Pockets of hope: Cases of linguistic flexibility in the classroom

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ABSTRACT

EN This study adds to the small but growing body of work demonstrating the instructional potential of linguistic flexibility and hybridity to support student learning. Our findings from two elementary classrooms illustrate the way that translanguaging pedagogy contributes to students' understanding of content-area material as well as their mastery of language arts skills. Student language practices described as reflecting academic language, language variation, and code-switching represent three domains that are often talked about separately. We consider the ways both focal teachers created spaces for students to draw on linguistic resources across these domains. In our discussion of the findings and their implications, we attempt to unite these perspectives in order to extend current understandings about translanguaging pedagogy and highlight ways to value and employ a broader spectrum of language practices for academic purposes.

Key words: LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES; TRANSLANGUAGING; ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

ES Este estudio contribuye a la creciente, aunque todavía limitada, literatura científica que demuestra el potencial pedagógico de la flexibilidad e hibridez lingüística para el aprendizaje. Los resultados del análisis de dos clases primarias ilustran cómo la pedagogía translingual contribuye a que los estudiantes comprendan la materia a la vez que desarrollan sus habilidades lingüísticas. A menudo, las prácticas lingüísticas de los estudiantes que reflejan su uso del lenguaje académico, la variación lingüística y los cambios de código se tratan por separado. Sin embargo, aquí analizamos cómo los dos instructores crearon espacios para que los estudiantes movilizaran sus recursos lingüísticos en los tres ámbitos. En el apartado de discusión de los resultados y sus implicaciones, aunamos estas perspectivas con el fin de extender nuestro entendimiento la pedagogía translingual y destacar maneras en las que podemos valorar y emplear un amplio abanico de prácticas lingüísticas para fines académicos.

Palabras clave: IDEOLOGÍAS LINGÜÍSTICAS; TRANSLANGUAGING; EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA

IT Questo studio si aggiunge al piccolo ma crescente corpo di lavoro che dimostra il potenziale didattico della flessibilità e dell'ibridazione linguistica a supporto dell'apprendimento degli studenti. I risultati emersi dal nostro studio di due classi di scuola primaria illustrano come la pedagogia translanguaging contribuisca alla comprensione dei contenuti disciplinari da parte degli studenti e alla loro padronanza delle abilità linguistiche. Le pratiche linguistiche degli studenti, che mostrano il loro uso del linguaggio academico, della variazione linguistica e del *code-switching,* rappresentano tre domini di cui spesso si parla separatamente. In questo studio, invece, consideriamo i modi in cui entrambi gli insegnanti coinvolti hanno creato spazi affinché gli studenti attingessero alle risorse linguistiche di tutti e tre i domini. Nella discussione dei risultati e le loro implicazioni uniamo queste prospettive al fine di estendere le attuali conoscenze sulla pedagogia translanguaging e di sottolineare come valorizzare e impiegare un più ampio spettro di pratiche linguistiche per scopi accademici.

Parole chiave: IDEOLOGIE LINGUISTICHE, TRANSLANGUAGING, ISTRUZIONE PRIMARIA

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1. Introduction

The overarching aim in this research project is to increase our understanding of how teachers can create and sustain equitable learning spaces for linguistically diverse students. While researchers have convincingly established the importance of students' everyday language practices as resources for learning (Gort, 2006; Lee, 1997; Martínez, 2010; Orellana & Reynolds, 2008), teachers often tacitly or explicitly convey that these practices are non-academic or inappropriate for school (Alim, 2005). Hybrid language practices, in which students communicate using more than one named language, are both typical of bilingual communities and often highly stigmatized, by teachers and by speakers alike (Martínez, 2013; Urciuoli, 1996). The current school accountability climate in the United States emphasizing standardized testing, and consequently monolingual language policy, reinforces these deficit views towards language hybridity, promoting ideologies of language standardization and linguistic purism (Menken, 2008). And yet, in our research, we have found pockets of hope, specifically classroom spaces in which students engage fluidly in their home and community language practices for meaning-making. In this study, we examine the pedagogical practices of two elementary teachers in central Texas who valued a wide range of student language performances. Our central guiding research question was: How do these teachers create classroom spaces for culturally and linguistically diverse students to engage in diverse language practices?

This study adds to the small but growing body of research demonstrating the academic value of linguistic flexibility in supporting student learning. We also consider the way that speakers cross dialectal as well as linguistic borders in the service of their learning. Our findings illustrate how translanguaging pedagogy supports a broad range of student language performances and contributes to students' understanding of content-area material as well as their mastery of language arts skills.

2. Theoretical perspectives and literature review

How language is defined and understood is central to the purpose of this study. We draw on an understanding of language as a social practice rather than a discrete object (Pennycook, 2010). García's (2009) conception of translanguaging, defined as the everyday language practices of bilinguals, aligns with this perspective on language. Translanguaging, as defined by García, goes beyond code-switching to connote a single linguistic repertoire. Theoretically, this definition encompasses a vast array of bilingual language practices, including shifts between named languages as well as dialectal shifts within named languages. Studies exploring translanguaging in schools have traditionally focused on the practice of shifting between named languages (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Gort & Sembiante, 2015; Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014; Seltzer, Collins, & Angeles, 2016). In this study we consider language practices both along a Spanish-English and standard-vernacular continuum. We use the term *linguistic flexibility* to emphasize a broad range of language practices, characterized by hybridity and variation, within classroom spaces.

