Promoting self-esteem, motivation and creativity through collaborative, pluri-lingual story translations

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I discuss how a collaborative and creative approach to Foreign Language Teaching can improve self-esteem, motivation and academic attainment in a multi-cultural school community in East London. The research intervention drew inspiration from the learning context, as well as the Storyline method and experience of collaborative translation. It was designed in response to low self-esteem and motivation among Y7 language learners and the school community following COVID-19 lockdowns, and was planned, delivered and analysed over a period of two-and-a-half months. Research findings indicate that the co-creation of new semi-structured social contexts for language learning, reflection and creativity motivates learners, "community collaborators" and teachers. By providing the necessary resource and feedback, participants collaboratively developed original multi-lingual story translations. This approach not only promoted the linguistic creativity of prior higher-attaining students, but also improved the translation skills of middle and lower attainers. Furthermore, it fostered a collaborative and dialogic culture, enhancing the self-esteem necessary for *all* learners to progress.

Keywords: Collaboration, Creativity, Community, Motivation, Self-esteem, Pluri-lingualism, Storyline, MFL, Language, Learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Overarching themes of Donne's 400 year-old *"No man is an island"* resonate across societies and school communities today. As Donne reminds us "we are all part of the main […] involved in mankind", community responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent research have emphasised the significance of engaged communities in promoting societal well-being (Bodas et. al, 2022). This is crucial for effective learning and national progress. In order to equip young individuals with the necessary "knowledge, skills and qualifications" to "contribute to economic growth", as prescribed by the UK Department for Education (2023), community engagement in education is vital. As educators, we can incorporate community collaboration and valorisation of community resources into our subject curricula design. In this research, I argue that a structured, creative and collaborative approach to language learning, co-developed with learners and "community collaborators", cultivates feelings of success and connectedness. This is essential for motivation, self-esteem, creativity and progress, both at an individual level and community-wide.

The "school community" is defined, in this article by teachers and former students, as "all the different families who live around the school, people who help the school to function and its service users". Located in Tower Hamlets, a multi-cultural area of East-Central London, the school community reflects the borough's long history of migration, most notably from Bangladesh (Tower Hamlets' Partnership, 2018). High levels of intersectional poverty, inequality and reported distrust in government are also characteristic of both the school community and borough. Institute for Community Studies UK (2021) research indicates that empowering influential community members and organisations is crucial for effective collaboration with residents of Tower Hamlets. Therefore, educational approaches must be carefully co-designed to nurture the intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional and social parts of each learner, including self-esteem, motivation and relationships (Mahmoudi et al, 2011). Such holistic development ultimately contributes to the well-being of individuals, their community and nation.

The school at the heart of this particular community is a single-sex academy for students aged 11-18 *(*Appendix I*)*. In 2020-2021, 90% of students identified as "Bangladeshi", one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities in England. Yet, since 2013, female Bangladeshi students have academically outperformed their White British counterparts (Strand, 2015) and in 2019, the school exceeded the English state-funded schools' national average (Gov UK). Therefore, Bangladeshi ethnicity and heritage in the UK today present as assets to be celebrated in the MFL classroom. In 2021, the school had the largest percentage of students (94%) studying languages (French/Spanish/Bengali) at GCSE in the area, far more than the national average (44%). Given that 73.2% students speak a language other than English at home (>90% Bengali or Bengali Sylheti), there exists a clear opportunity to embrace non-dominant capital in the classroom. By harnessing cognitive benefits of pluri-lingualism, such as creativity and problem-solving (Lüdi, 2021), we can counteract negative impacts of the dual experience of bilingualism and poverty during early years (Cobb-Clark et al., 2021). This includes delayed linguistic development and propensity to develop social and emotional problems like low self-esteem. Research participants describe communication

barriers and emotional rifts seen within families in this community, where *"parents' emotional language is Sylheti and girls' is English."* (Appendix II/III). With approximately 2 million students speaking over 360 first languages (Gov UK, 2022) enrolled in UK state schools, and facing growing socio-economic challenges, educators must collaborate with communities to maximise the social and emotional learning benefits of pluri-lingualism. Doing so could enable "learning gains of +4 months over the course of the year" and ultimately "improve children's outcomes" (EEF,2019).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Power, identity and creativity

The concept of 'Power' in pedagogical relationships has long-fascinated philosophers. Foucault (1987), Chomsky (2003), Freire (1968), Hooks (1994) and Corbett (2001), among others, have engaged in debate surrounding minority power domination, the liberation of learners from societal shackles and the complex interplay between community, institution and 'self'. Each advocates for collective self-actualisation (Wiliam,2006), where *all* can realise their potential and pursue continuous growth, as per Maslow's Hierarchy (1954). Yet, learners and community members with valuable experience and expertise of contexts relevant to curricula, continue to be absent in design processes (Sbaiti et al, 2021). As per Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) principles, engaging such individuals and those with additional learning needs and protected characteristics in learning and research design (Hazell, 2020), can effectively eliminate power disparities (Belone et al, 2016). In this specific case, it disrupts existing dynamics, whereby Educator-researchers possess "expert power" (French & Raven,1959), and promotes the self-worth and creative potential of the community, while fostering truly inclusive language learning experiences.

Self-esteem and personal identity are key intrinsic motivations in young people's choice to learn languages post-age 14 in England. Language class is often the first time where, through creative writing, learners can explore their identity while developing as linguists (Ludtke, 2020). To promote life-long language learning in today's plurilingual classrooms, we must co-design creative experiences which celebrate different language varieties and their users (Nee et al., 2021). As such, we invest in learners' identities, intrinsic motivation (Brophy, 2013) and self-esteem. Yet, given the fluid nature of identity and motivation (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009), particularly in the age of migration and internet communication (Kramsch, 2009), opportunities for creativity must be regular and incorporate structured reflection.

