucking happy to see me?	no shit	Fuck.	you left	I didn't leave.	I was kicked out.
2	Little bro. Little bro.	Oh my	seems like everything's great in poshland?	I'll have to beat the shit out of whoever i'll have to.	bro	You're not even fucking happy to see me	No shit.	Fuck,	you left	I didn't leave.	I was kicked out
3	Bro. Brooooo.	Jaysus	it's going well in snob land, isn't it?	I'll beat the shit out of whoever I have to	lad	Aren't ya happy to see me?	no shit	Jaysus.	you left	I didn't quit	I got kicked out
4	man. Mannnn	Jesus	you're doing well in poshland, yeah?	I don't have to fight anyone for you do I?	bro?	You didn't bother your arse to come and see me?	you eejit.	Fuck	you went away.	I didn't go away	they took me away
5	Don't ya little brother? Hey, little brooootheeer.	Jaysus	things are going well in Snobland, aren't they?	if I have to bate the shite out of anyone.	lad	Are you not happy to see me?	Yeah I'm still fucking in there	Fuck	you left.	I didn't leave	They threw me out.
6	Little brother. Little brotherrrrrr	Mother of mine	he'll fit in well in PoshLand, right?	I'll beat the hell out of whoever I have to	dude	Aren't you happy to see me?	duh	Damn it	you left.	I didn't leave	I was dumped.
7	Little brother. Little brother.	My goodness	things are going well in Poshland, aren't they?	ill scrap whoever I have to	*Omission	Aren't you fucking happy to see me?	No shit,	Damn	you left	I didn't quit	I was thrown out.
8	Little brother. Pádraig, my boy!	Good heavens	things are going grand in Leprechaun Land, aren't they?	If I have to cause trouble, I will !!	mate	Don't you have a bit of a grin seeing me?	*Omission	*Omission	you took off	I didn't run off	I got the boot
9	Little brother. Little brother	My goodness	it's going well in Pijoland, innit?	I'll beat the shit out of whoever I have to.	bro	Aren't you fucking happy to see me?	no shit	Fuck	you left.	I didn't quit.	I got kicked out
10	Little Bother, Litte broooo	Ah jaysus	fancyland must be well, no?	I'll beat the crap out of whoever I need to	bro	Aren't you fucking happy to see me?	don't kid yourself	Fuck.	your left	i didn't leave	they, kicked me out
11	Bro. Brooooo.	My goodness	it's going well in wonderland, isn't it?	i'll scrap with whoever I have to.	man	Aren't you fucking happy to see me?	eejit.	Fuck.	you left.	I didn't quit	I got kicked out.

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 3 Learner Translations of Lexical Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 12 - 22 (of 22 total)											
#	Hermanito. Hermaniiitoooo	Madre mía	irá bien en Pijolandia	me lio a tortas	tío	no te hace ni puta gracia verme	no te jode	joder	te largaste	no me largué	me largaron
12	Little brother. Little brother	My goodness	it's going well in St Columbas, isn't it?	I'll beat the shit out of whoever I have to	man	Aren't you fucking happy to see me?	no shit.	Fuck	you left.	I didn't quit.	I got kicked out.
13	Little brother.. little brotherrr	My god	all's well in Poshland, is it?	I'll beat them up	***Omission**	You're not happy to see me?	obviously	***Omission**	you left.	I didn't quit Samu	they kicked me out
14	Little bro Little bro.	Mum	he would do well in poshland, right?	I'll mess up whoever I have to	man	Aren't you even a little glad to see me?	I'm still there clearly	Gosh.	you left.	I did not leave	I was booted.
15	Lil bro. Lil brooo	Oh my god	you're doing well in poshland aren't ya?	I'll batter anyone who gives you trouble.	***Omission**	are you not happy to see me?	No I'm clearly still in there.	Fuckin hell	you left.	I didn't leave	They made me leave
16	Little bro. Little brooo!	My god	it's going well in snobby land	I have to beat anyone up	man	Aren't you happy to see me?	obviously	***Omission**	you left	I didn't leave	I was kicked out
17	Little bro. Little broooo.	Mother of God	it's going well in the Land of the Posh, isn't it?	I'll batter whoever I have to.	mate	Are you not buzzing to see me?	really.	Jaysus	you left.	I didn't leave	I was kicked out
18	Little bro. Brooo.	My god	it`s going to be good up with the high and mighty, isn`t it?	I have a go at whoever I want.	man	Aren`t you fucking happy to see me?	fucks sake.	Fuck	you left.	I didn`t leave.	They let me go
19	Little brother. Little brother	My goodness	doing well in fancyland?	I'll beat the shit out of whoever I have to	bro	Aren't you fucking happy to see me?	duh.	Damn.	you left.	I didn't leave.	They kicked me out.
20	Little brother!	Oh my gosh	how are Poli?	I'll take on whoever it takes.	man?	Aren't you fucking happy to see me?	No, but I'm good.	Fuck	you've left.	I didn't leave	they kicked me out.
21	Little brother. Little brotherrr.	My goodness	it's going good in posh land right?	I get into trouble with whoever I need to.	bro	Are you not happy to fucking see me?	it doesn't concern you	Jesus.	you left.	I didn't leave	They let me go
22	Laddd, ladddddd	Oh my god	its going well on the soutside, is it?	or there'll be murder	***Omission**	are you not fucking delighted I'm here?	ye gobshite.	Fucking hell	you left	I didn't quit,	I got sacked