At the same time, we understand the differences between Spanish and English and "standard" and "vernacular" to be socially constructed and subject to change over time. In considering the kinds of language labeled "academic" or "standard" or "appropriate for school," our work builds on previous contributions that establishing the racialized and arbitrary nature of such labels. For example, Aukerman (2007) considered the ways that both teachers and researchers have framed bilingual students' language use as either social BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) or decontextualized, cognitively demanding CALPs (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiencies). Her analysis demonstrates that language use qualified as BICS can be quite cognitively demanding and not very "basic"; conversely, what is labeled as academic is socioculturally defined and embedded in social relationships. Others have asserted that the "standard language" which is held up as exemplary is frequently based on written, edited language, rather than spontaneous, spoken language (Lippi-Green, 2012). Rather, "standard English" is closer to an ideal and cultural emblem than a set of defined linguistic practices (Silverstein, 1996). Finally, critiques of appropriateness-based discourses—the notion that some language practices are more appropriate for school than others—have highlighted how language practices considered appropriate and normative when spoken by white students are often perceived as inappropriate when spoken by students of color (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

At the same time, language continues to serve as a gatekeeper in school, and academic disciplines, like other subcultures, have their own particular ways with words (Schleppegrell, 2004). In our work, we echo the position of scholars who argue that rather than more effectively teach students how to switch between "standard" and "nonstandard" or "academic" and "everyday" language practices, we can support them in becoming, "effective communicators by doing what we all do best, what comes naturally: blending,

merging, meshing dialects" (Young, 2009, p. 72). We add that the ability to blend, merge, and mesh both dialects and languages has the potential to support bilingual students as they learn about and through language. Our work also embraces the ideological underpinnings of translanguaging, and views language hybridity and students' fluid bilingualism as a resource (Celic & Seltzer, 2011; García, 2009).

Translanguaging encompasses both language practices and the use of these diverse practices for meaning-making (García & Li Wei, 2014). In a school setting, translanguaging as a pedagogical approach allows and supports spaces of linguistic flexibility for learning. Since Cummins (2005) called for the development of translanguaging pedagogies much research has moved in this direction (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Flores & García, 2013; Gort & Pontier, 2013). Research has examined how diverse language practices can be used across different instructional programs including English as a Second Language (ESL) (Zapata & Laman, 2016) and forms of bilingual education (Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014) as well as within specific academic areas including literacy (Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007), and content-area instruction.

Translanguaging pedagogies have been connected to positive academic outcomes. For example, through their exploration of Gujarati and Chinese complementary school in the United Kingdom, Creese and Blackledge (2010) identified how instructors' translanguaging practices helped increase student engagement and access to difficult texts. Seltzer et al. (2016) found that translanguaging pedagogy in an 11th-grade English literature classroom in the United States allowed students to increase meaning-making in literacy activities. Sayer (2013) examined how students' practice of shifting between English and Spanish as well as the vernacular afforded academic, linguistic, and identity development. More current research has considered how translanguaging instructional approaches and strategies combine to form a pedagogical framework. Research identifies three components of a translanguaging pedagogy: stance, design, and shifts (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017; García & Kleyn, 2016). An educator's stance includes his or her understanding of language and language ideologies. The translanguaging design includes how teachers plan to utilize diverse language practices in the classroom and how shifts in language use result from moment-to-moment in-class instructional decisions. While this pedagogical framework is well-developed theoretically, more classroom-based research is needed to identify possible strengths and challenges in practice.

Just as researchers have explored translingual pedagogies that make use of more than one language, similar work has been done to develop pedagogies for students who are bidialectal. Strategies have spanned a wide continuum, ranging from the use of dialect readers (Simpkins & Simpkins, 1981) to the use of contrastive analysis that highlights differences between language varieties (Taylor, 1989; Wright, 1999) to curricular experiences that promote awareness of students' own language and linguistic variation generally (Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999; Henderson & Ingram, 2018), and, most recently, to instruction that works to instill critical awareness of how linguistic discrimination upholds inequitable power relations (Alim, 2005; García, 2017; Purnell, Idsardi, & Baugh, 1999).

Carol Lee's (1995) cultural modeling approach is one example of ways that teachers have been able to position linguistic diversity and flexibility as an asset rather than an impediment to learning. She outlined the respects in which some rhetorical aspects of African American Language (also known as Black Language, Black English, African American Vernacular English, and Black English Vernacular) are analogous to the practices of literary analysis. This work and that of her colleagues further demonstrates that encouraging students to use, value, and develop the full spectrum of their linguistic repertoire supports literacy development and achievements (Lee, 1995; Smitherman, 1994). Researchers extending this cultural modeling framework to Spanish-English bilingual students have illustrated similar relationships between the often-stigmatized language practices of bilinguals and literacy skills such as audience awareness and the communication of nuance (Martínez, 2010; Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner, & Meza, 2003). Collectively, the contributions of these scholars have shown that everyday language practices, while often stigmatized by teachers, can contribute in important ways to children's learning. Although the complex language practices of children and youth have been extensively documented, a better understanding of how teachers can use linguistic diversity as a pedagogical resource is still needed.