2.2. Collaboration, motivation and the teacher

There is "no single way of achieving a high-quality language education" (Conlon, 2022). However, a truly motivating, *inclusive* and *progressive* languages education necessitates fostering creativity, collaboration and emotional engagement with second and third language cultures (Graham et al., 2022; Porter et al, 2022), while responding to individual needs (Wei et al, 2022; Dörnyei,2020). Adaptive teaching techniques, such as shared success criteria, strategic questioning and multi-perspective peer dialogue (Guo et al, 2022), with structured opportunities for reflection, foster learner motivation. Yet, this relies on mutual trust (Kucharska, 2017) and a collaborative learning

culture, where all actors work together as per Freire's concept of "critical co-investigators" (1968). Gayton (2018) highlights the Teacher's key role in learner development and motivation; creating a safe community for dialogic exchanges and understanding progress. If we are to facilitate collaboration, motivation, creativity and progress as educators, before investing in knowing individual learners, it is imperative that we also know and continually invest in ourselves.

2.3. Working with Storyline

Storyline is a creative, learner-centred approach to teaching and learning, founded on Vygotskian theory and pioneered by Bell, Harness and Rendell in the late 1960s. It is a holistic and multi-skill approach in which no one skill is taught discreetly (Brandford, 2007), with multiple cross-curricular benefits. Benefits include increased learner autonomy (Little, 2007) and ownership (Harkness, 2007). This is achieved through "structured freedom" (Kocher, 1999), allowing learners to utilise personal experiences to create characters and narratives, while internalising feelings and emotions. The storyline provides a meaningful context, supporting learners' consolidation and recall of subject knowledge (Krenicky-Albert, 2004; Brandford, 2016). This process helps embed language into long term memory, which is necessary for linguistic creativity and attainment in foreign language learning. Learners' desire to impress with a final creative product (Kocher, 2007) increases their intrinsic motivation (Ushioda, 2007, 2011). Simultaneously, metacognitive teaching practices (Bloom, 1956) promote their awareness of strengths and weaknesses as learners, writers, readers, editors and group members. Structured reflection, dialogue and creative co-design enable students to understand what and why they are learning and to identify cross-curricular links, necessary for Maslow's self-actualisation (Appendix IV) and holistic development.

The Storyline approach has been applied internationally to a range of disciplines and contexts, in unique formats to promote different outcomes. Examples include its application in French and German Language learning (Brandford, 2016), facilitating school transition (Creative Dialogues Project) integrating cognition and emotion (Ahlquist in Karlsen and Häggström, 2020) and enhancing digital skills (Romstad in Karlsen and Häggström, 2020). Inspired by innovative implementations of Storyline and community research findings, I fused Storyline with a collaborative and creative translation approach. This involved actively involving community members through a "community collaborator" partnering concept and integrating non-dominant languages into structured learning.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research and Analysis Approaches

This study uses a collaborative and evidence-based practitioner-enquiry approach. To maintain flexibility and avoid overly rigid cycles (Koshy, 2010), the approach is underpinned by three complementary models: Nunan's Action Research cycle; Boyd and White's (2017) ten steps for teacher-practitioner research; and Riel's (2019) model of collaborative action research (Fig.1). Riel's model depicts robust learner-researcher partnerships, actively discouraging reliance on one

party and valuing the inclusion of diverse perspectives. It also highlights the importance of continuous shared growth, aligning with a foundational pillar of the school's educational philosophy: "life-long learning". This commitment to continuous growth and partnership ensures that the research will enable flexibility to adapt to evolving needs and circumstances of both learners and researchers.

The systematic, cyclical structure of Nunan's framework similarly promotes regular reflection. It involves revisiting "reciprocally interacting variables" (Nimehchisalem, 2018), such as changeable needs and drivers of the community, "at a higher level each time", thus enhancing understanding (Koshy, 2010). Yet, regular reflections must be scaffolded to cultivate collaborative environments, characterised by supportive social learning cultures (Rogers,1983) and communities of practice (Vangrieken et.al,2017), necessary for motivation and progress. Furthermore, unlike Nunan's model, Boyd and White's illustrates collaboration alongside the management of ethical risks; crucial to consider when managing the fluidity, openness and unpredictability of research in school community contexts.

3.1.1. Figure 1: Collaborative action research model (Margaret Riel, 2019)
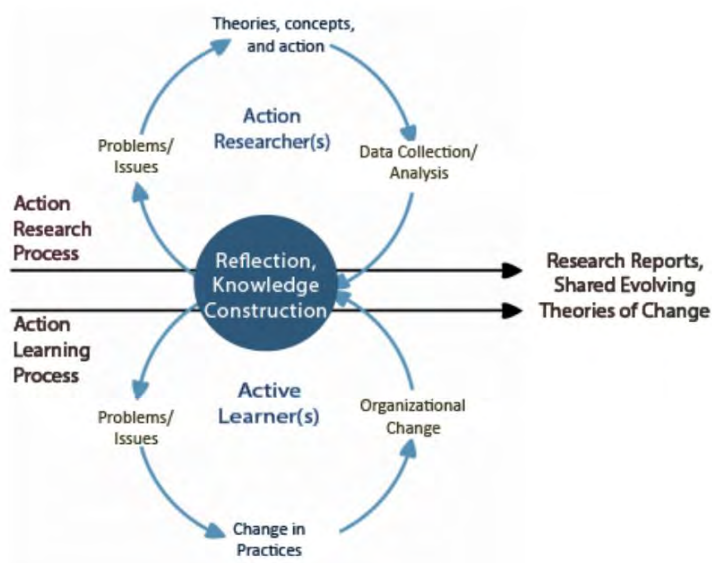
A mixed-method, triangulation approach to data collection prevents complex interdependent factors from being viewed in isolation and misinterpreted (Andrew & Finch, 2005), deepening one's understanding of the research problem (Cresswell, 2006). Qualitative data, including interview transcripts and recordings, questionnaire responses, student work and teacher observations (Appendix V), were collected to gain insight into learner and community perspectives on engagement, collaboration and self-esteem. This data provides valuable insight into learner and community understanding of "their own and others' behaviour and beliefs" (UK Research and

Innovation, 2022). Yet, thorough research outcomes necessitate communication between qualitative and quantitative data sets (Regnault, Wilnoss & Barbic, 2017). Therefore, I concurrently collected and analysed quantitative attainment, SEN and community data to enhance the quality of my findings.