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 4 Learner Translations of Lexical Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 1 - 7 (of 20 total)											
#	**cari**	**vamos de culo**	**ya hay choto a la vista**	**nos lo pasamos de puta madre**	**E : el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete**	**muy guay**	**estaba hecha mierda**	**se pusieron ciegas**	**ñaca-ñaca**	**chica**	**pasta**
1	Cari abuelita	estamos tan ocupados	***omission**	lo pasamos genial	***omission**	muy guay	no quería beber despues de tomar también el día anterior ***omission + addition**	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	pasta
2	Abuela ***omission**	***omission**	¿ya hay niños a la vista?	lo pasamos muy bien	Y el sábado, sabadete, nos fuimos mis amigas	muy genial	estaba ya un poco cansada	***omission**	***omission**	abuela	dinero
3	abuela ***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	fue una noche muy divertida.	Y el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete	muy guay	estaba un poco cansado	***omission**	***omission**	Tan abuelita,	pasta
4	abuela ***omission**	estoy hasta el cuello	***omission**	nos lo pasamos genial.	***omission**	muy guay	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	pasta
5	abuelito/a abuelito/a	estamos muy ocupados.	***omission**	nos lo pasamos genial	Y el sábado, sábado, camisa blanca y buen rollo,	muy bonito	no me encontraba muy bien	mis amigas se volvieron locas,	***omission**	abuelito/a	dinero
6	**abuela** abuela	he estado muy ocupado	¿Tienes algunas otras noticias? ***omission + addition**	¡tuvimos un buen momento!	El sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete,	muy guay	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	abuela	pasta.
7	**abuela** abuelita	vamos muy mal.	¿ya hay abuelo a la vista?	nos lo pasamos genial.	Y el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete	muy guay	estaba ya un poco cansada y mal	mis amigas se pusieron ciegas,	«ñaca-ñaca», de nuevo lío.	abueltia	pasta

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 4 Learner Translations of Lexical Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 8 - 14 (of 20 total)