A few studies have described translanguaging across both linguistic and dialectal boundaries in secondary settings. Martinez (2016) describes the language practices of Lorenzo, a high school student in Los Angeles. Martinez observed that Lorenzo's linguistic flexibility and ability to move seamlessly between varieties of English and Spanish was typical of many students in linguistically diverse communities and often recognized by sociolinguists; however, such abilities are rarely acknowledged or valued by educators. Instead, students like Lorenzo who speak Spanish are often perceived as inherently monolingual, and

students who speak stigmatized dialects in school are usually corrected when they use them (Ball, Skerrett, & Martínez, 2011). In contrast to this norm, de los Ríos and Seltzer (2017) describe two secondary classrooms where teachers asked students to study and respond to translanguaging texts, noting that this created space for students to critique linguistic discrimination and develop personally meaningful and linguistically dexterous writing practices typically censored in English classrooms. Building on this scant body of literature, the study described here contributes to research by focusing on translanguaging in elementary schools, which includes shifting both within and across languages. Specifically, we focus on two teachers who embrace a translanguaging stance and examine how they create linguistically flexible spaces. In turn, we highlight the academic benefits of their translanguaging pedagogy for literary development and engagement with cognitively demanding content.

3. Methods of inquiry

This dual case study draws on data from two separate larger studies carried out during the 2013-2014 school year. The collaboration for this article focused on teachers' translanguaging pedagogy. Both teachers (whom we are calling Ms. Barry and Mr. Clarke) were White, had a bilingual endorsement as part of their teacher certification, and were teaching in classrooms (1st grade ESL classroom and 3rd grade bilingual classroom) with predominantly Latinx Spanish-English bilingual students. The teachers were purposefully selected based on their pluralist language ideologies and expertise in their fields. Ms. Barry was recommended as an exemplary teacher by local teacher educators and, when approached, expressed both pluralist ideologies and an interest in collaborating with a researcher. Mr. Clarke was identified through his participation in a language ideology survey taken by a random sample of 323 educators in the school district. He was selected for a case-study based on his highly pluralist ideologies, reflected in his survey responses and a follow-up interview. Data sources for both case studies included ethnographic fieldnotes from participant observations in classrooms; video and audio recordings of children and teachers in whole-group, small group, and dyadic interaction; written artifacts, including work samples from children and teachers' notes and lesson plans; and transcripts of semi-structured interviews with teachers and children. In addition, we both engaged in retrospective interviews (Martínez, 2014; Rampton, 2003) with each teacher during which we presented them with pieces of data for their reaction and opinion.

In Durán's case study, she visited Ms. Barry's classroom three times weekly for one school year, with each visit lasting approximately 45 minutes. Data sources included ethnographic fieldnotes, over 30 hours of video and audio-recordings, collection of artifacts like student work, and student interviews. Ms. Barry's classroom was located in a school in central Texas, which according to the state reports, was at the time 93.6% economically disadvantaged, 85.1% Latina/o, and 10% African American. The remainder of the student body was White, mixed-race, Native, or other. In this school, 50.3% of students were labeled "Limited English Proficient" and participated in the school's ESL or bilingual programs. Within Ms. Barry's classroom, all students had been identified as English learners based on home language surveys; however, her classroom was designated ESL rather than bilingual.

In Henderson's case study, she visited Mr. Clarke's class for two full school days followed by targeted visits (n = 14) for a minimum of two hours during the spring semester. Data sources included approximately eight hours of video recording, classroom artifacts (photographs, writing samples, etc.), and a language ideology survey. Observations were strategically planned to include a period of time before or after instruction for informal interviews (lunch, specials period, or recess). Mr. Clarke's classroom was also located in a school in central Texas, which, according to the state reports, was at the time 93% economically disadvantaged and approximately 86% Latina/o. The remainder of the student body was African American, White, mixed-race, Native, or other. In this school 41% of students were labeled "Limited English Proficient" and served in the school's ESL or bilingual programs. Mr. Clarke's classroom was designated as a one-way dual language bilingual education classroom, and all of his students were identified as English learners based on home language surveys.

Data analysis was ongoing and began alongside data collection, which consisted of expansive field notes and analytic memos (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). The analytic process involved tracking language practices through video logs. Classroom video was logged in 1-minute intervals. The log included a space to summarize what was happening in the video, a space for coding what occurred inductively, and a space for coding deductively with pre-determined language codes (i.e., TEO: teacher English-only). Video segments identified as including translanguaging practices were selected for transcription, coding, and thematic

analysis. Similarly, we analyzed student artifacts featuring translanguaging (Glesne, 2010; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). We defined translanguaging as instances of shifting between named languages (Spanish and English) and/or dialectal styles. Engaging in data display, the analytic process included examining student writing across students at several different points in time across the year in order to document commonalities and changes. We compared and contrasted our findings to consider how both teachers valued and utilized translanguaging practices in their classrooms (Merriam, 1998). We re-visited the classroom videos and artifacts drawing on our evolving themes for (dis)confirming evidence.