To identify assets and barriers of the school community, I analysed the first mixed-method data set critically and thematically. This informed the intervention design and research question: "*To what extent does a collaborative and creative story translation approach promote students' self-esteem, motivation, linguistic creativity and attainment in MFL?*"

3.2. Tools

Data collection tools were chosen based on intended outcomes: understanding of students' and the community's language learning motivations; student self-esteem; and linguistic creativity and attainment. The semi-structured interview format facilitated opportunities for open dialogue between the participants and researchers.

3.3. Sampling

The sample class included 29 Y7 students, of whom 17.2% have a diagnosed Special Educational Need compared to the national average of 14.9% (DfE, 2019). 76% of the class speak English as an Additional Language compared to 13.7% of UK pupils with EAL (Bell Foundation, 2021) and around two thirds, well above the national average, are eligible for pupil premium funding (Sutton Trust, 2021). Although unreflective of the national average, the SEN and EAL statistics are indicative of the wider school community and inner-London comprehensive secondary schools (Gov UK, 2022). The students in the sample group were mixed ability, comprising 16 "MAPs" (middle-attaining pupils), determined by prior attainment data, and an almost equal number of students at either end of the attainment spectrum (6 HAPs and 7 LAPs). Despite 67% of state secondary schools in the UK offering up to 3 hours of Languages at KS3 (Collen, 2020), there is no public data stating the percentage of students taught in mixed-ability MFL groups. However, the sample would arguably be representative of mixed-ability classes in UK state secondary schools. Class data that includes learners from either end of the "attainment" spectrum, also provides a sense for the divergence in experiences and learning outcomes (Kimmons, 2022) with this approach.

3.4. Interviews

During the pre-intervention research stage, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the school community (Ex-students/teachers; Associate Head Teacher; Learning Support Team; School Liaison Officer; Head of Y7), provided a multi-perspective understanding of the community learning barriers and assets. Stakeholders were selected for their range of influence, expertise and experience, with some former students now teaching in the school for 30 years and others recent

recruits working in a pastoral support capacity. Questions, provided in advance, enabled interviewees to lead conversations and share noteworthy perceptions. Reflective space between meetings enabled participants to construct a narrative of their "biographically intelligible self" and then refine their "narratives, understandings and framings of experience" (Hughes, 2020). This allowed for better understanding of specific assets and barriers to learning within the community, while promoting participants' self-reflection necessary for their own self-esteem and motivation.

3.5. Questionnaires

Students were asked nine questions (Appendix VI) in questionnaires at the intervention start and end to track their language learning motivations and encourage self-reflection. To measure students' feelings during the intervention, I used the Blob Tree (Appendix VII), a psycho-analyst test to determine emotions in experiential learning and intelligence development contexts. At the start, middle and end of the intervention, students were asked *"How do you feel about Spanish?"*, prefaced with *"in terms of your learning experience and relationship with Spanish",* before circling a "character" on the Tree. This encouraged reflection and promoted emotional literacy, while reflecting students' intrinsic motivation for language learning. It also showed the impact of the intervention on their self-esteem in the language-learning context.

3.6. Observations

Observations of teacher and student behaviour changes over the intervention period complemented other data collection tools, providing another lens through which to assess the impact of the intervention. Behaviours observed included collaborative work between learners, critical questioning and learner participation resulting in increased engagement and thus motivation. However, given inherent learner differences (Covington, 1998), outward observable effects such as engagement may vary. Therefore, a range of measures, including multi-perspective dialogue (Guo et al, 2020) were employed to track learner motivation. In line with the collaborative nature of this research, observation results were shared and discussed with participants, allowing for structured reflective discussion, and feedback regarding both the educators' teaching and the learner experience. This enabled both myself and participants to see progress, thus affecting our self-esteem and motivation.

3.7. Reliability, validity and ethics

One issue often cited with mixed-method, teacher-practitioner research is bias. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) argue that not all variables in dynamically-changing social contexts can be controlled and measured precisely. However, "classroom studies often trade reduced internal validity, such as bias, for better external validity" (Rose & Johnson, 2020). As the learner sample group reflects the school student population, the results could be generalisable within such community. Yet, generalising findings beyond such context could compromise the external validity of the research.

Data is stored securely and privately. Furthermore, participants' anonymity is protected in the presentation of the study findings. Participants read a research information sheet and provided consent for their input to be included in the study (Appendix VIII). Students' voice recordings will not be shared publicly, even anonymously, without prior consent from students and families.

4. INTERVENTION

4.1. Planning and implementation overview

Informed by my understanding of the community, the intervention was conducted over five fifty-minute lessons with a "community collaborator" workshop between the end of April and beginning of May. Figure 3 illustrates each stage of the intervention planning and implementation process, encompassing pre- and post-intervention phases. This comprehensive framework enables effective involvement of community collaborators, facilitates an understanding of students' existing funds of knowledge, encourages cyclical feedback and supports progress reflections.

