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Translanguaging, Coloniality, and English Classrooms: An Exploration of Two Bicoastal Urban Classrooms

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While current research focuses on the marginalization and educational crises of students classified as English language learners—*whom we identify as* emergent bilinguals *(García & Kleifgen, 2010)—this article highlights some of the contexts for learning that help these students thrive academically, culturally, and socially in two urban English classrooms. We explore the concept of translanguaging (García, 2009a; García & Li Wei, 2014) through the writing of two students who took up this practice as a challenge to coloniality in English classrooms. We also outline how two secondary teachers in New York City and Los Angeles adopted a translanguaging pedagogy (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). Through our analysis of two focal emergent bilingual students, we demonstrate how a translanguaging pedagogy—one that puts students' language practices at the center and makes space for students to draw on their fluid linguistic and cultural resources at all times—is a necessary step forward in twenty-first-century English instruction. Our findings illustrate that the teachers' translanguaging pedagogies disrupted the inherently monolingual and colonial tendencies of English classrooms through curricula that promoted metalinguistic awareness and reflection about their own linguistic and cultural identities, and integrated students' diverse language practices to push back against colonialist ideologies. Our study adds to the nascent body of literature that translates theories of translanguaging into practical pedagogical approaches in secondary English classrooms.*

As one of the largest school-aged populations, Latinxs[1]—with their concomitant diverse demographic profile—are far from a monolithic entity. However, despite their diversity and unlike most immigrant groups, Latinxs share a history of US domination, intervention, and occupation that spans centuries in Latin America and in the United States itself (González, 2000). Within the United States, García (2009b) notes that the linguistic colonization of Latinxs unfolded through "a policy of eradicating Spanish by encouraging a shift to English" (p. 111). She explains that the United States has done this "by adopting a policy of debasing and racializing Spanish, linking it to subjugated populations, immigration, poverty, and a lack of education" (García, 2009b, p. 111).

Power-laden social, linguistic, and racial hierarchies saturate the lives of Latinxs in myriad ways, primarily through the "coloniality of being" (Mignolo, 2000), where Latinx children's lived experiences, schooling, and languages are surveilled through restrictive policies. While studying the translingual practices of Latinx youth is not a new phenomenon, few empirical studies examine how secondary English classrooms use translanguaging pedagogies. In addition, the colonial roots intertwined with English education, especially for Latinx youth, make these classrooms fertile ground for decolonial and translingual approaches.

This article focuses on releasing Latinx youth's translingual voices as they write against colonial language ideologies in two bicoastal cities. As Latinx youth constitute the largest student population in both California and New York, we examine Latinx students from two urban English classrooms taught by two teachers (one monolingual and the other bilingual) to understand how translanguaging pedagogies transpired across contexts. Rather than separate students' language practices, the teachers adopted "discursive and pedagogical practices that break the hegemony of the dominant language in monolingual classrooms" (García, Flores, & Woodley, 2012, p. 45). Our collaboration between a Chicana researcher and a White researcher lent insight into one another's examination of curricula that encouraged "border thinking" (Mignolo, 2000), or the knowledge generated from the exterior borders of the modern/colonial world. For the mostly Mexican and Dominican youth in our studies, their existence in and ties to the United States are laced with tumultuous colonial pasts and unique but similar histories of immigration (González, 2000). These histories became the subject of inquiry and resistance through a translingual approach to English instruction.

Morrell's (2015) call to action for more "courageous leadership" (p. 317) in dismantling the linguistic racism in our nation's English classrooms inspired our research collaboration. Our data, which include participant observation, field notes, and analysis of student writings, illustrate how the teachers' implementation of a translanguaging pedagogy—particularly their *stance*, or their set of beliefs about students and their language practices, and their *design*, their organization of classroom life that brought to the surface the diversity of students' language practices (García et al., 2017)—benefited Latinx bilingual students. Thus, our collaboration inspired two interrelated questions: (1) *How do two teachers in English classrooms implement translanguaging pedagogies?* and (2) *When such pedagogies are implemented, what language and literacy practices emerge from Latinx bilingual students?* Through our analysis, we illustrate that the two teachers' reimagining of the English classroom through a translanguaging lens made space for students to reflect on their linguistic and cultural identities and use their rich language practices to resist colonial ideologies.

The term *translanguaging* describes the language practices of our participants. Rather than start with socially constructed "languages" (and thus discuss how students "switch" between such "languages"), we start with the *speakers*, whose creative and critical enactment of their holistic repertoire (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Li Wei, 2011) cannot be separated into such dualities as "first/second" or "standard/

nonstandard" language. We believe that translanguaging transcends these false dichotomies that reproduce monoglossic language ideologies and continue to shape the discourse about language in our society (García, 2009a).

Subverting the English-Medium Classroom

We connect the theoretical contributions of Mignolo's (2000) "border thinking" with sociolinguistic conceptions of bi/multilingualism as dynamic (García, 2009a). Both Mignolo's work and the concept of translanguaging are integral to the cultural, epistemic, and discursive borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) that US Latinx immigrant youth often navigate in "English-medium" classrooms. We draw from these theories to examine the educational discourses and practices that value the depth of knowledge production of Latinx youth.