We recognize that our positionalities influenced data collection and analysis. Durán identifies as a mixed (White and Latina) female and Henderson as a White female. Both researchers are bilingual (Spanish/English) and, when possible, tried to mirror the language choices of the teacher and students when engaging with them. We also brought a pedagogical lens to our investigation and analysis based on our prior educational experiences as a former ESL and bilingual teacher in the United States (Durán) and a former bilingual elementary teacher in Mexico (Henderson).

4. Findings

Across cases, our analyses suggested that the teachers encouraged translanguaging as a literary technique and as a means to access subject content. In this section, we begin by presenting data from Ms. Barry's 1st grade classroom during language arts instruction, followed by Mr. Clarke's 3rd grade classroom during math and science instruction.

4.1. Ms. Barry: Linguistic flexibility as literary

In our first case, the teacher's positive evaluation of translanguaging shaped her teaching in significant ways. Ms. Barry noted that the school policy was heavily focused on transitioning students to all-English quickly. However, she felt that it was important to value and support students' bilingualism. In her words, "And here I feel very protective of Spanish, and I think I'm one of a few teachers at my school that really believes speaking Spanish is important and building off your home language is important" (Teacher Interview, January 2014). She attributed this pro-bilingualism stance to her graduate coursework in bilingual/bicultural education. Ms. Barry noted that, after having studied bilingualism intensively, she no longer felt comfortable enforcing rigid rules about when students could use their home language. She had previously worked in schools with strict language separation policies and had herself upheld those policies, however, after learning more about bilingual education, "You can't just go back to doing things the way you did before, because there's a piece of you that's like, wait, that's wrong" (Teacher Interview, January 2014). In her estimation, her knowledge about bilingualism and bilingual education shaped her response to her current school's language policy and led her to encourage bilingualism and biliteracy even in a school context where this approach was not emphasized or supported.

This positive stance towards linguistic flexibility and translanguaging influenced how she taught her bilingual students to read and write. As part of her writing instruction, Ms. Barry invited students to closely study and approximate the kinds of language use modeled by published children's books authors. This writing pedagogy, in which "mentor texts" are used as examples and inspiration, often leads students to appropriate (Wertsch, 1991) the language of the author, first in imitative and subsequently in original ways. These authors and their linguistic choices, then, help apprentice students into an understanding of the possibilities of creating literature and what counts as literary. Importantly, Ms. Barry deliberately and regularly featured books by bilingual Latinx writers in which the author made use of translanguaging. For example, she planned an extended author study of the work of bilingual Chicana author Carmen Tafolla, in which students read many of Tafolla's books and discussed her language use. She asked students to consider which of Tafolla's composing decisions they might try out in their own writing. This author study included Tafolla's *What can you do with a paleta?/¿Qué puedes hacer con una paleta?* (2009) and *What can you do with a rebozo?/¿Qué puedes hacer con un rebozo?* (2009). These books describe possible uses for a *paleta* (popsicle) and *rebozo* (shawl), respectively. They are published in parallel translation, and the English text includes a number of Spanish words and phrases. This kind of translanguaging is a hallmark of Latinx and Chicanx literature as written by adults (Rudin,1996).

Following their study of Tafolla's writing, a number of students tried out this kind of translanguaging style in their own writing. The following page from a student-created book (Figure 1) represents a typical example of students' writing, using the occasional single-word insertion of Spanish in a mostly English text:
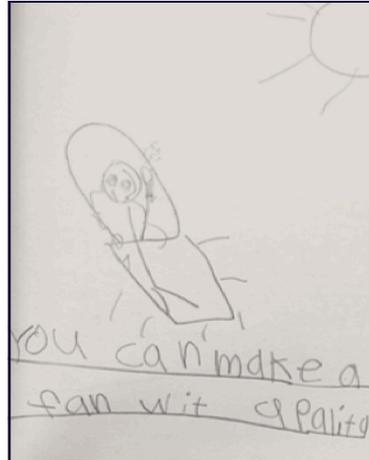
Figure 1. You can make a fan with a paleta.

Like the examples from Tafolla's (2009) *What can you do with a paleta?/¿Qué puedes hacer con una paleta?*, this student used a single word in Spanish (*paleta*) and explored potential context of use ("You can make a fan with a paleta"). This specific pattern of bilingual writing diverged from the usual patterns of mixing in students' oral speech, as explained below. However, it was in keeping with conventions of the genre. Bilingual children's picture books typically feature either single-word insertions or parallel translations, rather than the unmarked and integrated use of Spanish and English characteristic of many bilinguals' speech (García, 2011). This limited form of translanguaging likely stems, at least in part, from the gatekeepers (editors, reviewers, publishers) of children's literature, many of whom assume that bilingual books should be written so as to remain accessible to monolingual English speakers (Pérez & Enciso, 2017). It may be that an express focus on bilingual audiences would change the kind of translanguaging that is visible, both in published children's literature and in the writing that children do.

Students' linguistic flexibility also appeared sensitive to genre conventions. While children engaged in language mixing in both speech and writing, their speech was often deeply hybrid, with mixing evident both within and across sentence boundaries (e.g., "We love tamales too, especially de pollo") The following language chart illustrates the kind of translanguaging that was typical of students' oral language use (see Martínez, Durán, & Hikida, in press, for further discussion):
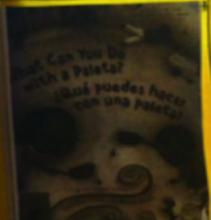

Figure 2. Excerpt of language chart.