4.1.1. Figure 3: Intervention Timeline
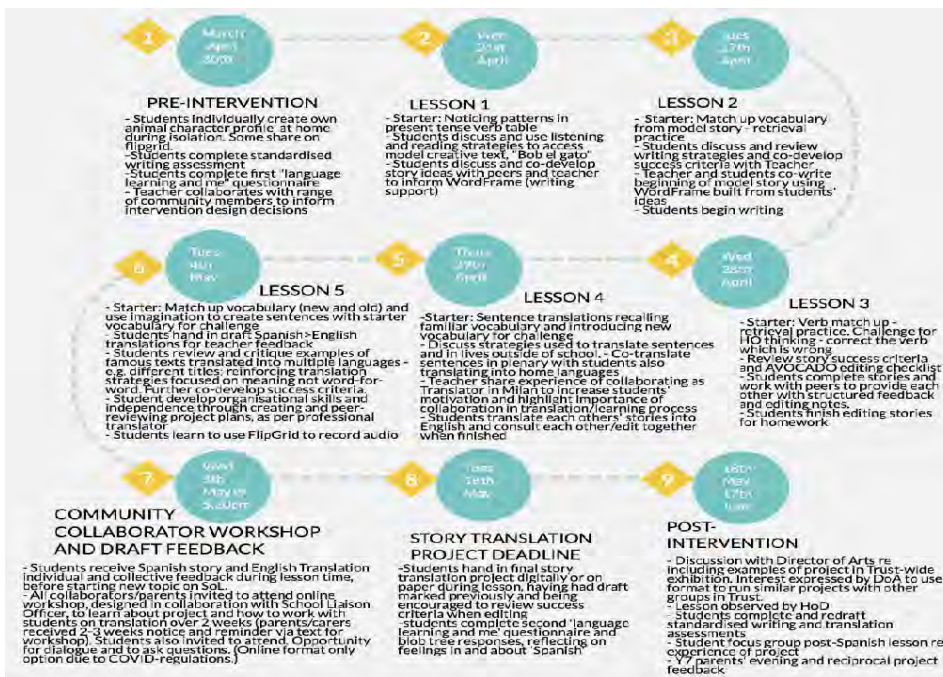
4.2. Community-centred design: minimising barriers and maximising assets

98% of the school students identify as "Muslim"; an asset of the school community based on relative academic success among young Muslim girls. Fostered partly by parental high expectations (Khattab & Modood, 2018), the school had the highest percentage of outgoing students in Education, Employment or Training in 2017 (98%) (Gov UK, 2017) in comparison to other local schools. However, despite such asset, interview findings suggest that frustration is growing in the

community due to increased living costs, leaving parents unable to support children to reach increasingly high expectations. With economic disadvantage and poverty comes technological disadvantage; overcrowding; unemployment; health issues - specifically mental health issues. The school works to fill the community "cultural capital" gap (concerning class and economic status), through partnerships with theatres and other professional organisations such as Bank of America and WOW (Women of the World). Consequently, students' attainment is reliant on community collaboration that maximises community assets.

The school also works to address self-esteem and confidence deficits among women in the community (Appendix IX). Acknowledging that "it takes a community to educate a child" (Ogden, 2014), the school began running creative community workshops in 2017 to cultivate relationships with families, to involve them in their girls' education and develop self-esteem among mothers. Prior to COVID, the school offered courses such as ESOL, Fruit Carving, Health and Social Care, Theatre Writing and Opera with the English National Opera. However, community enrichment activities stopped due to lockdown, with only two workshops continuing online and technological barriers preventing participation. The languages classroom must therefore build on schools' existing work by creating further opportunities for collaboration to promote self-esteem and confidence across the community.

During the peak of the COVID outbreak in the UK, grief also struck the community. With significant numbers of students and staff losing loved ones, mental health issues already prevalent in the community worsened. Where families did not share the same emotional language, the devastating effects of grief were exacerbated. In the sample group, several previously-highly motivated students struggled to engage in classwork, homework or peer relationships on returning to school (Appendix X). Cases of low self-esteem and friendship challenges were disproportionately high among Y7 students, having experienced a lack of transitional and consistent tutor support. Given that self-esteem is necessary for academic success (Prihadi and Chua, 2012), the languages classroom must provide creative and collaborative opportunities for students to form healthy relationships and build self-esteem. In this intervention, students collaborate on the planning, writing, editing and peer reviewing of stories against co-designed success criteria. (Fig.4)

4.2.1. Figure 4: Co-designed success criteria and planning support sheet
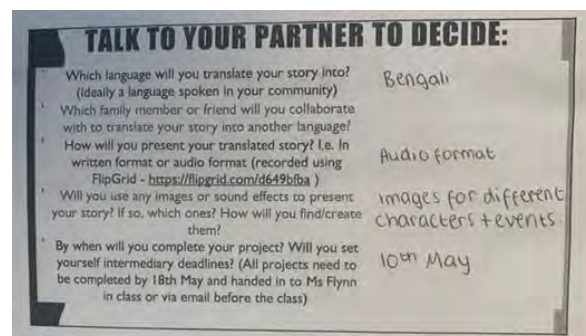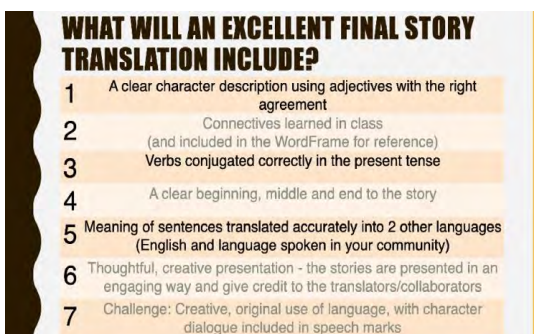
Having actively enjoyed Spanish pre-lockdown, students showed a striking dip in self-esteem, motivation and attainment, with a nervousness to communicate and aversion to independent thinking on returning to school post-lockdown. Assessment data also revealed a downward trend in attainment since lockdown, with clearest gaps evident among students struggling with independent learning, positive relationships and accessing technology. Re-establishing a safe, collaborative culture was therefore necessary to re-build students' self-esteem and social skills. In this intervention, a student volunteer led the class in brainstorming ideas (Fig.5) for a Spanish sentence builder, used to write their stories. By co-designing activities, students see the impact of collaboration and teachers are motivated by seeing students use language they chose.

