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The development and use of multilingual repertoires in bilingual classrooms: between policy and practice in the *Escola Andorrana*

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ABSTRACT

Multiple education systems coexist in Andorra, including the national *Escola Andorrana* (EA, Andorran school) that adopts a multilingual approach to teaching, with both Catalan and French serving as equal languages of instruction throughout primary education. In this article, we interview educators and administrators in the EA in order to discover how they engage their agency in the pursuit of developing learner multilingual repertoires. We then use the findings of these interviews to undertake a critical analysis of Andorran language-in-education policy. In our interviews, we witness tensions between rigid medium-of-instruction policy (that urges teachers to use one language in the classroom) and top-down directives that encourage fostering more flexible multilingual repertoires and metalinguistic awareness among learners. Teachers ultimately need to engage their agency in order to navigate this friction successfully. We find that an important aim of repertoire building is the compartmentalisation of languages in a way that prepares the child for life in Andorra and, as such, reinforces existing social hierarchies. Repertoire building, rather than a critical act of resistance that breaks down barriers between languages, is instead used to reify hegemonic structures.

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Introduction

Andorra is a tiny country, with only around 40 km of winding mountain roads separating its most distant settlements. In this small area live over 80,000 people, speaking a host of different languages in a situation of complex societal multilingualism. Despite this small population, multiple education systems coexist in Andorra, including the national *Escola Andorrana* (Andorran school, henceforth EA), which will be the focus of the present article. Throughout primary education, both Catalan and French are languages of instruction in the EA, with children having two teachers in a bilingual setting – one who delivers part of the curriculum through Catalan, and another who does so through French. In this article,

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we will examine how educators engage their own agency in order to set about developing learners' multilingual repertoires and metalinguistic awareness. How are children encouraged to view their linguistic competence holistically, and how can this help us to undertake a critical analysis of language-in-education policy?

In this article, we first provide the theoretical context, which lays out existing scholarship regarding multilingual repertoires and teacher agency. We then give an overview of the research context, focusing on language-in-education policy in Andorra, before presenting our research questions and methodological approach. After this, we discuss data from interviews undertaken with teachers and administrators in the EA, in order to ascertain how learner multilingual repertoires are developed. We then apply our interview findings to an analysis of relevant top-down language legislation in Andorra, before drawing some final conclusions.

Theoretical context: multilingual repertoires and teacher agency

The notion of multilingual repertoires can be traced back to the early work of John Gumperz (Gumperz 1964; Gumperz and Naim 1960), in which different varieties used by a speaker 'form a behavioural whole, regardless of grammatical distinctness, and must be considered constituent varieties of the same verbal repertoire' (Gumperz 1964, 140). More recent sociolinguistic studies, notably Blommaert (2010), have advocated for approaches to multilingualism that reject the treatment of languages as discrete and immobile, in favour of repertoire-based analyses that address 'mobile [linguistic] resources' (Blommaert 2010, 43). This moves away from ideas of the internal coherence of individual language systems, and foregrounds the multilingual individual as the locus of contact, more in line with original proposals by Weinreich (1953). Despite ideological and practical concerns which may present multilingualism as competence(s) in a set of discrete languages (e.g. medium-of-instruction choice is necessarily framed in terms of individual languages), Matras (2009) reminds us that multilingual repertoires are not internally organised by language. Instead, 'elements of the repertoire (word-forms, phonological rules, constructions, and so on) gradually become associated, through a process of linguistic socialisation, with a range of social activities, including factors such as sets of interlocutors, topics, and institutional settings' (Matras 2009, 4). Indeed, a bilingual or trilingual person is not merely a combination of two or three monolinguals, but rather a speaker with a repertoire composed of different languages, each with varying degrees of competence, determined by the person's individual life circumstances (Pascual Granell 2006, 21–22).

This article addresses the development of multilingual repertoires by focusing on teacher agency in the context of bilingual classrooms. In our chosen case study of Andorra, teachers enact multilingual medium-of-instruction (MOI) policies, chiefly favouring the use of Catalan and French. MOI policies can be motivated by a range of factors, including historical concerns, access to resources, political ideology, identity creation and the desire to increase educational outcomes (Walter and Benson 2012, 284–289). Multilingual MOI policies chiefly foster the 'use of two or more languages in education [with an aim of ensuring] multilingualism and multiliteracy' (Cenoz and Gorter 2015, 2). Since educators are actors who implement MOI policy, we wish to explore how teachers' practices and ideologies impact the development of the linguistic repertoires of young