Coloniality and Border Thinking

According to Quijano (2001), *coloniality* refers to long-established systems of power that surfaced as a result of colonialism and continue to control labor, social relationships, and the sanctioning of knowledge. Coloniality manifests in various domains in society: (1) the coloniality of *power* references the relationship between modern forms of exploitation and power (Quijano, 2000); (2) the coloniality of *knowledge* represents the impact of colonization and racism in the construction of knowledge (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000); and (3) the coloniality of *being* primarily affects everyday lived experiences and language, with language being the primary place where knowledge is inscribed (Mignolo, 2000, as cited in Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Throughout the Americas, and in the United States specifically, the coloniality of being persists through the monolingual and monocultural schooling of Indigenous and Latinx youth.

As equity-minded scholars dedicated to the "epistemic democratization" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 169) of our nation's classrooms, we draw on Mignolo's (2000) notion of "border thinking" to explore how colonial histories continue to inform restrictive educational contexts, especially as they pertain to the languaging[2] (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) of emergent bilinguals. Mignolo (2000) conceptualizes border thinking as "an other thinking" (p. 66), which includes thinking "between two languages and their historical relations in the modern world system" (p. 74). According to Mignolo, the current world system lies at the nexus of modernity and coloniality and cannot be explained or analyzed without foregrounding colonialism. Current ethnic, racial and social hierarchies are the product of European colonialism in the Americas that dates back to 1492. These legacies of colonialism grant power to certain people while dehumanizing others through what Mignolo identifies as the *colonial difference*. In turn, border thinking emerges within the interstitial spaces of the colonial difference and emanates from the very epistemic borderlands where the colonial/modern global design intersects with local histories. As a theoretical framework, border thinking is primarily concerned with recognizing the subaltern knowledge production of people living in ongoing colonial or

formerly colonized nations, and is also concerned with the subjectivities of those who did not physically cross borders, but rather had borders cross them.

Coloniality and English-Medium Spaces

English-medium spaces are particularly mired in coloniality. Part of the post-structuralist process to "disinvent" English is the recognition that "languages were, in the most literal sense, invented, particularly as part of the Christian/colonial and nationalistic projects in different parts of the globe" (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, p. 1). Elements of this coloniality are still at work in US schools, namely in restrictive language policies that police those students whose language practices do not align with "Standard English" (Silverstein, 1996). Because students in English classrooms are tasked with learning "English"—treated as a bounded and teachable subject—their language practices are especially scrutinized (Martínez, 2016).

To disinvent the "subject" of English in schools is, in effect, an effort to redefine English-medium spaces that leave little room for alternative ways of languaging. By jettisoning the idea that the inclusion of other languages "interferes" with English, our studies embrace the reality of linguistic contact and highlight the fluid ways that bilingual Latinxs language in urban contexts. We take up Pennycook's (1995) argument for a new understanding of the role of English in the classroom, one "in favour of a critical paradigm that acknowledges human agency and looks not only at how people's lives are regulated by language, culture, and discourse but also at how people both resist those forms and produce their own forms" (p. 48). In other words, though English most certainly shapes Latinx students' education, Latinx students also *shape English* in ways consistent with their location on the borderlands. Taking this stance, English classrooms can invite "the process of using language against the grain, of the empire writing back to the centre . . . of using English to express the lived experiences of the colonized and to oppose the central meanings of the colonizers" (Pennycook, 1995, pp. 51–52). To use English in this way defies its standardized uses in the classroom. For the Latinx youth in our two classrooms, the use of English was always intertwined with Spanish. Students' ways of languaging were aligned with García's (2009a) conceptualization of dynamic bilingualism, which views bilingual speakers' languages not as static or balanced, but flexible and responsive to the communicative context.

According to García et al. (2017), *translanguaging* refers to "both the complex language practices of multilingual individuals and communities, as well as the pedagogical approaches that draw on those complex practices to build those desired in formal school settings" (p. 2). Thus, to adopt translanguaging means taking linguistic fluidity as the norm and building pedagogy from students' language practices. Translanguaging holds "the potential to release ways of speaking of subaltern groups that have been previously fixed within static language identities and hierarchical language arrangements and that are constrained by the modern/colonial world system" (García, Flores, & Woodley, 2012, p. 48).

With this in mind, we follow Young's (2009) argument for a shift away from teaching students of color to "code-switch" because of the term's implicit separation of their language practices, which he relates to the Jim Crow construct of

"separate but equal." Teaching students to code-switch reifies language ideologies that designate one language (i.e., "Standard English") as powerful and simultaneously relegate others to the margins. Instead, students of color should be taught to "become more effective communicators by doing what we all do best, what comes naturally: blending, merging, meshing dialects" (Young, 2009, p. 72). We use *translanguaging*, moreover, to describe both the pedagogical approaches our teachers took in their classrooms and Latinx students' language practices because of the term's inherently transgressive nature. Teaching students to engage in translanguaging, rather than code-switching, supports the border thinking necessary to challenge coloniality through borderlands language and literacy practices (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016).

Latinxs, Colonization, and Resistance

Despite xenophobic ideologies that continue to propagate English Only policies, Latinx communities in the United States continue to be highly bilingual (Krogstad & González-Barrera, 2015). Schools, as institutions of assimilation, operate under the ideology of the coloniality of being, where the colonizer's qualities are deemed superior to those of subjugated populations (Mignolo, 2000). Thus, this review of literature: (1) provides a brief examination of the ways in which Latinxs have been colonized, (2) points to literature that demonstrates the ways in which K–12 Latinx emergent bilinguals resist colonialist classroom ideologies, and (3) explains our choice of *translanguaging* over terms of "appropriateness" (Flores & Rosa, 2015) such as *code-switching*.