4.2.2. Figure 5: Brainstormed ideas for Spanish Sentence Builder; a scaffolded resource for creative story writing
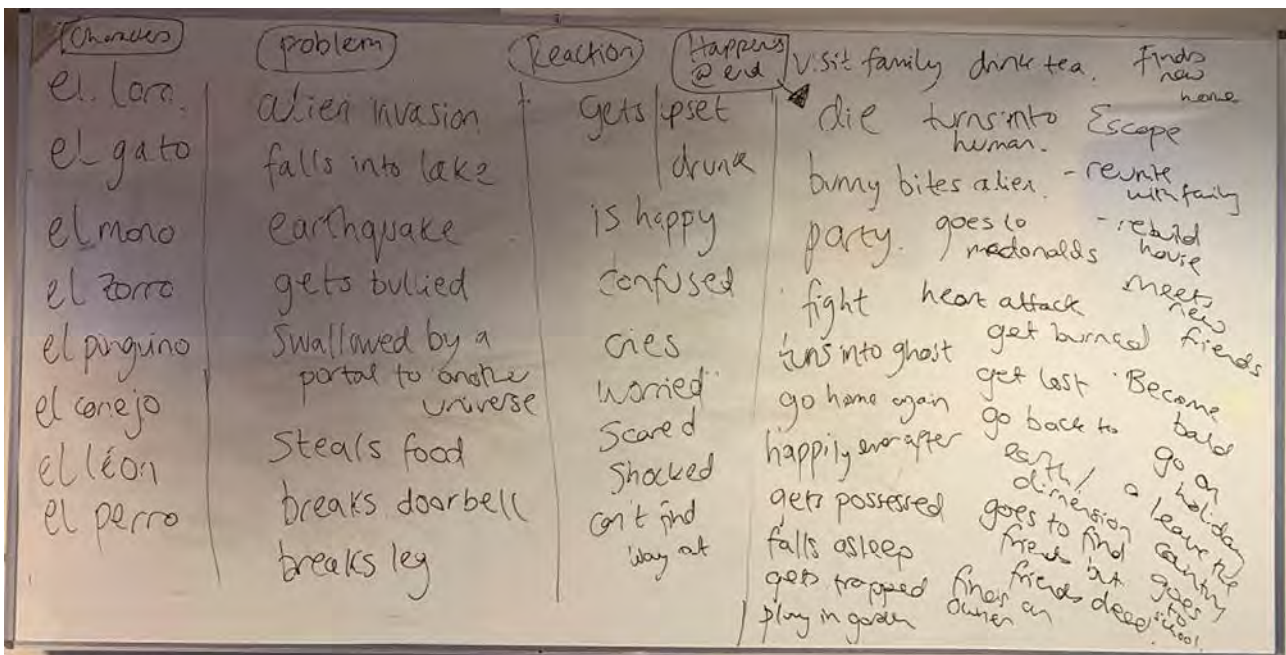
Y7 students' lack of motivation was not unique to Spanish, but evident throughout school life. Despite notable lethargy and low self-esteem, experience teaching Y7 Music showed me their potential for creativity. Thus drawing on students' creative assets was important to counteract residual lethargy, hindering students' learning. I aimed to address the lack of self-esteem and motivation in my Y7 Spanish class by highlighting the students' existing funds of linguistic knowledge and exploiting opportunities for creativity and collaboration. Additionally, I sought to break down the existing communication barrier in the wider community.

In this intervention, students identified a "community collaborator" who speaks a language other than English or Spanish, with whom they could work to translate their story into a third language of their choice. The "community collaborator" was invited to an online workshop with the School Liaison Officer and Bengali interpreter, where they learned about their roles in the project and

strategies to employ with their student to complete a written or audio third language translation. Collaborators also asked how they could continue learning languages with their student partner. This collaborative dynamic outside of the classroom provided students with another social space within which to practice and learn languages, thus increasing motivation of both students and collaborators.

To prepare the workshop content and map the collaborator engagement approach, I worked closely with the School Liaison Officer. She ensured all communications were written in "clear, simple English" (The Bell Foundation, 2020) and included greetings and key terms in major languages spoken within the community. Such approach aimed to maximise community engagement from the outset. Clear modelling and guided practice of the collaborative translation process, with opportunities to share knowledge and ask questions during the workshop, instilled confidence in collaborators to work effectively with their attached students. At a macro level, this also continued the school's existing work to build bridges and skills in the wider community.

Where a vast proportion of students (76%) are exposed to another language at home, most understand that language grammar differs and some are fully literate in the first language (Thompson, 2017). As many School students read the Qur'an but do not speak Arabic, eliciting from students reading strategies already used with their families was necessary to tailor required support. Encouraging students to apply these in the languages classroom, specifically to their reading and translation of the model story (Fig.8), promoted self-esteem and linguistic creativity.

4.2.3.   Figure 8: Model Story (Translation in Appendix XI)

Osa osa, mentirosa…

Hay un _gato se llama Bob._ Tiene 73 años y es bastante sabio. También es gordo y peludo. Es gordo porque es perezoso, pero es muy divertido. Es divertido porque tiene hábitos extraños. Se echa una siesta a las dos de la tarde todos los días. Ni antes ni después. A las 2 en punto. Tiene el pelo rojo, largo y suave y los ojos verdes. No lleva gafas. Dicen que los pelirrojos tienen diez vidas en lugar de nueve. No sé si es verdad.

Esta es la novena vida de Bob. En este momento, no tiene miedo. Bob está contento.

Es miércoles y es la hora de la siesta de Bob. Sin embargo, en este momento, entra su amiga, Rosa la osa (bear), en el piso y grita _"¡Hay un terremoto! ¡Tienes que salir!"_

Bob salta del sofá donde duerme y va hacia la puerta, pero no puede salir. No tiene miedo porque Rosa es una mentirosa. Pero, antes de que tenga tiempo de pensar… ¡hay un terremoto de verdad! La habitación se vuelve negra.