children in a multilingual setting. All actors implicated in the application of (in our case, language-in-education) policies are endowed with agency (Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech 2021; Zhao and Baldauf 2012), which we understand as 'the state [that] enables individuals (and, to some, collectives) to make free or independent choices, to engage in autonomous actions, and to exercise judgement in the interests of others and oneself' (Campbell 2012, 183). As language policies are applied by different agents, they are subject to processes of reinterpretation and renegotiation,[1] and through their exercising of agency, teachers engage with this responsive quality of language-in-education policy. Indeed, educators are not just passive implementers of language policy, but rather can agentively (co-)create policies (Stritikus and García 2000) and even if this agency is somewhat constrained by top-down directives (Henderson 2017) in context-specific ways (Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson 2013), teachers still have a capacity for performative action (Lo Bianco 2010). A synthesis of existing scholarship (Heikkilä, Iiskala, and Mikkilä-Erdmann 2020; Jenkins 2020; Nguyen and Bui 2016; Robinson 2012; Vähäsantanen, Saarinen, and Eteläpelto 2009; Zacharias 2013) reveals that teacher agency can be manifested in at least four ways, namely *adoption*, *adaptation*, *transformation* and *resistance*. Straightforward adoption of education policies, or at least a degree of compliance with any top-down changes, may of course be observed, whether this is genuine or part of a more complex discursive strategy (Robinson 2012, 240). Teachers can work creatively to subtly 'adapt requirements by interpreting and re-shaping them into acceptable teaching practices' (Robinson 2012, 243). Taken further, by the ways in which teachers enact education policy, they can fulfil a transformative 'gatekeeper' role, noting that 'what is implemented at a lower level is often different from what is prescribed at a higher level' (Bamgbose 2004, 61) and that in response 'educational change depends on what teachers do and think' (Fullan 2007, 129). Teachers can also actively resist mandated educational policies as an 'act of commitment' reflective of their 'personal visions and critical inquiry into their own practice' (Nguyen and Bui 2016, 101).

How then can teacher agency be deployed to favour (or disfavour) the acquisition of pupils' multilingual repertoires? Generally speaking, policy agents in the field of education (including teachers) reproduce hegemonic power structures (Lewis and Moje 2003), and this typically takes the form of adoption of changes and compliance with policies that uphold the status quo (Robinson 2012). However, educators can also oppose top-down directives, with active resistance taking the form of advocacy if they believe they are acting in the benefit of their pupils.[2] This may occur in systems characterised by a strict separation of languages (Gómez, Freeman, and Freeman 2005), a strategy with which teachers are not necessarily in agreement. Indeed, in contrast to this clear division of MOIs in multilingual educational settings, much scholarship recommends a dynamic approach to the learning of bilingualism, placing emphasis on translanguaging pedagogies (García 2009; García and Wei 2014; Gort and Sembiante 2015; Otheguy, García, and Reid 2015) as a means for students to acquire multilingual repertoires (García, Ibarra Johnson, and Seltzer 2016; Palmer and Martínez 2013). One way in which educators can achieve this is through the creation of multilingual class spaces (Ricento and Hornberger 1996), where hybrid linguistic practices are not just tolerated, but encouraged as a tool for identifying connections between learners' different languages (Henderson 2017) – in other words, a space where the composite, flexible and mobile nature of repertoires can be fully explored and allowed to develop. Having presented how teacher agency regarding

the implementation of MOI policies can be employed in the promotion of multilingual competence framed in terms of flexible repertoires of mobile resources, we turn to the specific research context of the *Escola Andorrana*. What top-down language policies are enacted by teachers in this scenario, and how is this a product of the complex history and current demographic makeup of Andorra?

Research context: language-in-education policies in the *Escola Andorrana*

Andorra is a microstate of 478km^2, high in the Pyrenees mountains on the border of France and Spain. Its terrain historically rendered Andorra somewhat inaccessible, and the country finds itself between two territories where the major European languages of French and Spanish have long been in positions of hegemonic power. As a result, Catalan has remained Andorra's autochthonous language for centuries, while French and Spanish, as powerful neighbouring languages, also maintain a presence in the country. Language usage in Andorra changed over the last decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century as the country's population underwent an unprecedented boom, increasing 830% between 1960 and 2020, from just over 8,000 people to around 80,000 (Departament d'Estadística del Govern d'Andorra n.d.). Most of these new arrivals have come from Spain and Portugal, notably since the latter's accession to the European Single Market in 1986 (Sáez 2004, 256), consolidating the presence of Spanish in Andorra, as well as introducing Portuguese as a language of migration. This has led to Spanish becoming the 'default language' of social interactions in Andorra (Jiménez-Salcedo 2021a), despite the fact that Catalan is the country's sole official language, as enshrined in article 2.1 of the 1993 Constitution (Govern d'Andorra 1993). Indeed, while Andorra originated as a Catalan-speaking area of high mountain passes and valleys, 'Andorra has become thoroughly urban and cosmopolitan and, as a result, absolutely multilingual' (Jiménez-Salcedo 2021a: 141, our translation).

Despite its tiny size and limited population, Andorra offers its residents a choice of school systems to which to send their children, each with their own MOI policies. The French system was introduced in 1900 and consists of French-medium primary and secondary education, much as would be found throughout France, with the exception of the inclusion of compulsory weekly hours of *Formació Andorrana* (Andorran education) delivered through Catalan, in which children learn about the history, geography and culture of the country. The so-called 'Spanish system' is in fact made up of two separate sub-systems of confessional schools (introduced in 1882) and secular schools (introduced in 1930) that employ a combination of Spanish and Catalan as media of instruction (with religious institutions favouring greater use of Catalan), in addition to the aforementioned compulsory hours of *Formació Andorrana*. In the school year 2018/19, 32.52% of school-age children followed the French system, while 26.04% attended one of the various Spanish schools (Govern d'Andorra 2020, 15).