#	cari	vamos de culo	ya hay choto a la vista	nos lo pasamos de puta madre	E : el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete	muy guay	estaba hecha mierda	se pusieron ciegas	ñaca-ñaca	chica	pasta
8	abuelos ***omission**	estamos muy ocupados aquí.	¿tiene alguna noticia? ***omission + addition**	nos lo pasamos.	Y el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete	muy guay	yo no podía beber ***omission + addition**	todas mis amigas se pusieron ciegas,	«ñaca-ñaca», de nuevo lío.	abuelos	pasta
9	abuelo abuelo	estamos muy ocupados en este momento	¿hay alguna novedad? *omission + addition	¡Lo pasamos genial!	***omission**	muy chulo	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	abuelo	dinero
10	abuelos ***omission**	la vida por aquí ha estado bastante ocupada	***omission**	Fue agradable	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	algunos terminaron un poco afectados por las copas	***omission**	***omission**	dinero
11	abuela abuela	somos un desastre	¿tiene alguna noticia? *omission + addition	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	***omission**	dinero
12	abuelita abuela	somos perezoso	¿Alguien te molesta allí?	nos lo pasamos una bomba.	Y el sábado, llevé una camiseta blanca, guapa	muy bonito	no quería beber porqué estaba ayer ***omission**	todas mis amigas bebieron	«ñaca-ñaca»	***omission**	dinero
13	laia laia	la vida va un poco así así.	***omission**	lo disfruté mucho	***omission**	muy guay	estaba ya un poco de resaca	mis amigas se pusieron ciegas	***omission**	mi vida	pasta
14	abuelito/a ***omission**	estamos bastante ocupados	¿Hay novedades emocionantes? ***omission + addition**	la pasamos muy bien	***omission**	agradable	estaba un poco cansado/a	Mis amigas disfrutaron mucho *omission + addition	***omission**	***omission**	dinero extra

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Task 4 Learner Translations of Lexical Sociolinguistic Variants. Responses 15 - 20 (of 20 total)											
#	cari	vamos de culo	ya hay choto a la vista	nos lo pasamos de puta madre	E : el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete	muy guay	estaba hecha mierda	se pusieron ciegas	ñaca-ñaca	chica	pasta
15	abuelitos ***omission**	recuperamos el rumbo	¿han podido instalar su nuevo televisor sin ayuda? ***omission + addition**	Disfrutamos mucho de la noche.	Y el sábado, después de completar mi tarea, ***omission + addition**	muy agradable	teníamos que entregar una tarea al día siguiente ***omission + addition**	***omission**	***omission**	Bueno abuelitos	pasta
16	abuela abuela	hay mucho que hacer aquí	¿Qué tal abuelo? ***omission + addition**	nos lo pasamos de MARAVILLA.	Y el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete	muy estupendo	quería ser responsable después de ayer, ***omission + addition**	mis amigos estaban siendo un poco irresponsables, ***omission + addition**	«ñaca-ñaca», de nueva tontería.	***omission**	pasta
17	Abuelo abu	no andamos muy bien.	¿hay alguna novedad? ***omission + addition**	nos lo pasamos de escándalo.	Y el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y a divertirse,	muy guay	estaba ya un poco destrozada	todas mis amigas se pusieron ciegas	surgió lo que tenía que surgir, un nuevo amor	***omission**	dinerito
18	abuela abuelita	estaba hecho de polvo, lo siento!	que estéis haciendo el último mientras? ***omission + addition**	lo pasamos muy bien	***omission**	***omission**	No me sentía muy bien desde la noche anterior,	así que decidí no beber. Mis amigos, en cambio, eran todo lo contrario	***omission**	abuelita	pasta
19	Abuelito Cari	estamos bastante ocupados	¿ya hay noticias emocionantes por tu lado@ ***omission + addition**	nos divertimos mucho	***omission**	muy agradable	me sentía un poco mal	mis amigas se emborrachaban	hubo un pequeño alboroto	***omission**	dinero
20	Tata Tata	estamos bien	hay muchos restaurantes bien? ***omission + addition**	Me lo pasé muy bien.	El Sábado mis amigos y yo fuemos a una cena temática de camisa blanca ***addition**	muy bello	estaba consado	***omission**	***omission**	Tata	pasta

Key	Omission	Neutral	Colloquial	Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Error

Appendix D: Focus Group Question Guide

Notes

- Ensure they have all signed informed consent form - remind them it will be recorded
- Thank them for time and participation
- Explain focus group:
    - Informal conversation
    - Less than an hour
    - Phones off please
    - This is a chat about the translation tasks not the module/DCU in general
    - I have some topics I'd like to cover but the goal is to hear your opinions so feel free to bring up anything that interests you or stands out
    - I'd love to hear from everyone throughout the chat, it's ok to build on what others say or present a different opinion
    - Have a copy of the tasks as reminder
    - Positive and negative opinions welcome - it's all constructive
    - Logistics - where possible try to not talk over each other for purpose of recording
- Prompts:
    - How?
    - Why?
    - In what ways?
    - Can you give an example?