Evident in this chart of children' verbatim talk is the kind of translanguaging common in children's oral language. Children's talk often featured the influence of both Spanish and English at the lexical and syntactical level (e.g., "the girls shared with the woman vendiendo frutas"; "He buy[s] paletas que te pica at the store with his mom.") However, when children wrote books during writers' workshop, they typically either wrote using single-word insertions of Spanish words or parallel translations. This difference between their written and oral language use suggests that part of children's learning was an understanding of the conventions of different modes of communication. Their ability to shift between styles and modes of translanguaging suggests the mastery of state language arts standards (e.g., "understand how communication changes when moving from one genre of media to another," Texas Education Agency, 2010, §110.14).

Moreover, the possibilities for linguistic flexibility in Ms. Barry' classroom extended beyond just mixing Spanish and English. For example, during a unit of study on poetry, Ms. Barry shared with the class a number of poems from the anthology *Hip Hop Speaks to Children* (Giovanni, 2008), which features a range of different poetic examples of African American Language (AAL), such as Gwendolyn Brook's "We Real Cool" and Lucille Clifton's "why some people be mad at me all the time." In writing poetry, one student, Jesenia, occasionally made use of linguistic features typically associated with AAL, such as copula deletion (e.g., "they Ø sweet") or the habitual or invariant be (to indicate an ongoing action), in some of her poetry, as in the following:

> Cherries
> Are good
> they taste
> Sweet
> They always
> Be sweet.

Both the invariant be and copula deletion are distinctive feature of AAL (Rickford & Rickford, 2000) and are unlikely to reflect the influence of Spanish, as Spanish has no parallel linguistic features. Jesenia's use of syntactic features associated with AAL may have also been influenced by her teacher's provision of published children's poetry that included them. It is also possible Jesenia's use of copula deletion (in other poems) and the invariant be in this one ("they always be sweet") may represent examples of what Rampton (1995) termed "crossing," or the use of linguistic features identified most closely with another ethnic group. Just as not all African American children make use of AAL, many users of AAL are not African American (Bucholtz, 1999; Chun, 2001). In schools like this one, where Latinx and African American students compose the majority of the student body, researchers have documented similar kinds of language crossing or sharing across social and ethnic groups (Martinez, 2016; Paris, 2009). However, poetry seemed to be the only genre where these features were evident in Jesenia's writing. Further suggesting an attentiveness to genre, Jesenia's poem about cherries used line breaks, color, and text placement in order to make her poem visually resemble a cherry. This technique (making a *concrete poem*) had also been highlighted by the teacher in published collections of poetry. Collectively, these writing moves suggest that Jesenia was paying close attention to the kinds of creative possibilities available in the genre of poetry, as modeled in published anthologies, and then exploring the wide spectrum of options. Her flexible use of language echoed those of accomplished, published poets and suggested her own emerging command of the literary form.

Although Ms. Barry did not explicitly discuss features of AAL on any of the days where she was observed, it is possible that such discussions occurred on other days. Engaging in metalinguistic conversations with this book or others like it might have created opportunities for students to engage with the larger questions of how language practices come to be associated with "standardness" or not (de los Ríos & Seltzer, 2017). However, Ms. Barry's decision to prominently feature authors who wrote using language practices that are often stigmatized or corrected in classrooms appeared to have created opportunities for her students to see such practices as both academic and literary.

4.1. Mr. Clarke: Linguistic flexibility as a means to access subject content in math and science

In the second classroom, the teacher (Mr. Clarke) strategically engaged in translanguaging pedagogy. He used both Spanish, English, and varieties of Spanish and English during instruction and encouraged students to draw on their full linguistic repertoires to access content material. Mr. Clarke taught the science and math portion of the curriculum to two groups of students, while his co-teacher taught language arts and

social studies. In this bilingual classroom context, there was no separation of language or restriction of hybrid practices. In the linguistic analysis of the first video, which was 15 minutes long, Mr. Clarke shifted between English and Spanish 26 times. His flexible language policy was based on his view that translanguaging was both normal and useful. He explained, "Yo creo que hacer el 'code-switching' es algo muy funcional, es lo que hace la gente bilingüe siempre cada día" (*I think that doing 'code-switching' is something very functional. It is what bilingual people do every day*) (Teacher Interview, February 2014). He continued to explain that he would often let students speak any language in his classroom for content knowledge development, saying "con tal de que haya comunicación está muy bien" (*as long as there is communication, it's very good*) (Teacher Interview, February 2014). While Mr. Clarke's flexible language policy could be critiqued as appearing to lack structure and intentionality, ongoing classroom observation and analysis revealed that Mr. Clarke's curricular design and translanguaging shifts (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Sletzer, 2017) were strategic, purposeful, and useful for both language development and access to subject content. Mr. Clarke's science classes involved hands-on activities, including science experiments, scientific observation and recording, and reporting of results. To develop these science skills, Mr. Clarke both allowed students to access their full language repertoires and validated their choices. This linguistic flexibility reflecting a translanguaging pedagogy was consistent across all science class observations. For example, during one science unit, each student was provided with a seed in a petri dish and a graphic organizer to record observations of how the seed was changing and developing. On the wall Mr. Clarke hung a vocabulary anchor chart with key vocabulary in Spanish and English (i.e., *seed coat/recubrimiento*) and a list of cognates (*germination/germinación*). After completing their observations and recordings on their graphic organizers, selected students shared their findings with the whole class on the overhead projector. Some students recorded predominantly in English or Spanish, while others drew on both. In Excerpt 1, the interaction between Mr. Clarke and a student (Karla) illustrates this translanguaging pedagogy and the validation of linguistic fluidity for academic learning:

Excerpt 1.