In this article, we focus on the national EA system, which in 2018/19 accounted for the remaining approximately 41% of pupils, or 4522 children (Govern d'Andorra 2020, 15). The first EA preschools were inaugurated in 1982, and the aims, objectives and guiding principles of the system have been laid out in a series of legislative texts and decrees, perhaps most importantly the *Llei de l'Escola Andorrana* (Law of the Andorran School, LEA) of 1989 and the *Llei d'Ordenament del Sistema Educatiu Andorrà* (Ordinance of the

Andorran Education System, LOSEA) of 2018. Broadly speaking, the EA adopts a multilingual approach to MOI, though Catalan is the main working language of the system, and as such, the default language in which all administrative work is conducted, including oral and written communications to children and their guardians (Jiménez-Salcedo 2021b, 12). The promotion and protection of Catalan is explicitly stated as central to the mission of the EA, with the LEA determining that the EA is to 'set as a priority goal that pupils reach an appropriate level and acquire rich, nuanced skills in written and spoken Catalan' (Govern d'Andorra 1989: article 3), while the LOSEA develops this by stating that the EA should 'ensure the accurate use of Catalan, the language of the country, in different communicative situations, through the knowledge of its different registers and levels of use' (Govern d'Andorra 2018: article 3). However, the thoroughly multilingual approach of the EA towards MOI choice is evident from an early age, where French is introduced as a vehicular and curricular language in the *Maternal B* stage, when children are four years old. Languages are then added gradually through the system, as detailed in Table 1.

French is used from a very young age as a MOI, as well as being studied as a subject in its own right, due its social, economic, cultural and historical importance as the language of a neighbouring power that still plays a central role in Andorran political affairs (Cairat 2006, 61). Moreover, French is the community language of a small but longstanding minority of speakers mostly located in the northern part of the country (around 6900 people or approximately 9% of the population, Govern d'Andorra 2019, 10), as well as people who have recently migrated to Andorra from French-speaking areas. This being said, French is a language with limited social presence in Andorra (Hawkey 2022, 380), not being frequently used in the major urban centres, and younger Andorrans identify more closely with Catalan and Spanish culture than with that of France (Jiménez-Salcedo 2021b, 13). It is in this context of favourable international prestige but limited local usage that the EA seeks to ensure a high degree of French language competence among its pupils.

The development of student multilingual repertoires appears to be a fundamental value of the EA, and is presented in the 2021 ordinance on languages and literatures in primary schooling within the EA, which states that 'languages are not learned one by one, but rather by means of a common linguistic grounding, so that when a student learns one [language], in order to learn it properly, s/he also needs to learn how it is connected with the other languages [with which it coexists]' (Govern d'Andorra 2021, 1, our

Table 1. Structure of the EA system with MOI and curricular languages (adapted from Jiménez-Salcedo 2021b, 15).

Stage	Pupil age	MOI	Curricular languages
Maternal A	3–4	Catalan	Catalan
Maternal B	4–6	Catalan, French	Catalan, French
1st stage, primary	6–8	Catalan, French	Catalan, French
2nd stage, primary	8–10	Catalan, French	Catalan, French, English
3rd stage, primary	10–12	Catalan, French	Catalan, French, English, Spanish
1st stage, secondary	12–14	Catalan, French, Spanish	Catalan, French, English, Spanish
2nd stage, secondary	14–16	Catalan, French, Spanish	Catalan, French, English, Spanish
Sixth form (*batxillerat*)	16–18	Catalan, French, Spanish	Catalan, English (obligatory). French, Spanish (optional).

translation). The related ordinance on secondary education similarly affirms that language learning 'is supported by the several languages that make up the multilingual repertoire of each student' and underscores the importance of recognising 'the multilingual and multicultural repertoires of pupils' (Govern d'Andorra n.d., 1–2, our translation). According to the 2015 ordinance on compulsory education in the EA, students should leave the system with a developed 'multilingual communicative competence', defined as 'the student's capacity to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions orally and in writing in different languages; and to participate in multilingual and intercultural communicative exchanges in an appropriate and creative way, in any situation of family, social, cultural or school life' (Govern d'Andorra 2015: annex 1, competence 2, our translation). The 1989 LEA further grounds this need for a complex linguistic repertoire in the socioeconomic reality of Andorra as a multilingual country, stating that in addition to Catalan, children need to acquire 'a good level of Spanish and French, since these are also languages of work and social interactions in Andorra' (Govern d'Andorra 1989: article 3). This being said, the different languages used in the EA are not placed on equal footing, with Catalan firmly at the top of the hierarchy as the working language of the system and the 'basic language of learning [in primary education], as the national language' (Govern d'Andorra 2021, 1, our translation; Jiménez-Salcedo 2025). In practical terms, multilingual competence is developed through strategies developed from CLIL approaches – specifically, TIL (*Tractament Integrat de Llengües* or Integrated Language Treatment) methods that integrate the learning objectives across all languages, and that favour cross-linguistic acquisition processes, so that the learner does not use any one language in isolation (Jiménez-Salcedo 2025). During the acquisition process, the learner thus has to understand 'what is common and what is different between [each language, so as to] employ resources from other languages to resolve communicative obstacles' (Govern d'Andorra 2021, 3). Indeed, the acquisition of multilingual competence in the EA is not just an abstract aim, but rather a necessity grounded in the specific sociocultural reality of Andorra as a space characterised by highly complex and dynamic societal multilingualism (Jiménez-Salcedo 2025).