	Guiding Questions	Follow Up Questions
Opening	Tell us your name, how long you've been studying Spanish for and how comfortable you feel using Spanish.	
Intro	What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think of slang?	– What do you like/dislike about it? – Do you use it? Who with?
Transition	Why do you think people use slang and informal language?	– How do you feel when people use slang/informal language with you? – Why would you choose to use slang/informal language? – Why would you choose to avoid slang/informal language?
Key	How do you feel about using slang and informal language in Spanish?	– Who do you use it with (if at all)? – Where did you learn it? – What are the most challenging things about using it? – How important is it to you to learn it?
	Do you feel that being able to use Spanish slang and informal language has an impact on your identity in the FL? How?	– Does your knowledge of slang and informal language impact your ability to express yourself in Spanish? – Do you feel like yourself when you communicate in Spanish? In what ways?

	What did you think about using translation exercises to look at slang and informal language?	– Was it useful? In what ways?
		– What was the most challenging thing about the translation activities implemented in this module?
		– Which was the most enjoyable translation activity implemented in this module?
		– Which was the least enjoyable translation activity implemented in this module?
		– Do you think that there was anything particularly useful about using translation activities vs other types of activities that you normally use when learning Spanish?
		  o E.g. reading comprehension on one of the dialogues
		  o Listening comprehension with one of the video clips
		  o Writing your own letter
		– Had you ever worked with slang while learning Spanish? If so, where (school, Y1, Y2, summer course, exchange, etc) and in which way?
		– Did you feel like the in-class discussion before each activity helped you to carry out the translation activity or better understand the slang or informal language? How?
		– Did you feel like the reflection question helped you to better understand slang or informal language? How?

	Did your beliefs about and attitudes towards slang and informal language use change over the semester? If so, how?	– How do you feel about slang and informal language now compared to the start of the semester? – How did the activities impact your beliefs about slang and informal language? If at all. – Did this change in beliefs happen in relation to English or Spanish or both?
Ending	What advice would you give about teaching slang and informal language through translation activities in this module?	– Would you recommend keeping these activities in the module? Why (not)? – Are there any changes that you would make to the activities?

	I'd like you to help evaluate the translation activities and to help me improve how slang and informal language is taught in the classroom. What have we missed? Is there anything that we should have talked about but haven't?	

Appendix E: Enrichment Programme

E.1 Introductory Session

1. Análisis textual

Fragmento

All of a sudden, Sorcha's like, "Is Fionn there with you?" I turn to the goys, roysh, and I'm like, "What's the story with Fionn and Jayne?". JP's like, "They're going out together." Which is, like, news to me, because I've been seeing Jayne with a y for the past four weeks, roysh, and she asked me to keep it quiet while she tried to, like, patch things up with Sorcha. What a total bitch.