The Colonization of Latinxs

Mignolo (2005) notes that Latin America is a constructed idea that emerged from Christian expansionism and the modern/colonial roots of racism. Colonialist wars waged against the Indigenous Americas beginning in the sixteenth century continue to bear heavy and oppressive legacies five centuries later, spanning the racial violence, religious persecution, linguistic colonization, slavery, and genocide (Mignolo, 2005) that comprise Western civilization's foundational logic. These legacies have been inscribed in contemporary racial, political, and social hierarchies throughout Latin America (Mignolo, 2000).

Coloniality is not solely covert subjugation, but also the West's enduring economic, political, and epistemological presence and force throughout Latin America (Mignolo, 2005). The surge of immigration from Latin America to the United States and the accompanying demographic shift, which González (2000) calls the "Latinization of the United States," are the product of the United States' expansionist economic and territorial history. González distinguishes Latinx immigration and presence in the United States as different from European immigration to this country in at least three ways: (1) Latinx immigration is closely tied to the needs and growth of the US empire; (2) racial and language ideologies in this country have had the effect of moving Latinxs not from immigrant to mainstream status, but from an immigrant to a linguistic/racial caste status; and (3) the greatest num-

ber of Latin Americans have arrived since the United States became the dominant world power. In direct relation to these increasing Latinx immigration trends, the economic circumstances that allowed European immigrants to assimilate and rise socioeconomically are no longer present (González, 2000).

The disjuncture between histories of immigration, language policies, and the realities of the lives of immigrants coalesce into a tempest that shapes the K–12 experiences of the majority of Latinxs in our nation's schools (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). The education of Latinx children in the United States continues to be shaped by legacies of imperialism, where colonial schooling buttresses "a single system of thought" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 10) and an internalized oppression by the colonizer (Urrieta, 2009). Furthermore, Latinx youth have been subjected to both de jure and de facto schooling segregation (González, 1990; Laosa, 2001; Orfield, 2004), where colonialist curricula continue to strip Latinx youth of their cultural, racial, and linguistic identities. Forms of "subtractive schooling" (Valenzuela, 1999) persist and often portray Latinx children as "missing" so-called dominant forms of language (Rosa, 2016) and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), and locate educational inequalities in "deficiencies" in students' communities rather than in structural systems of power (Gutiérrez, 2006). Lastly, the 2010 legislative attacks on Mexican American studies in Tucson Unified School District best represent state-sponsored assaults on Latinx histories, literacies, and ways of knowing (Cammarota & Romero, 2014).

Border thinking as a critical response to coloniality helps us honor the knowledge production that is often silenced within Whitestream curricula (Urrieta, 2009) that center the histories and contributions of Euro-Americans (Sleeter, 2005). In addition, as we outline below, by releasing students' voices from monolingual ideologies that separate their languages into the "two solitudes" (Cummins, 2008), translanguaging becomes a method of theorizing and enacting pedagogies for Latinx bilinguals that enables them to speak and write from the margins and against empire.

Translanguaging as Resistance

Restrictive language policies have been implemented all over the United States, but especially in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts, which have banned bilingual education despite large numbers of Latinx students. Many scholars (Crawford, 2000; Gándara, 2000; Uriarte, Tung, Lavan, & Diez, 2010) have taken a critical view of these policies, citing the negative effects of a linguistically subtractive education. By limiting and devaluing students' language practices, they argue, we also limit and devalue who they are and what they can do. Despite this hostile climate, teachers and students have subverted such restrictive policies by translanguaging, drawing on their diverse language practices for both academic and socioemotional well-being.

The term *translanguaging* has mainly been used to describe pedagogies in classrooms geared toward teaching emergent bilinguals English, such as English as a second/new language (ESL/ENL) and TESOL, as well as bilingual settings. Growing numbers of empirical studies on the use of translanguaging have been conducted in PreK–8 dual-language settings (Durán & Palmer, 2014; Gort & Sembiante, 2015; Martinez, Hikida, & Durán, 2015), afterschool contexts with

bilingual/multilingual K–8 learners (Daniel & Pacheco, 2016; Martínez-Roldán, 2015), the college composition classroom (Canagarajah, 2013), and community or heritage-language classrooms outside the United States (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Fewer studies have examined the use of translanguaging in secondary English classrooms in the United States.

Efforts to translate theoretical work in translanguaging into pragmatic approaches in secondary classrooms are emerging. For example, promising translanguaging pedagogies in English classes include García and Leiva's (2014) examination of a teacher who leveraged students' proficiency in bilingual hip-hop to mobilize their biliteracy and to challenge the cultural and linguistic privileging of monolingualism in English classrooms. Due to the intense focus on text analysis in secondary English classrooms, some studies have explored the use of genres such as poetry (Seltzer & Collins, 2016) and monologue (de los Ríos, 2016) to understand how translanguaging relates both to literacy development and socioemotional well-being. Additionally, Stewart and Hansen-Thomas's (2016) case study of one bilingual youth underscores the need for sanctioning translanguaging spaces in secondary classrooms through the leveraging of students' transnational worlds and literacies.