Dos minutos y dos segundos después, Bob se despierta. Pero Bob ya no es un gato, es un humano con una madre, cinco hermanas y todavía tiene el pelo rojo. Quizás sea la vida número diez.

Adaptive teaching is essential for motivation and attainment among learners with complex needs and competing priorities. By adopting an appropriate Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach for individual students at each stage, all students can develop their own creative texts, participate in collaborative peer translation work and learn with a "community collaborator". In this intervention, students used the Sentence Builder (Appendix XII) co-designed in the brainstorming session to guide their writing. Clear instructions with structured activities facilitated students' independent learning. However, for *all* to complete a multi-lingual story translation in the allotted time frame, additional 1-2-1 support is needed. When implemented successfully, this approach supports self-esteem, motivation and progress also of those with additional learning needs.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Self-esteem

Where effective community collaboration is present, story writing and translation projects increase students' self-esteem. All students who completed the story in three languages with collaborators who attended the online workshop, showed an increase in self-esteem (observed and self-proclaimed via Blob Tree results). They also showed an increase in writing and translation assessment scores (Appendix XIII). Despite absence of collaborator support, those who collaborated to complete the story and translation in 2 languages also showed increased self-esteem (Fig.9). Conversely, a decrease in self-esteem was observed among 3 students who did not complete the story translation, signaling the importance of understanding students' existing capabilities and language proficiency to define the degree of additional support required.

5.1.1. Figure 9: Impact of story translation completion and collaborator attendance at workshop on students' self-esteem.
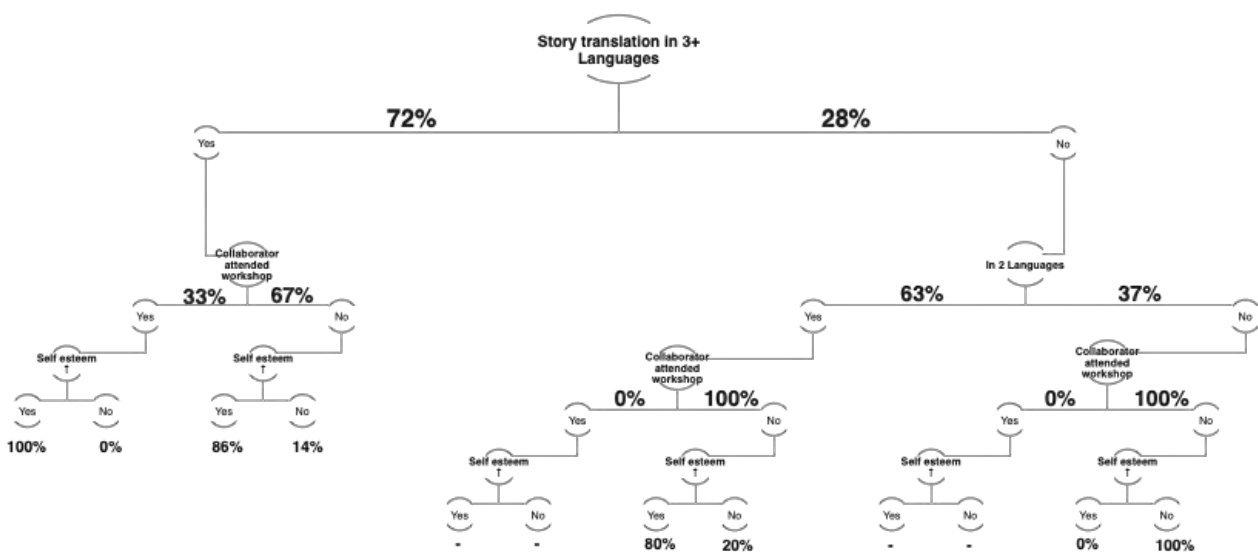
Students' written and recorded translations and Blob Tree responses showed a decrease in self-esteem among students receiving feedback pertaining to grammatical errors with familiar words. However, corrective feedback regarding unfamiliar vocabulary did not affect students' overall self-esteem. To increase learner self-esteem, the story translation approach is reliant on students receiving feedback and showing progress. Yet, students must become accustomed to the "process of learning, getting things wrong and understanding the way the target language works" (Conti, 2015), if they are to be linguistically creative.

Where students showed originality in visual and audiovisual presentation of story translations, students' self-esteem increased to the detriment of their linguistic accuracy and creativity. One HAP (Appendix XIV) did not veer away from using the WordFrame yet still made errors in Spanish and English story writing. Learners attending the focus group stated that more time to complete stories and translations in class would benefit their accuracy. The success of the creative approach therefore relies on sufficient time for structured reflection, feedback and editing.

5.2. Motivation

Motivation for learning languages more broadly increased. In post-intervention questionnaires, students cited greater motivation to learn Spanish and other modern languages including Arabic, Korean, Bengali, Japanese, Italian and Chinese, in comparison to pre-intervention questionnaires (Figure 11). As "language choice intersects with issues of symbolic power and identity" (Kramsch, 2009), such shift could reflect the recent national turn away from traditionally valorised European languages towards languages of other global powers with large cultural exports such as South Korea, China and Arab countries. The overt valorisation of other non-traditionally taught languages in the UK and cultivation of students' individual L2 identities could also have prompted such shift.

Post-intervention questionnaires also showed that students were increasingly motivated to learn languages to "communicate" and "to understand culture I'm interested in" (Fig.12). Consequently, the collaborative, creative story translation approach promotes intrinsic motivation for language learning.