1.	Mr. Clarke	Karla, what seed are you doing?
2.	Karla	(Karla walking to the front of the room) Sunflower (Karla places her observation sheet on the overhead monitor)
3.	Mr. Clarke	Sunflower. ¿Que nos cuentas en el mundo de girasoles? [*What can you tell us about the world of sunflowers?*]
4.	Karla	Observé que el girasol ya creció (inaudible) [*I observed that the sunflower already grew (inaudible)*]
5.	Mr. Clarke	(Teacher pointing at the projected writing "Obreve") ¿Que dice al principio? Perdón. [*What does it say at the beginning? Sorry*]
6.	Karla	Observé [*I observed*]
7.	Mr. Clarke	(Teacher pointing to the projected words and reading) Oh! Observé que mi sunflower ya creció una hoja seed coat. *[Oh! I observed that my sunflower already grew a seed coat leaf.]*
8.	Mr. Clarke	¿Se está cambiando de color, Karla? [*Is it changing color, Karla?*]
9.	Karla	(Karla shakes her head no)

In line 1, Mr. Clarke initiated the interaction in English asking Karla about her seed while she walked to the front of the room and Karla answered in English. Mr Clarke re-voiced her answer "sunflower" in line three, but then shifted to Spanish and asked Karla to tell the class what she learned about "el mundo de girasoles" (*the world of sunflowers*). By re-voicing Karla's response, he ratified her response, and by shifting to Spanish he developed a linguistic connection, specifically the content-based vocabulary word *sunflower/girasol*. Karla's written text was displayed on the overhead and read, "Obreve que Mi Sun flower ya le crecio una hoja seed coat" (*I observed that my sunflower already grew a seed coat leaf*). The written text included translanguaging along the Spanish-English continuum. Karla combined both Spanish and English words in her observation. She also departed from additional standard conventions including writing "Obreve" versus *Observé*, capitalizing the M in *mi* and *S* in *sunflower*, and writing *sunflower* as two words. Yet, she departed from what she wrote in her oral explanation substituting *girasol* for *sunflower* in line 4. By doing

this, Karla positioned herself as a competent bilingual who knew the content-based vocabulary word in both languages.

In line 5 Mr. Clarke pointed to her sentence and asked in Spanish what it said, indicating his inability in the moment to decode Karla's written "obreve" for *observe* (*I observed*). Immediately following the question, he said "perdón" (*sorry*), placing the breakdown in communication on himself, the reader, rather than Karla as writer. This subtle addition potentially prevented Karla from becoming discouraged about her writing. In line 6 Karla clarified orally in Spanish that she wrote "observe" (*I observed*). Having received the clarification, in line 7, Mr. Clarke read Karla's entire written observation. Importantly he did not modify her hybrid language choices. Rather, after having read her observational recording, he asked a follow-up content question in line 9 in Spanish, "¿Se está cambiando de color, Karla?" (*Is it changing color, Karla?*). In this brief interaction, Mr. Clarke validated and normalized Karla's bilingual writing by reading it out loud to the classroom and focusing on its content rather than form. His follow-up content question further prioritized access to content and content understanding over the reproduction of standardized linguistic form. At the same time, classroom language development did occur. Both Mr. Clarke and Karla used and modeled content-area vocabulary word including seed coat and sunflower.

Mr. Clarke and Karla's interaction illustrated linguistic flexibility, including translanguaging shifts (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017), engaged in by both teacher and student. This linguistic flexibility during a science lesson included variation within Spanish. In a separate science unit investigating and observing crayfish, another student Marta shared her recording that her crayfish "se echó pa'tras" (*It moved backwards*), using a vernacular form of Spanish. This example is a calque (*echar pa'tras* = to move backwards) borrowed from the English phrase and translated into Spanish commonly associated with Spanglish. Again, Mr. Clarke repeated and normalized this linguistic variation of Spanish, embracing it as a tool for content-based investigation and meaning-making.

Mr. Clarke used the same approach—modeling and allowing linguistic flexibility for problem solving and meaning-making—during math instruction. Standardized test preparation for the 3rd grade State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) math exam was a mandated part of the curriculum. The school provided each teacher with required test preparation booklets. Mr. Clarke worked with his students on testing strategies. One key strategy was to identify the pattern in the provided answers. He debunked the standardized test format for the students in the following way, telling students: "When we look at these problems, two are dumb, one is tricky and one is for realz" (Classroom Observation, April 2014). He intentionally used dialectal language that was familiar and common in his students' repertoires to demystify and take power away from the test. Students would identify the pattern and make statements like "D is for realz" or "A and C are dumb."