Translanguaging against "Appropriateness"

Our study extends this body of translanguaging scholarship by focusing specifically on the transgressive nature of translanguaging. We argue against what Flores and Rosa (2015) call *appropriateness-based approaches* to language education. As in Young's (2009) argument against code-switching, Flores and Rosa assert that these approaches do little to challenge the underlying racism that designates certain language practices as "standard" or "academic"; instead, these terms must be understood as "language ideologies rather than discrete linguistic practices" (p. 152). This means that teaching students that an ability to "switch" between their "home languages" and "academic language" leads to success ignores the reality of White supremacy and coloniality by which the White listening subject others the non-White speaking subject in racialized ways.

By taking up the theoretical perspectives and pedagogies associated with translanguaging—as opposed to appropriateness-based approaches steeped in what Flores and Rosa call raciolinguistic ideologies—the teachers in our studies invited students' fluid bilingual language practices that voiced border thinking and challenged coloniality and related ideologies. Our studies illustrate that translanguaging does far more than simply "scaffold" instruction for emergent bilinguals; it functions as a "border tongue" (Mignolo, 2000) that enables students to critique the coloniality still present in their lives and schooling.

Two Cities, Two Classrooms, Two Students

This article draws from two yearlong ethnographic studies that explored the literate and linguistic practices of Latinx youth enrolled in English classrooms that employed translanguaging pedagogies. Specifically, we looked for instances of students using

translanguaging in both their writing and classroom conversations to push back against the kinds of language ideologies that go hand-in-hand with coloniality. By training our eyes and tuning our ears to students' translanguaging, we became aware of how this languaging went hand-in-hand with border thinking and saw how students drew on their multiple language practices and cultural positionings to write back to empire (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2003). In the following sections, we briefly describe our individual research settings and participants. We then discuss our individual processes of data collection and analysis while also explaining our positionalities as racially diverse researchers. Last, we explain how we moved from the analysis of our individual studies toward the collaborative process of analysis across both studies.

Settings and Participants

De los Ríos's 10-month study took place in an 11th- and 12th-grade English elective Chicanx/Latinx studies course offered at an urban public high school in the greater Los Angeles area. According to California Department of Education data, the school demographics at the time were 85% Latinx, 12% African American, and 3% undisclosed; 81% of the student body received free or reduced lunch. About 42% of the student body was classified as English language learners, with the primary language being Spanish. The Chicanx/Latinx studies course was composed of first- and second-generation Chicanx students (of Mexican descent) at various points on the bilingual continuum (Hornberger, 2003). The teacher, Arturo Molina,[3] was a first-generation bilingual Chicano male who was born and raised in the working-class immigrant community where the school was located. Prior to this research in his classroom, Mr. Molina was not aware of the term or theory of translanguaging, yet he had already developed curricular and pedagogical approaches that reflected translanguaging. Mr. Molina, then in his seventh year of teaching, shared that "it only makes sense" to use a pedagogy that values both Spanish and English when working with bilingual youth (Field note, November 13, 2014). His existing engagement with translanguaging was one of the primary reasons his classroom was selected for inquiry.

Seltzer's study took place in an English classroom at a small public high school in a borough of New York City. Of the approximately 460 students at the school, 70% were Latinx and 28% were African American, nearly 90% qualified for free or reduced lunch, and 23% were labeled as English language learners. Though the large majority of these students spoke Spanish, there were also Fulani speakers from West Africa and small numbers of Arabic, Urdu, and Albanian speakers. Lauren Ardizzone, a White, English-speaking woman who had taught at the school for nearly 10 years, taught the English class. Because of the school's emphasis on inclusion, students classified as ELLs were programmed into Ms. Ardizzone's "mainstream" English classroom and received push-in services from an ESL teacher. This meant that Ms. Ardizzone's English classroom contained Latinx students from across the bilingual continuum, as well as non-Latinx students traditionally viewed as monolingual.

The two focal student participants from our classroom studies were chosen through criterion-based purposive sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Though border thinking and translanguaging were pervasive in both Mr. Molina and Ms. Ardizzone's classrooms, we include Lourdes's[4] and Anna's writing because these students were particularly representative of these language and literacy practices. Lourdes, a student in Mr. Molina's classroom, was a first-generation Chicana student who grew up in a bilingual and bicultural immigrant household in a working-class neighborhood east of Los Angeles. As a self-identified "brown-skinned woman," she embraced both her Mexican and American identities. In Ms. Ardizzone's classroom, Anna was a vocal participant and sophisticated thinker. A self-described "dark-skinned Latina" of Dominican descent, Anna often used both English and Spanish to respond to texts and participate in classroom discussions, though she reported more comfort with English than Spanish.

A Word about Our Participants

We use the term *emergent bilinguals* to refer to the population the federal government has called *LEP* (*limited English proficient*) and many call *ELLs* (*English language learners*). Some scholars attempt to break down these categories further, using terms like *SIFE* (*student with interrupted/incomplete formal education*), *newcomer*, *LTELL* (*long-term English language learner*), or *RFEP* (*redesignated fluent English proficient*) to describe participants. Though we agree that terms like *ELL* or *LEP* are far too simplistic and reductive to describe these young people, we are also wary of the myriad labels placed upon bilingual students in school (Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006). Though the two young women in our studies were at different points on the bilingual continuum and were classified by different terms in the eyes of the state, we refer to them as *emergent bilinguals* to emphasize their linguistic strengths and the fluid, shifting nature of their practices as they "do" being bilingual (Auer, 1984).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from two ethnographic classroom studies with bilingual/multilingual learners in secondary schools in Los Angeles and New York City. For de los Ríos's study, data collection consisted of participant observation with field notes and analytic memos, semistructured interviews with students, and the analysis of students' literacy artifacts. For Seltzer's study, data collection consisted of participant observation with field notes and analytic memos, analysis of artifacts from students' classroom work, and audio recordings and transcriptions of classroom talk.