5.2.1. Figure 12: Intervention questionnaire responses showing learner motivation
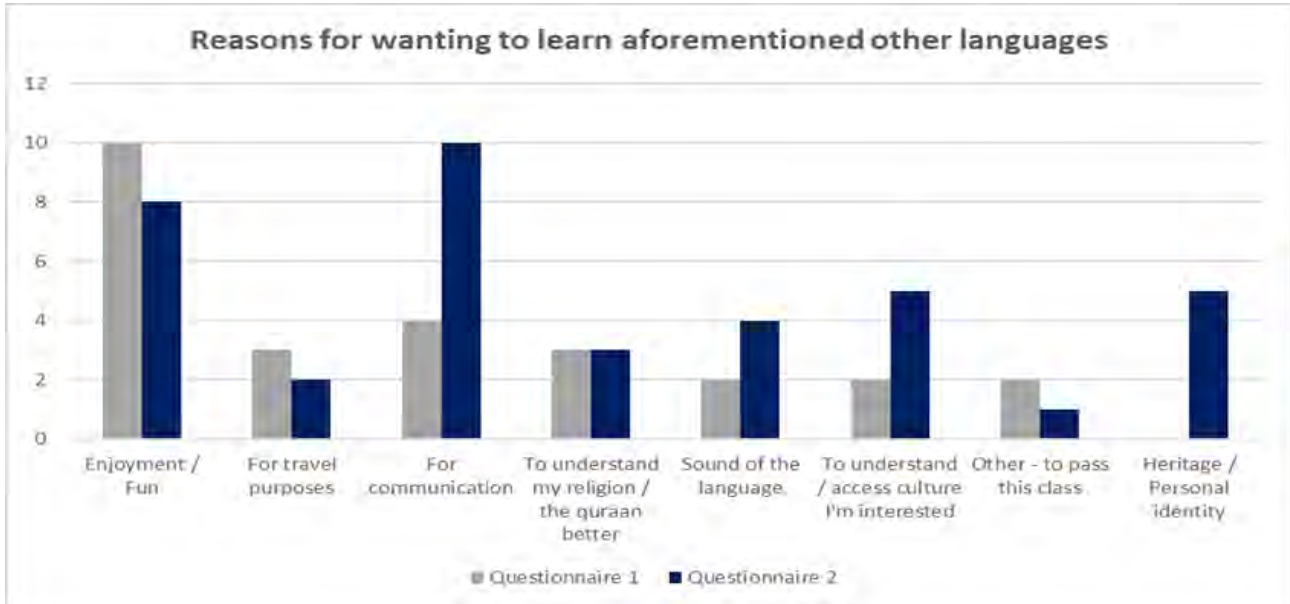
Co-creation of the WordFrame and clear success criteria resulted in increased observed and self-proclaimed motivation among learners. According to learners, the project provided an appropriate level of challenge where they could say what they wanted to say. Some also used *Wordreference* to find new vocabulary to increase the originality of their stories, thus displaying motivation and linguistic creativity (Appendix XV). Post-intervention, more students also shared answers verbally and completed extension tasks in lessons to acquire additional language, reflecting an increase in motivation. However, it is important to recognise that "language acquisition is a complex phenomenon influenced by many factors" (Cenoz, 2011). Moreover, considering that each individual possesses a unique learning profile and lived experience (Appendix XVI), it is not possible to attribute behavioural changes solely to one aspect of the intervention or the intervention as a whole. It is undeniable that students feeling more settled in school with peers had an impact on behaviour.

The most conclusive finding of the study is the impact of the collaborative dialogic approach on classroom culture, essential for building students' motivation and self-esteem. According to the Cambridge Faculty of Education (2021), opportunities for sustained, purposeful dialogue allow young people to "*elaborate and develop their thinking and make ideas meaningful in their own terms.*" On observing the group after the intervention, the Head of Spanish noted high quality collaborative classroom learning (Fig.13). This intervention has therefore contributed to the re-establishment of an effective, collaborative class culture, promoting student self-esteem, motivation and attainment.

5.2.2. Figure 13: Post-intervention observation sample by Head of Spanish

From Les-son Ob serva-tion evid-ence Form	PADDLE:	P1	P2	P3	A1	A2	D1	Dif1
	++/+/+-/-	+	+	++	+	+	++	NA

Key strengths
Use of mini-plenaries
Challenging activities
Use of extension activities
Use of modelling
Expanding cultural capital through explanation of language labs
Effective questioning through breaking down concepts (oficina del director)
Areas of excellence:
Positive classroom environment
Collaborative work between learners
Range of skills evidenced over time

5.3. Linguistic creativity

Linguistic creativity of students' story translations was measured using three norm-reference measures from the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults (ATTA); Fluency, Originality and Elaboration (Goff and Torrance, 2002). Results showed that HAPs are more confident to take risks and use language creatively, with some MAPs also displaying creative language use. The HAP's extract below displays fluency, originality and elaboration, with the underlined phrases original and adding detail:

"Es un día fantástico, en el jardín, hay un gato, se llama Freyja. Está con su mejor amiga, Mara el pingüino. Están jugando en paz. Freía tiene el pelo negro, liso y suave y los ojos fucsias, una cosa excepcional para un gato." (Appendix XV)

Without technology and online translator access, linguistic potential of some students was limited. However, where translation tools were available, we cannot rely on story data alone to show an accurate depiction of students' linguistic abilities and creativity. Including classroom writing and translation assessment results in the dataset provided a holistic picture of students' progress. One student produced creative and accurate story translations (Appendix XVII), but confused basic verbs (Appendix XVIII) in the assessment. Such comparison provided relevant AfL data, necessary for planning for progress.

5.4. Attainment in MFL

Owing to the carefully scaffolded, collaborative intervention design, all LAPs (including students with complex additional learning needs) made progress linguistically, evidenced by increased writing and translation assessment scores post-intervention (Fig.14). Challenging, co-designed success criteria left scope for creativity, enabling the highest attainers to also make progress, with all HAPs assessment scores increasing or continuing at 100% post-intervention. Of the 5 MAPs whose scores decreased post-intervention (Fig.14), none completed 2+ pluri-lingual translations or had community collaborators attending the workshop. This shows that effective community collaboration is key to progress for all MAPs. However, MAP and LAP translation assessments did evidence an increased ability to translate sentences based on meaning as opposed to word-for-word: an essential skill for multi-lingual communication.