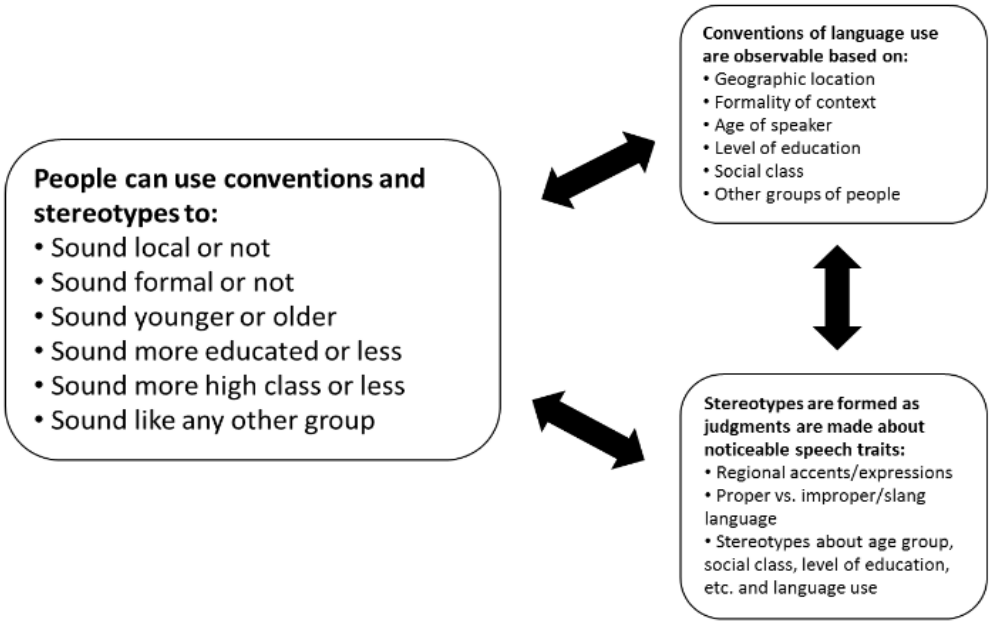
Preguntas de discusión

Lee el fragmento arriba y responde a las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Qué información puedes adivinar sobre las personas en este fragmento según como hablan? Usa las preguntas abajo para responder:
    - ¿Cuántos años tienen?
    - ¿De dónde son?
    - ¿Cuál es su clase social?
2. ¿Es una interacción formal o informal? ¿Cómo sabes?
3. ¿Cómo son estas personas? ¿Qué palabras utilizarías para describirlas? (en inglés o en español)
4. ¿Cómo dedujiste toda esta información basada en el texto?
5. Reescribe el texto para que sea neutro fonéticamente. ¿Tiene el mismo efecto?

2. Lengua y uso

Orders of Indexicality (van Compernolle, 2012, p.66)



Preguntas de discusión

1. ¿Qué piensas que tu manera de hablar dice sobre ti?
2. ¿Hay ciertas palabras o expresiones que usas que pueden indicar tu edad o de dónde eres? ¿Cuáles son?
3. ¿Usas estas palabras/expresiones independientemente de con quién hablas o de qué hablas?
4. ¿A veces cambia tu estilo de hablar? ¿Cómo? ¿Cuándo? ¿Lo haces a propósito o cambia naturalmente?
5. ¿Puedes pensar en algunos ejemplos de cómo la gente usa convenciones y estereotipos para sonar de una manera determinada o transmitir una imagen determinada?

3. La variación lingüística

Aquí tienes una presentación sobre la variación lingüística en que vamos a trabajar.

E.2 Task 1 – The Wolf of Wall Street

Transcripción

A: Who the fuck has the god damn gall to call this house on a Tuesday night? God damn it!

B: You're gonna miss it!

A: Oh please, tell me something I don't know, I wait aaaallll week for the fucking *Equalizer** and they have the fucking…

A: (Answers phone) Hello? Jean? How are you Jean? Right-oh Jean, that'd be great! Cheerio!

A: (Hangs up) Fucking halfwit!

B: You missed it!

A: Damn it!! Alright tell me, what happened?

**The Equalizer = a TV show*

Preguntas de discusión

1) Lee el fragmento arriba y decide quiénes son los interlocutores (p.ej. edad/género/relación entre ellos). Explica tus respuestas.
2) Relee el texto y anota las expresiones coloquiales, informales o vulgares.
3) Ve el clip y anota si hay más expresiones coloquiales, informales o vulgares.
4) ¿Por qué la persona A usa lengua vulgar en este fragmento?
5) ¿A veces se usan insultos y lengua vulgar en un sentido positivo? ¿Cómo? ¿Con quién? Da unos ejemplos en inglés.