Our Positionality

Who we are has influenced both our individual studies and our scholarly partnership. Like Ms. Ardizzone, Seltzer is a White woman who taught English in New York City for six years to students with whom she did not share an ethnic, racial, linguistic, or socioeconomic background. De los Ríos, more like Mr. Molina, is a bilingual Chicana who was raised in an immigrant household. During her six years as a secondary literacy and ethnic studies teacher, she shared an ethnic, racial, and

linguistic background with her students in California. Rather than distancing us, these differences have enabled us to "read" one another's data through different lenses, highlighting our inherent assumptions and biases. We believe that active and critical reflection on our own positionality has enabled us to uncover deeper understandings of our participants' words, which not only makes for more compelling scholarship, but respects and honors the young people who have lent us their voices. In addition, as we discuss in the Implications section, we believe that our scholarly partnership has important implications for future research in linguistically diverse English classrooms.

From Individual Studies toward Collaborative Analysis

To begin our collaborative data analysis, we first took an iterative approach to our own data that combined both inductive and deductive approaches (Maxwell, 2013). Deductive codes were used from existing literature and our own pilot studies and included translanguaging, language ideologies, and linguistic creativity. Inductive codes were derived from data analysis. For this, we adapted Luttrell's (2010) three-step analytical process, in which data were sorted, indexed, and read through a total of three times: the first reading consisted of looking for "recurring images, words, phrases and metaphors" (p. 262); a second reading consisted of looking for "a coherence among the string of stories" (p. 262); and a third reading consisted of a coding that used concepts from our theoretical framework. During the third reading, we looked for examples of border thinking in students' conversations and writing, translanguaging as a mechanism for students speaking back to coloniality, and the parts of Mr. Molina's and Ms. Ardizzone's classroom designs that created space for students to voice their border thinking through translanguaging. When comparing our data, we found strong overlap and connection with the codes *metalinguistic awareness, translanguaging,* and *reading their social/linguistic/cultural worlds.* With this in mind, we revisited our data to recode and pull relevant instances of these codes from students' writing.

To enhance the validity of our qualitative research, we served as peer debriefers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for each other's data analysis—we considered one another's methodological activities and provided feedback regarding the accuracy and completeness of our data collection and data analysis procedures. We engaged in cross-case analysis to mobilize our knowledge beyond our individual studies, to compare and contrast cases, and ultimately to produce new knowledge (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008). Additionally, we triangulated data from student journal writing, essays, and poems with classroom observations and field notes, and corroborated findings with one another.

Mr. Molina's Classroom

Through historical and literary texts and multimodal popular media, the yearlong Chicanx/Latinx studies class examined notions of colonialism, hegemony, and racism in the United States and how they affect communities of color, particularly Chicanxs and Latinxs. A veteran ethnic studies teacher, Mr. Molina taught the

elective course, which met daily for 55 minutes. A hallmark of ethnic studies and Chicanx/Latinx studies literacy curricula is the aim of encouraging students to explore themselves as racial formations (Omi & Winant, 1994) and to effect social change (de los Ríos, López, & Morrell, 2015). This was done through engaging multiple writing genres, one of which was autoethnography. Within oppressed communities of color, autoethnographic writing has been a tool for decolonial thought and praxis (Aldama & Quiñonez, 2002) and a powerful mechanism for youth of color to write against the forms of coloniality that manifest in their everyday lives (Camangian, 2010). Pratt (1992) defines autoethnography as "instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways which engage with the colonizer's own terms" (p. 6). If ethnographic texts have been historically used by the West to study the "Other," then Pratt argues that autoethnographic texts are a means for subjugated populations to respond to and dialogue with such colonial representations. As in the compelling work of Camangian (2010), Mr. Molina used autoethnography as an anticolonial pedagogical tool for students to examine the ways their identities were deeply entangled with colonial legacies.

In one lesson, Mr. Molina incorporated students' interest in the Mexican literary genre *corridos*. Corridos—historically written in Spanish—have long been central to the self-determination and literary landscape of Mexican people (Paredes, 1958). As a "border rhetoric" (Noe, 2009), corridos have origins in the nineteenth century and are short ballads that often narrativize heroes, border-conflicts, and struggles for justice (Simonette, 2001). Students listened to a border corrido in Spanish, "La Jaula de Oro," written by Norteño ensemble band Los Tigres del Norte, because it personifies "the spirit of border strife" (Paredes, 1958, p. 205) and explores the multiple identities that immigrants experience in the United States. The title, "La Jaula de Oro" or "The Golden Cage," serves as a poignant metaphor for the "American Dream," which often forces immigrants to assimilate in exchange for social and political acceptance. Students listened to the corrido in Spanish, annotating alongside the lyrics the words and themes that resonated with them. Students were then asked to write autoethnographic essays that explored the racial, cultural, and linguistic identities they had developed while navigating physical and metaphorical borders that are not always accepting of bi-/multilingual and transnational Latinx youth identities.