Students were also able to draw on their full language repertoires when solving math problems. In Excerpt 2, Mr. Clarke was reviewing practice test problems that the students just completed:

Excerpt 2.

1.	Mr. Clarke	Okay, read it for us please.
2.	Gustavo	¿En español? Porque aquí está en español. [*In Spanish? Because here it's in Spanish.*]
3.	Mr. Clarke	Bueno, en lo que tú quieres, en chino si quieres (laughs). [*Well, in whatever you want, in Chinese if you want.*]
4.	Gustavo	Which clock below shows at times between six thirty p.m. and six forty-five p.m.?
5.	Mr. Clarke	So what do we need to circle up here (pointing at the word problem on the board)? Which clock below shows the time between six thirty and six forty-five
6.	Gustavo	Este…You have to circle the…u::h…u::h…entre [*Hmmm…. You have to circle the…u::h…u::h…between*]
7.	Mr. Clarke	Yeah. ¿Entre que? [*Between what?*]
8.	Gustavo	Entre seis treinta, seis y media y seis cuarenta y cinco [*Between six thirty, six and a half, and six forty-five*]

Mr. Clarke initiated the interaction in English, asking Gustavo to read the problem. Gustavo was preparing for the 3rd grade STAAR test in Spanish, and therefore the problem in his book was in Spanish. In line 2 he asked in Spanish if he should read it in Spanish. Mr. Clarke responded in line 3 in Spanish, mirroring Gustavo's language shift, that he could read it in any language he wanted. He joked that he could read it in

Chinese if he wanted. Mr. Clarke's joke and verbalized language policy emphasized that students could draw on any language resources they wanted for math problem solving. Interestingly, despite asking in Spanish and having the problem in Spanish in front of him, Gustavo read the problem in English from the board (line 4), positioning himself as a competent bilingual. Even though his problems were in Spanish, he demonstrated his ability to read the problem in English. Mr. Clarke's intentionally flexible language policy as part of his classroom design (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017) afforded Gustavo the opportunities to practice, take risks, and develop his content-area math English despite having monolingual Spanish test preparation materials.

In turn 5, Mr. Clarke mirrored Gustavo's choice and continued the questioning in English. This more cognitively challenging question asked Gustavo to identify the clue word to help solve the problem. Line 6 demonstrated the power of a translanguaging pedagogy for math problem solving. Gustavo began with the Spanish filler word "este (hmmm)," indicating that he was thinking. He continued in English: "You have to circle, the…" followed by additional thinking filler words "u:::h" before ultimately providing the answer in Spanish, "entre (*between*)." In this example, Gustavo drew on both Spanish and English for sense making. Mr. Clarke demonstrated his flexible language policy by mirroring Gustavo's language choice for a third time in line 7, asking in Spanish, "¿Entre que?" (*Between what?*). Overall, for the cognitively challenging process of solving decontextualized standardized math test problems, Mr. Clarke modeled linguistic flexibility, verbalized language flexibility as a language policy, and validated students' diverse language practices in their meaning-making processes.

Mr. Clarke's dynamic bilingualism was also demonstrated by his shifting in and out of language varieties for additional academic purposes in math and science instruction (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). Mr. Clarke described in a retrospective interview that engaging in diverse language practices or language performances that reflected his students' repertoires increased student engagement, encouraged an environment of risk-taking, and lowered students' affective filter. To serve this additional academic purpose, Mr. Clarke used dialectal language practices in both Spanish and English. In Spanish, for example, he ended with a dialectal form of saying please, "porfis" (*pretty please*), when giving instructions, and he used the vernacular phrase "Te vas a meter en pleito" (*You're going to get in a fight*) when speaking to one student who was having problems with his classmate. Furthermore, when celebrating students' successes, he gave fist bumps and used words such as "¡Chócala!" (*high five!*) or "¡Qué padre!" (*How cool!*) On the other hand, in English, while responding to students correct answers he said, "booyah," and when a student asked to borrow a pencil he said, "I'll front you a pencil. But you will owe me a buck." Both examples, include English phrases often associated with African American Language. The examples in both English and Spanish illustrate how Mr. Clarke switched in and out of varieties of each language.

Mr. Clarke's use of diverse language practices in his classroom discourse could be viewed as controversial. As a White, native English speaker, his use of vernacular forms of Spanish and English, specifically those rooted in African American culture, could be questioned. The presence of these language practices in his speech could be seen as styling practices reflective of appropriation (Bucholtz, 1999; Rampton, 1995). However, Mr. Clarke has been working in this community for eleven years, where he has adeptly learned "doing being bilingual" (Auer, 1984, p. 7, as cited in Gort, 2015). His language practices appeared to authentically reflect his deep involvement with the students' lives and backgrounds, and his students ratified his language choices continuously. Reyes (2005) explored the appropriation of African American Language by Asian youth and found that the use of dialectical language was used by youth to create social boundaries between teenagers and adults. In this study, Mr. Clarke appeared to engage in translanguaging by shifting between and within named languages as a way to connect to his students, bridge social boundaries, and create an inclusive, encouraging, risk-taking environment to access math and science content.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Translanguaging pedagogy can be used to challenge traditional schooling structures that marginalize emerging bilinguals and their language practices. Research has considered the ways linguistic flexibility can disrupt traditional teacher-student roles, understandings of language, categorization of students, forms of instruction, and what counts as learning (García & Kleyn, 2016). Together, these teacher cases suggested ways that educators can create more equitable classroom spaces that value and take advantage of language diversity. Issues of academic language, language variation, and translanguaging are three domains often

discussed separately, but our findings illustrate how each teacher challenged linguistic norms in all three of these areas.