Research questions and methods

Thus far, we have seen how language-in-education policies, such as those regarding the implementation of multilingual MOI in order to develop children's complex linguistic repertoires, are impacted by teacher agency. As potential co-creators of language policy, educators are instrumental in determining how multilingual policies play out in real life classrooms. We have presented an overview of top-down directives in the EA, highlighting guiding principles that underpin MOI choices and situating these in the societal multilingual context of Andorra. This theoretical and contextual background leads us to pose the following research questions. *How can we describe practices in the Escola Andorrana that allow for the development of multilingual learner repertoires?* And *how does this allow us to undertake a critical analysis of the relevant language policies and their applications?*

In order to better understand policies and practices in the EA, we undertook a series of semi-directed interviews in summer 2023.[3] We focused exclusively on primary education in the EA, since early years teaching is characterised by the somewhat idiosyncratic phenomenon of the presence of two teachers in the same classroom setting, one

delivering through Catalan, the other through French. We spoke with a range of educational practitioners, including Catalan-medium teachers, French-medium teachers and *caps d'estudis*, who fulfil a coordinating managerial role within each EA establishment.[4] There are eight primary schools in the EA network, spread across all major population centres of Andorra. For our interviews, we visited five of these centres and in each case, met with one Catalan-medium teacher, one French-medium teacher and one coordinating manager. Given the limited number of schools, in order to preserve participant anonymity, we have chosen the following pseudonyms to refer to the establishments: *Carlemany, Coprinceps, Canòlich, Conseller* and *Caboet*.[5] It should be noted that in one school (Caboet), the coordinating manager was also interviewed in the capacity of Catalan-medium teacher because this participant had recently undertaken both roles during their career, and due to limited teacher availability. As such, the corpus is made up of 14 interviews, totalling just under 14 hours.[6] Interviews were conducted in Catalan and/or French (depending on the preference of the interviewee) by one or both of the authors. Interviews were subsequently analysed qualitatively using ATLAS.ti software, whereby both authors listened to all recordings and assigned codes thematically in order to determine the most salient topics. Each of the two authors analysed half of the corpus and established an initial list of codes, each corresponding to a theme for analysis (Merriam and Tisdell 2016, 192–193). At this point, a meeting took place to discuss the code lists in order to check for overlap, to ensure consistency of code naming, and to remove redundant codes. The interviews were then exchanged, so that each author recoded the half of the corpus initially examined by the other person. This resulted in a list of 39 codes that are based on the research questions, the interview questions and a comprehensive review of secondary literature.[7] The *Code Co-Occurrence Analysis* tool was then used to pinpoint frequently co-occurring topics, which drew our attention to the repeated intersection of the themes of teacher agency and multilingual repertoires. The fragments which addressed both these issues were then examined with a view to identifying common narratives across testimonies, which is presented in the following analysis.

Data analysis: insights from educators and administrators in the *Escola Andorrana*

The present analysis seeks to provide the necessary information to answer to the first research question, namely how we can describe any practices in the EA that allow for the development of multilingual repertoires, based on the testimonies of educators and administrators working in the system. Most of the examples that follow are from French-medium teachers, which is linked to the fact that French occupies a complex social position in Andorra, as mentioned in our overview of the research context. Although it is rarely used as a vehicle of communication outside a few restricted settings,[8] the language retains an international visibility and prestige (Hawkey 2022). This will be discussed further in the upcoming analysis.

Harnessing existing student multilingualism

We have seen that recent top-down mission statements have foregrounded multilingual competence as a central aim of the EA (Govern d'Andorra 2021, 1), and the coordinating

manager of the Canòlich school states that existing student multilingualism is an obvious advantage that can be put to use in furthering this aim (Extract 1, below).

Extract 1[9]

Canòlich, coordinating manager: [As a teacher] I [would] know that my students are multilingual and therefore I [could] use the knowledge that they have of other languages, so that they understand things, compare, contrast …

Interviewer: Are the teachers aware of that?

Canòlich, coordinating manager: Yes, as the Escola Andorrana, I think so. And teachers use this, I think […] Compared to monolingual schools, it's a richness that helps you better learn languages, right?

Embracing existing student multilingualism can be seen as a helpful means to continue and develop multilingual repertoires (Bialystok 2010; Cenoz 2013). Cenoz and Gorter (2015, 5–6) present a continuum of approaches adopted by scholars of multilingual education settings, that moves between *becoming multilingual* (work that focuses on language acquisition strategies) and *being multilingual* (studies that focus on how multilingual identities are developed). We can already see that processes of 'becoming' and 'being' are likely to be mutually reinforcing and 'linked in practice' (Cenoz and Gorter 2015, 8), since existing multilingualism is used as a tool to develop that very same repertoire. Teachers are presented as multilingual agents who have the ability and right to make the most of pupils' existing language competence in ensuring that the EA's ultimate aim of advanced student multilingualism is achieved, in their role as 'people of influence' (Zhao and Baldauf 2012). In terms of the teacher agency taxonomy (adoption, adaptation, transformation, resistance), we see a degree of straightforward adoption of top-down policy that foregrounds multilingual competence – particularly in terms of 'express[ing] and interpret[ing] concepts … in different languages' (Govern d'Andorra 2015: annex 1, competence 2, our translation). There is also a degree of adaptation, in that coordinating managers are encouraging practices that go beyond the one-teacher one-language model. In Extract 2, a French-medium teacher from the Caboet school offers insight into what this looks like in the classroom:

Extract 2

Caboet, French-medium teacher: I've just got a new pupil from Argentina, so when he arrived, at the start we translated everything a bit. Then, very quickly, we started to line up the words *poulet, pollo, pollastre* ['chicken' in French, Spanish and Catalan, respectively]. So, people often notice that, in the three languages like 'oh yeah *maîtresse, maestra, mestra* ['teacher' in French, Spanish and Catalan, respectively] […] In the case of Spanish, it's easy because us teachers already know how to write in Spanish, we already know Spanish, so it's much more straightforward. Even in English, if we can make that link, it's interesting. Or even, just to see that in English, *chicken*, it's totally different, that's interesting too.