Upon listening to the corrido as a class, students were encouraged to think about the intergenerational relationships that exist within Latinx immigrant families and how Latinx children in the United States are often pushed to strip away their cultural and linguistic markers (Bejarano, 2005), which in turn can cause cultural tensions and a disconnect with their elders. The father figure in this corrido's lyrics states, "*Mis hijos no hablan conmigo, otro idioma han aprendido y olvidado el español. . . . Piensan como americanos, niegan que son mexicanos, aunque tengan mi color.*" (My children don't speak with me, they've learned a new language and have forgotten Spanish. . . . They think they are Americans, and deny they are Mexican, even though they have my color.) One student, Lourdes, explored in her essay how, as a child, she would regularly answer her Spanish-speaking loved ones in English:

> I began to identify as Mexican when I was young. That's because when I was little I would often talk English in front of my abuelita [grandmother]. I will always remember how she would yell at us saying "Cuando yo estoy aquí, se habla español," and in English that means "when I am here, you only speak Spanish" but I specifically remember that because one of my cousins then said, "Abuelita, this is America, We can speak English." She then said "ustedes son mexicanos, no son gringos!" We all knew we were Mexican but didn't understand why she would make such a big deal, until later we realized that my abuelita could've let us speak English if she wanted because she understood a little bit, but she didn't want us to forget Spanish or where we came from. After that I was proud to identify as Mexican, because I was able to speak two languages and have two cultures.

As we see in Lourdes's writing, her abuelita reminds Lourdes that she is *Mexican,* and that in her abuelita's presence, she and her cousins need to speak in Spanish. Lourdes's use of both Spanish and English to recount this pivotal childhood experience exemplifies her use of her fluid linguistic repertoire to describe how language ideologies have affected her life, as well as the ways in which her abuelita has helped her resist colonialist practices.

In Lourdes's essay, she continues to highlight the tensions encountered in colonial liminal spaces. Akin to the father's description of his children in the corrido, Lourdes highlights the ways that she has been perceived and treated because of her cultural and linguistic markers:

> My other Latina friends who don't speak Spanish would think that it's weird for me to speak it or others who spoke a different kind of Spanish, como el español formal [like a formal Spanish], would also say the way that I spoke it was weird, like un español quebrado [like a broken Spanish]. As time went on I stopped caring how I was seen for being Mexican and I got past how I was treated for it, because it was them who had the problem, not me.

Lourdes's lived experiences were marked by coloniality through her peers' stigmatization. She was either an English-speaking Mexican who dared to speak Spanish or an English-speaking Mexican who spoke "broken" Spanish, both perspectives that reflect colonial gazes and function to police and shame young people like Lourdes. In this context, Lourdes was not *allowed* to be a Spanish speaker of any kind, which highlights the racialized language ideologies through which Flores and Rosa (2015) argue that Spanish speakers are held to colonial standards of correctness and linguistic purity governed by privileged White listening subjects. Translanguaging, however, moves discourses away from deficit notions of "brokenness" and offers the alternative of performing a dynamic bilingualism that releases speakers from the constraints of an "Anglophone" and "Hispanophone" ideological binary (García & Leiva, 2014) which has historically rendered US Latinx immigrant youth "languageless" (Rosa, 2016).

Moreover, Lourdes's writing is a type of "syncretic text" (Cruz, as cited in Gutiérrez, 2008), or a testimony that is "situated in subjective particularity" (p. 149) and contests dominant discourses about Latinxs. Lourdes's syncretic text—one which cultivated critical consciousness, linguistic and cultural pride, and histori-

cal memory—might not have occurred had Mr. Molina not intentionally created a translanguaging classroom design for this type of border thinking and writing. The combination of autoethnography and the teacher's classroom design enabled Lourdes to question and critique the stigmatization that bilingual people like her receive, even from Latinx peers.

Ms. Ardizzone's Classroom

Ms. Ardizzone took a metalinguistic approach to her curricular design and introduced students to the idea that instead of speaking one "language" (English, Spanish, etc.), we employ any number of *language practices* with different people, in different contexts, and for different reasons. Students investigated their own language practices as well as the connections between language and identity and language and power. Through various multimodal texts, students encountered writers and other artists who engaged in metalinguistic exploration of their own language practices. Because Ms. Ardizzone wanted to bring students' language practices to the surface, she designed lessons around texts that provided students with representations of the kinds of metalinguistic awareness and exploration she wanted them to take up themselves.

The two examples discussed here employ spoken-word poetry. Like autoethnography, spoken-word poetry is deeply rooted in critical reflection and transgression. Many literacy scholars have pointed to the power of poetry to engage students of color in discourses that denounce colonial and narrow representations of their rich literate practices (Camangian, 2008; Fisher, 2005). Here, Ms. Ardizzone purposefully chose spoken-word poetry that was metalinguistic in nature, modeling the kind of thinking she wanted students to engage in as well as the use of a translingual border tongue.

During a unit that unpacked the links between language and identity, students watched a spoken-word performance by Melissa Lozada-Oliva entitled "My Spanish." Lozada-Oliva's poem explores her own language practices and attempts to make sense of how those practices connect to her evolving identity. After watching a recording of the performance and doing a close reading of the poem, Ms. Ardizzone invited students to write their own poems that explored their relationships to their language practices.