5.4.1. Figure 14: Intervention scores
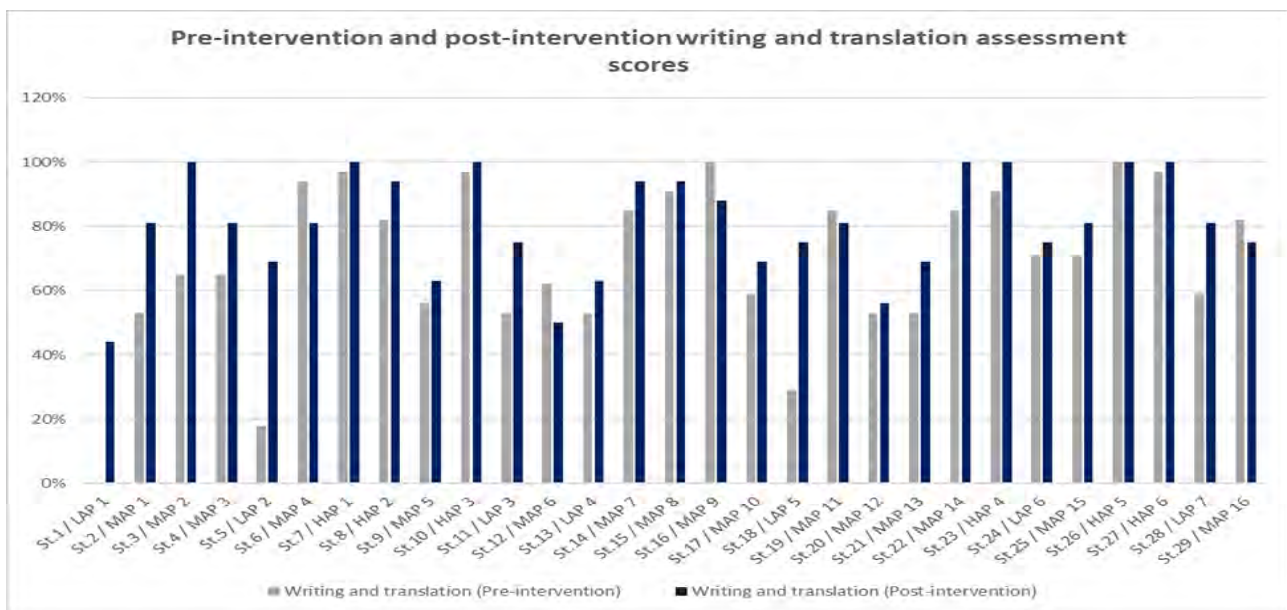
The intervention impact extended beyond the classroom. Three "community collaborators" expressed gratitude for their involvement, reporting that it had supported their own literacy in English, their child's in their home language and confidence to learn with their child. Younger family members had also used their daughters' stories to learn Spanish. Thus, the project, in part, contributed to addressing communication barriers in families and strengthening community relations, essential for language learning success.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The language learning space does not exist in isolation: it is subject to the same systems, policies and issues prevalent in the wider school community. As Corbett (2001) argues, we must understand the complex, interleaving dynamics of the community, the institution and the 'self', to establish a positive classroom climate that "feels respectful, inclusive and supportive of learning" (Hazell, 2020). Teachers must hone a delicate balance of flexibility and control to manage complex dynamics, while actively catering for individual difference and collaborating with members across the community to maximise available assets.

A collaborative and creative story translation approach, which valorises students' identities (Dörnyei, 2005) and builds on existing funds of knowledge (Bordieu, 1979), promotes learners' self-esteem, motivation, linguistic creativity and attainment. Yet, its success relies on effective community-wide collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978), structured reflection (Dewey, 1933) and adaptive teaching whereby all students can feel successful (Ushioda, 1996). Educators must resist social-constructivist or behavioural teaching approaches as a reactive response to classroom and broader education challenges. Instead, they should pursue a critical-constructivist and humanist learning philosophy underpinned by Corbett's pedagogy. This approach promotes respectful dialogue with community members and fosters collaboration necessary for progress in language learning. Today, being a teacher is not easy, especially in the area of foreign language teaching. However, it can be enjoyable and rewarding if teachers feel that they have a creative part to play as "designers of education" (Bell & Harkness, 2006), as is evident in this approach.

To enhance the validity of findings in future studies, five reflective questions (Appendix XIX) inspired by Roller's "Reflections on the Experience" questions (2014) can enable teachers to engage with their deep-seated feelings and identity as a teacher (Boyd, 2022). Scheduling "community collaborator" workshops outside of festive periods pertinent to the community, and increasing dual coding in collaborator session slides, would promote engagement in future iterations. This approach also presents an opportunity, missed here, to advance learners' racial literacy and critical thinking through the co-writing, and subsequent cross-curricular exploration, of original texts with members of the target language community. Stories modelled and co-written on different topics could raise collective awareness of global racialised hierarchical structures (Guinier, 2004, in Glowach et al, 2022) and promote curiosity regarding target language cultures.

Given the evolving global shift towards blended learning, one might explore a blended story translation approach, comparing its impact on students of different genders and linguistic backgrounds. Exploring how this approach impacts the creative abilities of "emerging bi-linguals", as well as pluri-linguals, would build on Hofweber and Graham's research (2017). Measuring the impact of creative story writing and translation projects on students with low literacy across languages and low independence levels would feed into current school-wide Literacy priorities. Such initiative would aim to promote students' cross-curricular learning and support overall attainment. Yet, my current research does not provide conclusive enough evidence to draw conclusions about such groups of students.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix I : Number of students per year (2020/2021) in the girls only school. Figures

Year	Total
Year 7	240
Year 8	239
Year 9	239
Year 10	209
Year 11	205
Year 12	198
Year 13	149
Year 14	15
Totals	1494

obtained from School Data Officer.