This teacher has the agency to move outside the rigid one-teacher/one-language model that is officially imposed by the MOI policy of the EA (an example of 'adaptation' according to the aforementioned taxonomy of teacher agency). As a French-medium teacher, she is able to draw on her own competence in Spanish and Catalan, in order to ensure the necessary acquisition of French vocabulary. This strategy facilitates multilingual

language acquisition and is concerned with the student 'becoming' multilingual, to adopt Cenoz and Gorter's (2015) terminology. The learner is then encouraged to critically reflect on the connections between the various language resources that make up their repertoire, however partially truncated (Blommaert 2010) these may be. This brings us to the idea of 'being' multilingual, since it is here that learners are required to actively develop a sense of themselves as multilingual beings, endowed with the capacity to compare and evaluate the languages that make up their repertoire. This clearly demonstrates how 'becoming' and 'being' multilingual are linked through practice. The teacher in Extract 2 exercises the agency to move outside the officially mandated confines of the one-teacher/one-language approach, thereby giving importance to hybrid practices that the child will go on to use in the multilingual setting of Andorra. However, the degree to which this serves to 'rethink prevailing assumptions about language that reify linguistic structure and normalise monolingualism' (Palmer and Martínez 2013, 288) remains to be seen and will be addressed in the discussion.

Views on moving beyond one-teacher/one-language

Educators and administrators hold somewhat mixed opinions of this system, characterised as it is by a tension between the arguably conflicting top-down policies of one-teacher/one-language on the one hand, and the development of a complex repertoire on the other. Certain teachers are clearly in favour, to the extent of believing that the system could emphasise the repertoire component even further through developing complex metalinguistic awareness on the part of very young pupils (Extract 3, below). This extract, when viewed alongside Extracts 1 and 2, aligns with Cenoz and Gorter's 'Focus on multilingualism' approach (2011; 2015) to education research, which foregrounds existing language competence and metalinguistic awareness as the two key elements in the development of multilingual repertoires.

Extract 3

Canòlich, French-medium teacher: But why not [introduce French earlier]? Because the kids are only little and the language of teaching is Catalan? But we're also saying that they have to be just as good in both Catalan and French, so what does it matter if you're already bringing it in at [age 4]? Because 'no, we have to lay the groundwork' […] But look later on, they make mistakes in Catalan anyway […] When you talk about multilingual projects and all that, sometimes people look at you like …

Interviewer: She's come in from Mars!

Canòlich, French-medium teacher: Exactly! But let's listen to *Little Red Riding Hood* in Albanian, in German, yeah go on, in Portuguese, in Italian, make them aware!

Meanwhile, other interviewees were sceptical about medium-of-instruction choice in the EA and how this builds multilingual competence, particularly in relation to French, as in Extract 4 (below).

Extract 4

Conseller, coordinating manager: The ministry wants us to improve [pupils' level of French] a bit, to raise the level, so that all these hours invested in French bear fruit […] Maybe we don't need to use the [French] language as a means of instruction, maybe it should be more of a

> foreign language […] We shouldn't just use French as a vehicular language and that's it […] instead, we should really push learning vocabulary. Be a lot more aware. I'm teaching science in French, fine, but I'm teaching French. Be aware of that because often, if we're teaching another subject through a given language, of course, really often the content and concepts that we want to teach and get across end up being more important than the language.

This coordinating manager believes that, in order to ensure linguistic competence in French, it would be more beneficial to adopt a foreign language teaching approach, much in the same way English is taught in the EA (or indeed, as French is taught in the aforementioned 'Spanish system'). These ideas will be revisited in our later discussion, when we consider the specific sociolinguistic context of Andorra. In Extract 5 (below), the coordinating manager of the Coprínceps school summarises the mixed feelings among educators regarding the repertoire approach, acknowledging the clear tension between the rigid medium-of-instruction policy and the flexible multilingual repertoire that students are expected to acquire.

Extract 5

> Coprínceps, coordinating manager: I suggested to one of my groups working on language teaching, on French specifically, I suggested that we do some activities that contrasted different languages, not just Catalan. And there was a teacher who said, 'yeah but, I don't think this is a good idea, because if we give them the chance to answer in French, we've lost them.' And I was like 'no, no, it doesn't work like that.' It's not that. This is to say that there are certain teachers who are really advanced and totally understand that it's a great way to teach language, but then you've got others who are more reticent and want to do everything in French. 'It has to all be in French, otherwise it'll be a disaster!' […] Last school year, I ran a metalinguistic training session with the teachers [of children aged 10–12]. I'll take this chance, I thought, reflect a bit on language, bringing it together with some work contrasting different languages. Working on learners' errors […] the children always make the same mistakes in French, and they're due to language interference, and they repeat them over and over. We've gotta do something, right? […] It's true, we make those mistakes because that's how it is in Catalan or in Spanish. So, what is the correct version that we should use at the end of the day? The training session I put on was focused on that, opening our minds and using all that we have in terms of language knowledge to learn new things, right?