Trabajo en casa

Translation Task

Rewrite the transcription in English to provide a PG version of the conversation. *
(PG = parental guidance/suitable for children aged 8+)

Your answer

Provide a translation/translations for the word *fuck* in Spanish. *

Your answer

Who the fuck *

Your answer

The fucking (TV) show *

Your answer

Fucking halfwit *

Your answer

The match was fucking brilliant *

Your answer

Fuck yeah *

Your answer

Holy fuck *

Your answer

E.3 Task 2 – Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento

Fragmento

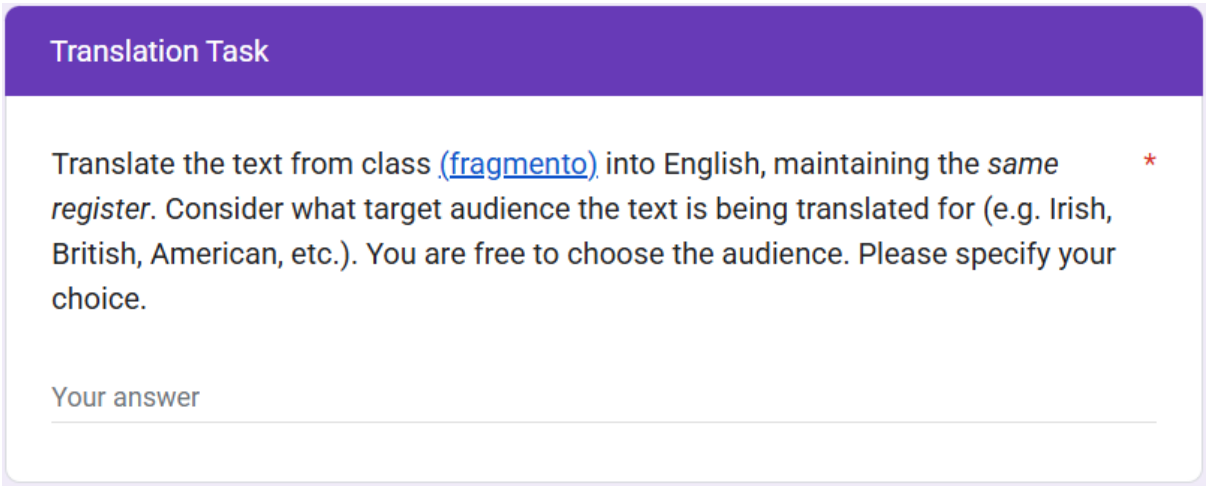
- ((...)) ¿Qué te pasa? Estás raro.
- No estoy raro, estoy jodido
- A ver, cuéntame, hijo mío.
- Pues nada, mi mujer, que dice que se ha ido de casa, que se quiere separar.
- Ya será menos.
- Que no. Que es en serio.
- ¿Y por qué?
- Yo qué sé por qué. Pues porque las tías sois la pera. Se estaba siempre quejando de que me paso todo el día y parte de la noche trabajando y no le hago caso, no la saco, y cuando estoy en casa, dice que soy un muermo y que no la hablo.
- Eso me suena. ¿Trabaja?
- Claro, es enfermera. Pero ella ya sabe cómo es el trabajo de fotógrafo, es un trabajo *full-time*.
- Pero podías arreglártelas para estar con ella y compaginar horarios, ¿no?
- Pues la verdad es que no lo sé. Desde hace unos meses salgo con una tía, tú la conoces porque trabaja en Radio Nacional, una chiquilla joven y eso.
- Pero tú lo que eres es un cabrón, y perdona.
- No, oye, que no es lo que te imaginas.
- ¿No es lo que imagino? Pues ya me contarás.
- Pero si mi mujer no sabe nada de este asunto y, además, no es el primero.
- A lo mejor es que tu mujer está hasta el gorro de que le pongas los cuernos. Tú crees que ella no se entera, pero lo sabe perfectamente y lo que no quiere son escenas ni follones.
- Pero irse de casa, así....
- ¿Y cómo quieres que se vaya, tío? ¿Tirándote una olla de agua hirviendo encima o qué?
- No me entiendes. Una mujer no puede abandonar a su marido y largarse de casa así como así. Verás mi madre cómo se va a poner, me echará la culpa a mí. Y además me deja así, tirado; ahí te pudras.