As students wrote their poems, many took the opportunity to translanguage using English and Spanish practices to engage in border thinking about monoglossic norms imposed upon their identities. For example, Anna reflected on her fluid, changing language practices, acknowledging that her audience might or might not understand her:

> My English is good enough, yet . . .
> Mi ingles a veces se cambia,
> it's okay, you'll get the idea, no es
> muy complicado. Understand? No . . . OK.
> Doesn't matter!

When Anna writes that her English is "good enough" but still sometimes changes, she communicates to her audience that this contradiction "no es muy complicado" (is not very complicated). For Anna and other urban bilinguals like her, this understanding and awareness of her own fluid, dynamic bilingualism is uncomplicated. However, in the line that follows, she anticipates her audience's lack of understanding of this basic bilingual truth. Anna acknowledges this inevitable misunderstanding *and* pushes back against the need for her audience to understand her. The last line, "Doesn't matter!" speaks to her confidence as a bilingual and her refusal to change her language practices to conform and make herself comprehensible to a monolingual audience.

In a subsequent unit, Anna engaged in translanguaging to interrogate language ideologies that question bi-/multilingual speakers' competence. The idea that a language other than English might mix with and thus "contaminate" English erases the reality of linguistic contact and, in turn, silences those speakers whose ways of languaging do not align with an ideology of separateness and purity. Interestingly, the other text that Ms. Ardizzone chose, a spoken-word poem by Jamila Lysicott entitled "3 Ways to Speak English," does not discuss bilingualism in the traditional sense. In her brilliant performance, Lysicott explores her different *English* practices: one associated with her academic life, another with her Caribbean family, and another with her friends and community in urban Brooklyn, New York. Rather than view these practices as distinct, Lysicott characterizes them as interconnected and integral to her identity as a "tri-lingual orator." The poem celebrates her linguistic complexity and indicts language ideologies rooted in coloniality. For example, she writes of her own English, "But you can't expect me to speak your history wholly while mine is broken / These words are spoken / By someone who is simply fed up with the Eurocentric ideals of this season."

Lysicott's characterization of her English as "broken" is one that students in the class investigated at length. Though some took issue with the phrase, others understood Lysicott's wording to mean that if her language was "broken," it was only because it had been "stolen" and "raped" away throughout history. This text, like Lozada-Oliva's poem, is metalinguistic in nature, engaged in writing from the borders back to empire, and served as a mentor text for students' own border thinking. In a journal entry, Anna responded using her own interrelated language practices to the following lines of Lysicott's poem:

> But do not judge me by my language and assume
> That I'm too ignorant to teach

In response, Anna wrote:

> This was powerful for me. To me, a person that could speak more than one language is the best person to teach due to the fact that students won't be learning things in just one simple language but in multiple ones. When people tell her she can't teach it's like saying, "Oh yo no se why you so ignorant, para que you want to teach." What I liked about this was that people that know many languages are not ignorant, they are really living

their lives in different languages at the same time. To me, being able to mix languages
is something everyone should be proud of and should share with the rest of the world.

Anna's reflection on the poem reveals both her grappling with the ideas put forth
in the poem and her pride in her own "mix" of language practices. She begins by
aligning herself with Lysicott and talking back to the same people Lysicott did. To
do so, Anna engages in translanguaging and takes down those who judge Lysicott
as ignorant. Anna uses English and Spanish fluidly in her rebuke, which can be
read in two ways. In one way, it is an authentic representation of how she uses
both languages together to go after someone she sees as ignorant. Over the course
of the year, translanguaging was often used in this way, both when students joked
around and when they expressed real anger or frustration.

 In another way, the translanguaged castigation could be read as a pointed
critique of this line of thinking. By using two of her language practices so fluidly in
this line of her journal, she challenges the idea that Lysicott—and she herself, as a
bilingual speaker—would be judged too ignorant to teach. Instead, Anna turns the
tables and calls this imagined group of people ignorant themselves, all while using
language practices that only she and other bilinguals would understand. In her
journal, Anna grapples with and talks back to the kind of linguistic discrimination
that Lysicott (and, perhaps, she) encounters through a transgressive "other tongue"
(Mignolo, 2000, p. 249). Anna's translanguaging here adds power and nuance to
her rebuke, emphasizing that this monolingual, colonial ideology—not Lysicott
or urban bilinguals like her—is indeed ignorant.

Making Space for Translanguaging

In putting our data side by side, we wondered how the two different classrooms
and students' writings interacted with one another. Though the studies differed
in focus, our shared interest in one another's work enabled us to see important
connections, noteworthy differences, and implications in and across our data.
First, we saw that an educator's commitment to enacting a translanguaging stance
through a transgressive curricular and instructional design could result in border
thinking and border writing, no matter the context. Given the malleable nature
of a translanguaging approach in English education, racially, linguistically, and
culturally diverse teachers can implement translanguaging pedagogies. Although
Mr. Molina shared much with his students by way of ethnicity, class, and language
background and Ms. Ardizzone did not, they both were able to leverage their stu-
dents' bilingualism through student-centered, culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012)
curricula. Both teachers created literacy units that paired translingual texts with
critiques of linguistic colonization to mobilize students' racial, ethnic, and linguistic
social worlds towards the center of their writing.