This coordinating manager recognises that this tension brings about frustration and reticence on the part of some teachers, when asked to adopt more repertoire-based approaches. This is ascribed to a lack of open-mindedness and forward thinking on the part of more traditional or 'less advanced' teachers, whose classroom practices may constitute mild forms of resistance (according to the teacher agency taxonomy) if they choose to not foreground multilingual repertoire competence in favour of strict code separation. Once again, we see the two elements of Cenoz and Gorter's (2011; 2015) 'Focus on multilingualism' approach in the repertoire building strategies proposed by the coordinating manager in Extract 5, encouraging children to metalinguistically reflect on their existing linguistic resources. However, the success of the approach is dependent on teacher agency in the implementation of this policy, and the coordinating manager fulfils a key role in ensuring compliance on the part of teachers, since any change is contingent on the opinions of teachers in their role as co-creators of policy (Fullan 2007, 129) and they always have the agency to resist top-down initiatives through their classroom practices (Dubetz and De Jong 2011).

Correction and linguistic purism

Repertoire development through metalinguistic awareness is proposed as a practical space of reflection for why learners make mistakes in a specific language, which brings us to the role played by ideologies of linguistic purism. In Extract 6 (below), a French-medium teacher discusses when and how it is helpful to 'correct' pupils' language usage.

Extract 6

Carlemany, French-medium teacher: I think the most important thing is that they make the effort to speak, and they do, and then correct things as they pop up. You don't need to correct the whole sentence because at the end of the day, there are sentences like '*la cadire avec la taule* [using adapted Catalan words for basic concepts such as 'chair' and 'table' instead of their French cognates]' and they say that stuff. But the fact you can go 'Oh, remember, in Catalan … ', that works really well for us. I think this is a richness that we have here in Andorra, I think. The ability to say 'look, *cadire* no, *cadira* is the Catalan word, in French it's *chaise* [the word for chair]' 'Ah, right'. And that way, when you build the links between the two languages a bit, it often sticks better. But yeah, basic things, I have to correct, so they can start saying them properly […] When it's necessary, [I use Catalan]. It means more to them, when you can make that link, I think it goes in more.

Interviewer: Do you bring in other languages spoken in class, like if you have Portuguese or Spanish speakers?

Carlemany, French-language teacher: If there's a Spanish speaker and they're saying a word in Spanish, we'll say to them 'look, that word is in Spanish. In Catalan or French, it's like this. Can you say it back to me?' Fine, and five minutes later 'What was that word again? [said in French]' […] Sometimes, when we want to be closed off about things, the kids are more, I don't know. When you make things more natural, there's no problem. This [language is used] here, you'd say it *that* way at home, the little boxes start to become more clearly defined.

This teacher views excessive correction as detrimental to repertoire building, in that it inhibits children's confidence to successfully produce content in French. Production is presented as more important, at least in the early stages of education, than adherence to normative language usage, though exceptions are made for basic, formulaic constructions, which children are expected to have acquired and be able to produce without interference from other languages in the repertoire. Instances of interference are addressed through explicit comparison between languages in the repertoire in order to ensure the material is retained by the learner. This is reflective of findings in Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015, 302), which maintain that a strict separation of the components of a learner's repertoire 'does not encourage the [integration of] new linguistic features and practices into their own repertoire of features and practices. The result is that the new features fail to become integrated as part of the learner's idiolect.' The testimony in Extract 6 also offers insight into the social aims of the EA in developing multilingual repertoires, which is enlightening since all analysis of multilingual education programs needs to be interpreted in its specific social context (Cenoz and Gorter 2011, 360), and indeed any discussion of individual teacher agency must consider that agentive acts are a result of the 'reciprocal relationship between the individual and the contexts in which they work and live' (Jenkins 2020, 168). We see that the repertoire is developed so that it can subsequently be compartmentalised into 'little boxes', in line with social expectations of how language is

expected to be used in Andorra. The goal of repertoire development is arguably domain-specificity – to slightly paraphrase the teacher in Extract 6, '[you use] this language [in school], you say it *that* way at home'.

The multilingual context of Andorra

Domain-specificity is of course context dependent, which brings us to the multilingual reality of Andorra, characterised by a limited presence of French and frequent use of Spanish. The specific social standing of French has consequences for student attainment, as presented in Extract 7, below.

Extract 7

Caboet, French-medium teacher: Now there are huge changes about the presence of French [in the school system], it's a bit over the top. They want pupils to have the same skills in Catalan as in French, which I think is impossible and unrealistic […] It's great because, it gives a lot of, how to put it, lots of importance to French, it's noble, right? Except that it's difficult, the context doesn't help. It's not the right context to say 'they're going to have the same level in both French and Catalan.'