(Carmen Rico Godoy, en «Las tías sois la pera, dicen los cebollos*», Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento,* Madrid, pp. 75-76)

Preguntas de discusión

1. ¿Quiénes son los interlocutores en este fragmento (p. ej. edad/género/relación entre ellos) y de qué hablan?
2. ¿Qué registro se usa? Explica tu respuesta.
3. Relee el texto y anota lo siguiente:
    - Palabras o expresiones coloquiales, informales o vulgares
    - Referencias culturales
    - Palabras o expresiones que son difíciles de entender
4. ¿Cómo traducirías las siguientes palabras/expresiones al inglés?
    - Ya será menos
    - Un cabrón
    - Largarse
    - Ahí te pudras
5. ¿Tus respuestas a la pregunta 4 pertenecen a una variedad específica del inglés? (P. ej. Irlandés, británico, o americano)

Trabajo en casa



E.4 Task 3 - Élite

Transcripción

N: Míralo. Si parece un ministro. Hermanito. Hermaniitooo. [rie]

N: Madre mía, irá bien en Pijolandia, ¿no?

S: Sí.

N: Que no me entere yo que me lío a tortas con quien haga falta.

S: Pero ¿qué haces aquí, tío?

N: ¿Qué pasa? ¿No te hace ni puta gracia verme?

S: Sí, pero ¿te han soltado ya?

N: No, sigo allí, no te jode. Anda una cervecita.

M: Pilla.

M: Joder. Qué bien esto, ¿eh? Volvemos a estar los tres juntos.

N: Esta noche la familia sale.

S: Esta noche no puedo.

N: Esta noche tú puedes.

S: Esta noche trabajo, Nano.

N: Dices que te has puesto malo y ya está.

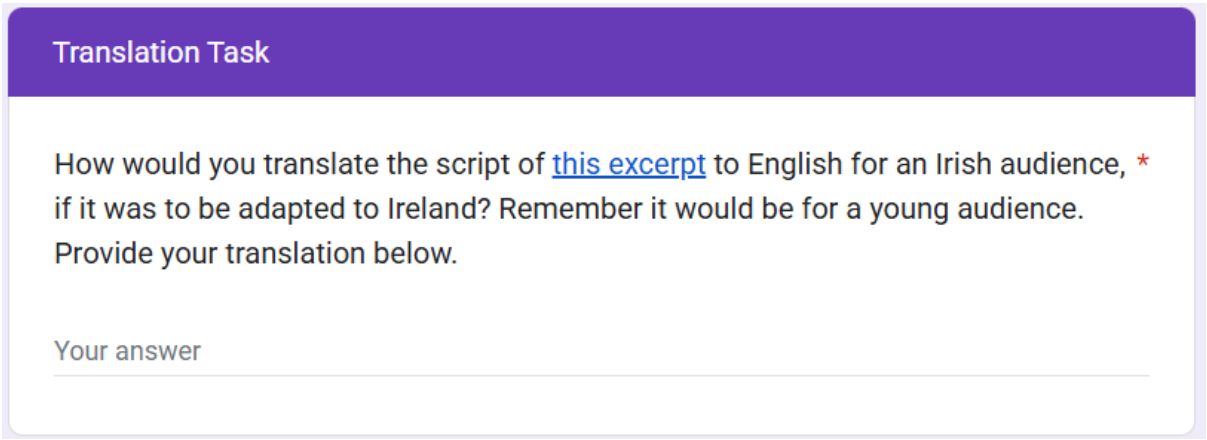
S: ¿Y si me pillan?, ¿Qué? Es el trabajo que tenemos desde que te largaste.

N: ¿Así empezamos? Samu, yo no me largué. A mí me largaron.