 Second, Lourdes's and Anna's writing explores the possibility of evading
the colonial expectation that their language practices (and they themselves) be
"legible." In their writing, Lourdes and Anna normalize and make sense of their
own language practices and engage in a discourse of resistance to coloniality in

a translanguaged "other tongue." This opens up space for an alternative, proudly bilingual enunciation of themselves. The kinds of classroom activities we saw in Mr. Molina's and Ms. Ardizzone's classes—including the use of metalinguistic mentor texts that encouraged border thinking and translanguaging—highlight what Mignolo (2000) calls "cracks" in the "modern world system" (p. 23). Both teachers' translanguaging designs were integral to creating an environment where students began to take risks and break out of the monoglossic mold of school writing. By providing students with models of translanguaged writing, Mr. Molina and Ms. Ardizzone set the stage for the student writing that occurred in the classroom.

Last, the distinct geographical contexts of our two studies are important to consider. Los Angeles and New York City have had divergent immigration patterns, and thus students in the two classrooms had unique sociopolitical histories and experiences. The differences we saw in the two focal students' classroom writing indicate that the socio-historical context of translanguaging matters. Though both pedagogical contexts built off students' locally situated histories, knowledges, and experiences and made space for the emergence of language and literacy practices we had not seen in other more "traditional" English classrooms, we nevertheless noted distinctions between Anna's and Lourdes's writing. In Los Angeles, Lourdes more explicitly identified herself culturally and linguistically throughout her writing than Anna. This could be because Lourdes was participating in an English class with an ethnic studies focus while Anna was in a "mainstream" English course. The actively antiracist and decolonial thinking evident in Lourdes's writing requires us as researchers and practitioners to reorient the English classroom to what Emma Perez (1999) identifies as a "decolonial imaginary," a place where people can imagine themselves as decolonial subjects whose futures will be on their own terms. A decolonial imaginary means moving past simply "allowing" students to draw on their everyday language practices and instead centers instruction and curricula around who and where students are as historically colonized and racialized subjects.

Reimagining the English Classroom

Restrictive language policies in US schools continue to work against students' translanguaging. Even in "bilingual" programs—and particularly in the burgeoning "dual language" programs across the country—students are held to monoglossic standards that separate their languages into bounded categories. As a result, students like Anna and Lourdes have not been exposed to pedagogy that emphasizes the interconnectedness of their language practices and the possibilities inherent in their translanguaging. Bilingual/multilingual students must be made aware that their ability to translanguage is integral both to their academic success and to their positioning as border thinkers who have the power to critique their English-medium learning spaces. The Every Student Succeeds Act includes what the Obama administration called "Investing in Innovation," which provides grants to schools and other educational organizations that wish to "expand the implementation of, and investment in, innovative practices that are demonstrated to have an impact on improving student achievement" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). We

believe that as one such innovation, translanguaging could be part of a larger reimagining of the education of emergent bilingual students across the country.

Perhaps due to the lack of practice and explicit teaching, it is important to note that students' translanguaging did not appear in abundance in either classroom. While Anna and Lourdes were emergent bilinguals, and their teachers encouraged them to draw from their fluid linguistic repertoires, they still wrote primarily in English. This fact reminds us that Anna and Lourdes are products of years of mono-lingual, subtractive, and highly audited forms of schooling. Emergent bilinguals like Anna and Lourdes are constantly required to "perform linguistically in the dominant language according to a standardized variety imposed by the majority language community" (García, 2015, p. 131). The coloniality of these students' ways of languaging and being is always at work, even when teachers invite them to critique the very notion of linguistic colonization in their lives.

Early in our analysis, we found ourselves anticipating the question from scholars and educators, "How much translanguaging must there be in order to call it *translanguaging*?" Upon further reflection and discussion, we have come to see that our work invites a critique of this very line of questioning. Though students in both studies drew mostly on English in their classroom work, we do not believe this points to a deficit in students' bilingualism or indicates that the use of language practices other than English are unnecessary, two common arguments against translanguaging in the English classroom.

We will never know the extent to which bilingual students engage in translan-guaging. As educators, we are only privy to the external manifestations of students' voices—the words they speak aloud and the words they write on the page. We do not know the sound of students' intrapersonal voices (García et al., 2017), those they hear as they alone make sense of their lived experiences in and out of school. To try to define translanguaging as a countable phenomenon, to track and organize students' fluid language practices in order to make them legible, is itself a colonialist process. Instead of attempting to control and "count" translanguaging, then, we urge educators to adopt a translanguaging stance that cedes some of that control and allows students' voices—however they emerge—to take center stage. It is our belief that taking up a translanguaging lens can allow room for more insurgent knowledges to destabilize and subvert the colonialities of power, knowledge, and being inscribed in dominant literacy and language classrooms.

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NOTES

1. We recognize the contradictions embedded in the colonial label *Latino.* As researchers studying Mexican and Dominican youth, we use *Latino* to describe geographically derived national origin groups that compose a larger US racialized language community from Latin America. Additionally, we use *x* in *Latinx* as a gender-inclusive alternative to the masculinist *Latino* and the gender binary in *Latina/o.*

2. *Languaging,* according to Makoni and Pennycook (2007), refers to the selection and utilization of social features by speakers "in a seamless and complex network of multiple semiotic signs" (García, 2011, p. 7).

3. With the permission of the teachers, we use their actual names to highlight real teachers enacting the courage and pedagogical innovations that Morrell (2015) calls for in twenty-first-century literacy classrooms.

4. Students' names are pseudonyms.

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