Despite being infrequently used by most residents of Andorra, French is a language of historical significance, and remains important in the transnational linguistic marketplace of Andorra as a language for potential onward mobility (Hawkey 2022, 380–381). French language competence in the EA is thus designed to meet the contextual needs of Andorra, so that learners are able to employ the language to these specific ends. As a result, the goal of equal competence in French and Catalan is 'impossible and unrealistic', as it is not appropriate in the Andorran context. Indeed, the tension between rigid medium-of-instruction policy and repertoire building seen throughout these testimonies applies chiefly to the French language in our data. Concerns around Catalan competence are not as frequently raised, and chiefly relate to the integration of the children of migrant families, which is why the fragments in this analysis do not include testimonies from Catalan-medium teachers, instead focusing on coordinating managers and French-medium teachers.[10] Another characteristic of societal multilingualism in Andorra is the presence of Spanish, discussed in Extract 8, below.

Extract 8

Carlemany, French-medium teacher: We have to encourage them to use more Catalan and French among themselves […] In the same group, there might be three who speak Catalan, but if there's one who makes a comment in Spanish, Spanish has a lot of power and they all end up speaking Spanish, it's weird. But if you tell them, they change straight away, they don't have a big problem with that […] And do they speak French 'naturally'? No, they don't speak it, that's the reality. They do when there's an activity guided by the teacher, but if you leave them alone with an activity in French, they'll do it in French, but they'll discuss it in Catalan or Spanish.

While the presence of Spanish remains officially restricted in the Andorran education system, the language has achieved a status of 'default language' in the country, due to Andorrans' ability to adapt to a range of communicative contexts, as well as a reproduction of the complex functional diglossia that causes Catalan to be subordinated to Spanish in certain contexts in Catalonia, Andorra's much larger and more influential

Catalan-speaking neighbour to the south (Jiménez-Salcedo 2021a: 139). In classroom settings, French in particular suffers at the hands of Spanish, which is spoken by children much more 'naturally' and is one of the main vehicles of communication between pupils when teachers are not present.

Discussion: between policy and practice

In response to our first research question, how can we describe the practices in the EA that allow for the development of multilingual repertoires? Perhaps most importantly, there is a clear tension between rigid medium-of-instruction policy on the one hand, and flexible repertoire-building practices on the other. This is felt most acutely in relation to French, where there is a reticence among some teachers to allow other languages into the classroom, for fear of erosion in competence of a language that is already in a weakened position in Andorra. Teachers (particularly French-medium teachers) are required to exercise agency in order to decide where and how they hold firm to exclusive use of French in the classroom, and where they are able to deviate. It is interesting to note that such agency rarely goes beyond adaptation of existing top-down policies into more actionable teaching practices, and there are scant examples of outright resistance (in terms of the taxonomy of teacher agency referenced throughout). While much scholarship favours the use of repertoire-based pedagogies and encourages translanguaging pedagogies (García 2009; García and Wei 2014; Gort and Sembiante 2015; Otheguy, García, and Reid 2015), the repertoires here ultimately serve to reinforce the compartmentalisation of the different languages into domain-specific usages. This is ensured through linguistic purism, and the discouragement of all but a few specific translanguaging practices (namely, drawing on a range of linguistic resources in order to ensure adherence to normative usage in a specific language in the repertoire). However, the context of Andorra is not always favourable to the development of the desired linguistic repertoire, given the clear presence of Spanish as 'default language' and infrequent use of French. French-medium teachers thus face a complex set of challenges if they are to ensure language competence among children in the EA.

Turning to our second research question, we will draw on these insights from educators and administrators, and focus on the content of a single piece of top-down legislature that sets out the aims, duties and principles of the EA, namely the LOSEA (Govern d'Andorra 2018).[11] Articles 3.5 and 3.6 detail the specific linguistic aims of the EA, as follows.

> Article 3.5: To ensure the accurate use of Catalan, as the language of the country, through the knowledge of its different registers and communicative contexts.
>
> Article 3.6: To foster the knowledge of different languages and the development of multilingual communicative competence in order to promote openness to international culture and to ensure fluent communication with citizens of other countries.

The development of 'accurate' Catalan competence is foregrounded as the first aim, above and beyond other linguistic goals. This is reflected in educators' ideologies of linguistic purism (Extracts 5 and 6), as well as concerns that any attempt to have children reach comparable levels in French will prove futile (Extract 7). It is noteworthy that Catalan is the only language mentioned by name throughout the LOSEA, even though the education system is thoroughly multilingual. This is an example of 'strategic

ambiguity' (Hawkey and Horner 2022) seen in other Andorran legislation, whereby Catalan is foregrounded by virtue of being the only named variety, to the detriment of other languages in the repertoire. This ambiguity opens up the possibility for those enacting policies to engage their agency in the pursuit of flexible multilingual practices. Interestingly, competence in languages other than Catalan is presented as a tool to engage with people from outside Andorra. This not only speaks to the importance of the transnational linguistic marketplace that operates in Andorra (Hawkey 2022; Hawkey and Horner 2022), but positions competence in languages other than Catalan as something inherently linked to foreign countries, rather than to any sense of Andorran identity. The attendant assumption is that Andorran linguistic identity is solely connected to Catalan. With this in mind, the approach of teaching French as a foreign language, rather than as a medium of instruction throughout the system (Extract 4), would seem to be coherent with the aim of ensuring communication with a powerful external neighbour. The linguistic aims of the EA are somewhat clarified in Article 18.4 below.

> Article 18.4: Oral and written communication in Catalan and the media of instruction [must be developed], appropriate to all registers and communicative situations, making use of a broad range of linguistic and non-linguistic resources. Clear and understandable oral and written communication [must be developed] in at least one foreign language, in both formal and colloquial registers, making use of a broad range of linguistic and non-linguistic resources.