Preguntas de discusión

1. Lee este fragmento e intenta adivinar quiénes son los interlocutores (p. ej. edad/género/relación entre ellos). Después, ve el clip y comprueba tus respuestas.
2. Relee el fragmento y anota lo siguiente:
    - Palabras o expresiones coloquiales, informales o vulgares
    - Referencias culturales
    - Palabras o expresiones que son difíciles de entender
3. ¿A qué se refiere la palabra *Pijolandia*? ¿Es una palabra estándar en español? ¿Cómo se forma esta palabra? ¿Existe la misma estrategia en inglés?
4. ¿Cómo traducirías las siguientes palabras/expresiones al inglés?
    - *liarse a tortas*
    - *hacer ni puta gracia*
    - *no te jode*
    - *tío*
5. Copia la tabla abajo y coloca los términos de la pregunta 4 según su grado de (in)formalidad.
6. Encuentra sinónimos o alternativos (en español) para estos términos, incluso alternativos más o menos informales. Agrégalas a la tabla también.

Trabajo en casa



E.5 Task 4 – La carta

10-XII-95

Ciudad

¡Hola Cari! ¿Qué tal?

Lo primero que quiero hacer es pedirte perdón por tardar tanto en escribirte, pero por aquí vamos de culo.

Bueno pasemos a lo que interesa. Me alegro de que te vaya todo tan bien y de que te lo estés pasando tan bien, pero, ¿ya hay choto a la vista? Bueno pues escríbeme y me lo cuentas.

Por aquí estamos como siempre, yendo a clase, cogiendo apuntes, leyendo, estudiando, etc. Pero nada en especial.

Este fin de semana ha estado bastante bien, primero el viernes nos fuimos de cena de filología, fuimos al Barrio de Pepi a cenar y bueno entre copa y copa acabamos todos muy mal, unas llorando, otros liados (yo como siempre no), otras durmiendo en el coche etc. La verdad es que estuvo muy bien, nos lo pasamos de PUTA MADRE.

Y el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete, nos fuimos mis amigas y yo de cena con un amigo, pagaba él porque era su cumpleaños, nos fuimos a cenar a un sitio muy guay, pero yo no podía beber porque estaba ya un poco hecha mierda del día anterior, así que todas mis amigas se pusieron ciegas, mientras tanto, yo pues intentaba que no hicieran una barbaridad, pero en un momento de despiste se fue una con uno y «ñaca-ñaca», de nuevo lío.

Bueno chica como ves todo sigue su curso normal, yo sigo sin tener novio y esas cosas, pero bien. Estoy dando clases particulares a dos niños, a uno le doy los miércoles y jueves y al otro los sábados por la tarde. Así que gano un poquito de pasta.

Bueno Cari, estoy en clase de Renacimiento y el profe no para de mirar, así que ya te contestaré, ¿vale?

Hasta pronto, un beso y un abrazo

FIRMA

(P.D. Nos vemos pronto ¿eh?)

Source: Briz, A. 2002 *El español coloquial en la clase de E/LE. Un recorrido a través de los textos.* Madrid: SGEL. pp 25-26

Preguntas de discusión

1. ¿Quiénes son los interlocutores en este texto (p. ej. edad/género/relación entre ellos) y de qué hablan?
2. ¿Qué registro se usa? Explica tu respuesta.
3. Relee el texto y anota lo siguiente:
    - Palabras o expresiones coloquiales, informales o vulgares
    - Referencias culturales
    - Palabras o expresiones que son difíciles de entender
4. ¿Cómo traducirías las siguientes expresiones al inglés, manteniendo un registro similar?
    - *Vamos de culo*
    - *Choto*
    - *Acabamos todos muy mal, unas llorando, otros liados…*
    - *Lo pasamos de puta madre*
    - *Y el sábado, sabadete, camisa blanca y polvete…*
    - *(yo) estaba ya un poco hecha mierda*
    - *Todas mis amigas se pusieron ciegas*
    - *Se fue una con uno y <<ñaca-ñaca>>, de nuevo lío*
    - *pasta*
5. ¿Cuál de estos términos traducidos utilizarías/no utilizarías con tus padres y/o tus abuelos? ¿Por qué? Compara tus respuestas con un compañero: ¿hay ciertos términos sobre los cuales tenéis respuestas distintas?

Trabajo en casa