In the case of Ms. Barry's classroom, she drew on a body of work by published authors that showcased language variation. In particular, both the poetry and the prose that she selected to share with students reflected the literary talents of writers who used "nonstandard" language in their texts. In featuring the written work of authors like Carmen Tafolla and Gwendolyn Brooks, Ms. Barry conveyed that Spanish, English, and AAL were all academic, appropriate for school, and valuable forms of literary expressions. Students seemed to take up this message, as many explored the possibilities for linguistic variation in their writing. The instructor's selection of literacy materials and the mentor texts themselves validated hybrid language practices and reflected a linguistically responsive pedagogical stance. Likewise, in her language chart, Ms. Barry recorded students' translingual talk without translating to one language or the other, further reinforcing the notion that translanguaging in written form was acceptable and useful for academic purposes such as literary analysis. Such an approach seemed to create a climate in which students were willing to try out a wide range of possibilities for literary analysis and composition.

Mr. Clarke similarly challenged what was considered "academic language" in his classroom. He himself flexibly engaged in diverse language practices during science and math content instruction, shifting between Spanish and English and dialectal varieties of both English and Spanish. He also validated students' hybrid language practices by repeating their language choices and mirroring them in his responses. Collectively, Ms. Barry and Mr. Clarke created translanguaging classroom spaces for the development of content-area discourses and access to academic content.

One implication of this research is the critical role of the translanguaging stance for developing and fostering classroom spaces with linguistic flexibility. Both Ms. Barry and Mr. Clarke articulated pluralist language ideologies that constitute the core of a translanguaging stance (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). Ms. Barry felt that "building off your home language is important" for classroom instruction, and Mr. Clarke expressed that "code-switching es algo muy functional" (*code-switching is something that is very functional*). Their articulated perspectives represented linguistic flexibility and hybridity as a resource for student development rather than a problem (García, 2009; Ruiz, 1984).

This research also demonstrated how the teachers' translanguaging stance connected to their articulated and embodied classroom language policies. Both teachers espoused strong messages when it came to allowing students to access their full linguistic repertoires in the classroom for meaning-making. Ms. Barry articulated an embrace of translanguaging, noting that, after intensive study of bilingualism, restricting students to English-only in the classroom seemed wrong. She also embodied this language policy in her classroom through her selection of books and her support for students' use of practices that spanned the English-Spanish and standard-vernacular continua. Mr. Clarke normalized the process of using diverse language practices for access content, stating, "Es lo que hace la gente bilingüe siempre cada día" (*It is what bilingual people do every day*). He emphasized this perspective to his students by making a joke during instruction that they could use "chino si quieres" (*Chinese if you want*) if it would help them learn the content, despite no students having previously engaged in Chinese language practices in the classroom .

Professional development for in-service teachers could target the translanguaging stance as a starting point for transforming classroom language policy and practices. Teachers could be asked to reflect on their personal language ideologies and how they connect (or not) to the language policies in their classroom. Teachers could be asked to view their beliefs across a broad spectrum of language practices, including what they consider academic language, how they perceive code-switching or language mixing, and what they know and think about the use of dialects and vernacular forms of named language such as English and Spanish. Both Ms. Barry and Mr. Clarke described themselves as outliers in their school community. As such, teachers could be asked to simultaneously reflect on the language ideologies and language policies that circulate through the school community and to consider how educators and administrators impact the existence of school spaces that support diverse language practices.

For teachers wishing to enact a translanguaging stance in their own work, these cases offer several useful implications. Both Ms. Barry's and Mr. Clarke's teaching moves illustrate the value of focusing pedagogical attention on ideas rather than on the form of their expression. For students who are working to learn a new concept, it may not be essential that they express their thinking in any one particular way. Rather, their talk is a tool to help them learn, and the more tools they have, the better. Although there are times to teach students about the linguistic patterns typically privileged in schools, there are also times to prioritize content over form. Moreover, Ms. Barry's example highlights the value of seeking out linguistic variety in

literature and inviting children to pay attention the craft of writing. Many accomplished writers use language in skilled and evocative ways that cross linguistic and dialectal boundaries. A number of scholars and the #WeNeedDiverseBooks movement have called for diversifying the literature available in schools; this study further supports the need to seek out literature that represents a wide variety of experiences and linguistic practices (Brooks & McNair, 2009; Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Thomas, 2016).

In summary, both of these cases illustrated the power of the teacher to reconceptualize what academic language is and what kinds of linguistic practices are appropriate for schools. Although working under different school language policies, each teacher understood that students' everyday language practices were marginalized. At the same time, these teachers perceived translanguaging as a useful tool for bilingual learners and organized their curriculum and instruction to take advantage of this resource. They communicated in both explicit and implicit ways that students' communicative practices were valuable for school-based learning. We view these teachers and students as pockets of hope: examples of classroom spaces that empower the linguistically marginalized.

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