Here, we see a reference to the aims for equal competence in Catalan and French described in Extract 7, as both are vehicular languages of the EA. Similarly, Spanish is one of the media of instruction in EA secondary education, though its status as default language (Extract 8) should be enough to guarantee widespread competence, at least to the extent that the legislation can be sufficiently ambiguous in not naming languages. The resultant logical interpretation is that this competence refers to Catalan and French. By extension, the 'foreign language' is presumably English, since none of the aforementioned languages meet that criteria, either by being autochthonous (Catalan) or vehicular (French and Spanish), though once again, strategic ambiguity is employed and this is open to flexible interpretation. The references to 'resources' call to mind the repertoire approaches adopted by Blommaert (2010), though the LOSEA aims are framed less in terms of resources that can be deployed in late capitalist marketplaces (despite a reference in Article 3.3 to preparing students for economic participation in society, and the mention of entrepreneurship below), and more as means of personal growth, as follows.

> Article 3.1: To promote [students'] cultural, intellectual, social, physical and moral development.
>
> Article 3.2: To encourage a global, critical and creative mindset, as well as adaptability, autonomy and entrepreneurship.

The framing of the EA in terms of the development of critical thinking skills brings us to an argument in Palmer and Martínez (2013, 288) regarding the role of multilingual pedagogies as tools that can allow for the reconsideration of received assumptions about social order and the unmarked nature of monolingualism. Andorra is clearly highly multilingual, and this is supported by teachers' agency in adopting the strategies we have seen to foster learners' multilingual repertoires. As such, myths around the supposed 'normalness' of monolingualism do not necessarily apply to Andorra. In fact, the EA is far from

subversive in encouraging the development of repertoires. Indeed, as we have seen in Extract 6, one of the ultimate aims is to ensure that children acquire an understanding of the domain-specificity and compartmentalisation of languages in line with hegemonic power structures that operate in Andorra. Catalan is much more akin to a majority language in Andorra, despite its historical and current subjugation in other territories. This is particularly clear since migrant languages (typically Portuguese) do not hold the same prestige as the varieties which make up the repertoires explicitly encouraged by EA language teaching policy (Hawkey 2024). While critical thinking is encouraged among children through the development of metalinguistic awareness (Extracts 2, 3 and 5), this appears to primarily serve the purpose of reinforcing existing social structures that position Catalan at the top of a linguistic hierarchy.

Conclusions

In our interviews with educators and administrators in the EA, we witnessed tensions between rigid medium-of-instruction policy (that urges teachers to use one language in the classroom) and directives that encourage fostering more flexible multilingual repertoires and metalinguistic awareness among learners. Teachers ultimately need to engage their agency in order to work out how to navigate this friction successfully. In short, teacher agency is a bottom-up means to resolve top-down policy tensions. This work therefore makes an important contribution to the study of teacher agency (and language policy more broadly) by highlighting that even mild adaptations of top-down directives can be sufficient to resolve issues arising from the existence of seemingly discordant language policies. We witnessed that an important aim of repertoire building is the compartmentalisation of languages in a way that prepares the child for life in Andorra and, as such, reinforces existing social hierarchies. Indeed, when multilingual repertoire-based competence is mandated top-down by official policy, it necessarily serves to reify hegemonic structures. Therefore, while multilingual repertoires can be revolutionary in the ways that they break down boundaries between languages, they are not always tools of resistance.

Notes

1. See Hornberger and Johnson (2007) and Johnson (2009) on how ethnography can allow for an understanding of language policy as negotiated process.
2. See Dubetz and De Jong (2011) for a discussion of teachers' resistance to imposed monolingual MOI policies in favour of bilingual strategies that ensure educational equity for emergent bilingual learners.
3. Participants freely provided informed consent to participate, signing a form that detailed their role in the study, and clearly stating that they could withdraw at any point. The study received ethical approval from the institution of the second author, as this was the host university for the project.
4. We prefer 'Catalan/French-*medium* teacher' to simply 'Catalan/French teacher' since these professionals are not just language teachers, but as mentioned above, use these languages as MOI to deliver the entire curriculum. 'Coordinating manager' is our English translation of the *cap d'estudis* role.
5. These pseudonyms make reference to prominent figures and elements of Andorran history and culture.

6. It should be noted that the current corpus comprises solely interview data and is not complemented with classroom observations. This is due to the fact that both participants live and work outside of Andorra, which prohibits this sort of semi-ethnographic approach to the project methods. However, in a future iteration of this research, extended participant observation will be explored.
7. This description of our analytical practice constitutes an *audit trail* (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Merriam and Tisdell 2016, 226–227) in order to ensure rigour and clearly explain how we arrived at our results.
8. These may include use with tourists, among a small autochthonous minority in the northern part of the country, or generally on the premises of the French secondary school in Andorra-la-Vella, among other specific contexts.
9. All extracts from participant interviews and legislation are the authors' own translations from the original Catalan or French.
10. In these cases, these tensions are not apparent in the same way, and are discussed in Hawkey and Jiménez-Salcedo (forthcoming).
11. See the research context for more information on how this sits alongside other relevant legislation.

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These will appear in the de-anonymised version. For the purpose of open access, the authors have applied a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.

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