Heteroglossia as Practice and Pedagogy
Chapter 11
Theorizing and Enacting Translanguaging for Social Justice

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Abstract This chapter theorizes translanguaging, while describing how it is carried out in one “English” classroom in a school for Latino adolescents who have arrived recently in the USA. The theories of transculturación, autopoeisis, and coloniality and border thinking are brought to bear on the concept of translanguaging, which is defined as an act of bilingual performance, as well as a bilingual pedagogy of bilingual teaching and bilingual learning. The theoretical discussion is then followed by a description of how the flexible use of linguistic resources in classrooms for immigrants can resist the historical and cultural positionings of English monolingualism in the USA. Translanguaging as pedagogy holds the promise of developing US Latinos who use their dynamic bilingualism in ways that would enable them to fully participate in US society, and meet the global, national, and social needs of a multilingual future.

Keywords Social justice • Autopoeisis • Dynamic bilingualism • Transculturación • Coloniality

11.1 Introduction

What is translanguaging and what does it have to do with social justice? This chapter attempts to answer these questions while further theorizing the concept of translanguaging, in my view an act of bilingual performance, as well as a bilingual pedagogy for teaching and learning. To anchor the theoretical discussion, I offer a description of how translanguaging is performed by a teacher, Camila Leiva, in one “English” classroom in a school for Latino adolescents who have recently arrived in the USA. This chapter then analyzes how the flexible use of linguistic resources in an “English” classroom for immigrants resists the historical and cultural positionings...
of English monolingualism or "heritage language" bilingualism in the USA. I argue that for US Latinos, translanguaging offers the alternative of performing a dynamic bilingualism that releases them from the constraints of both an "Anglophone" ideology that demands English monolingualism for US citizens and a "Hispanophone" ideology that blames US Latinos for speaking "Spanglish" (Otheguy and Stern 2010), or for their "incomplete acquisition" of their "heritage language" (Otheguy and Zentella 2012). But before I describe how translanguaging operates in Camila Leiva’s classroom, I theorize translanguaging by reflecting on my own subjectivity as a US Latina.

11.2 Theorizing Translanguaging

The term translanguaging was coined in Welsh (trawysieithu) by Cen Williams (1994). In its original use, it referred to a pedagogical practice where students are asked to alternate languages for the purposes of reading and writing or for receptive or productive use; for example, students might be asked to read in English and write in Welsh and vice versa (Baker 2001). Since then, the term has been extended by many scholars (Blackledge and Creese 2010; Canagarajah 2011; Creese and Blackledge 2010; García 2009, 2011; García and Sylvan 2011; Hornberger and Link 2012; Lewis et al. 2012a, b). I have used the term to refer to the flexible use of linguistic resources by bilinguals in order to make sense of their worlds, and I have applied it mostly to classrooms because of its potential in liberating the voices of language minoritized students (García 2009, García and Kleifgen 2010).

Translanguaging is related to other fluid languaging practices that scholars have called by different terms, meaning slightly different things. Jørgensen (2008) refers to the combination of features that are not discrete and complete "languages" in themselves as polylingualism. Jacquemet (2005) speaks of transidiomatic practices to refer to the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different communicative codes, simultaneously present in a range of local and distant communicative channels. Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) refer to fluid practices in urban contexts as metrolingualism, rejecting the fact that there are discrete languages or codes. Canagarajah (2011) uses codemeshing to refer to the shuttle between repertoires in writing for rhetorical effectiveness. But what makes translanguaging different from these other fluid languaging practices is that it is transformative, attempting to wipe out the hierarchy of languaging practices that deem some more valuable than others. Thus, translanguaging could be a mechanism for social justice, especially when teaching students from language minoritized communities.

In this section, I try to theorize translanguaging by reflecting on how the concept emerged for me as a US Latina, born in Cuba and raised in New York City. I, thus, draw mostly on Latin American scholarship, and specifically the work of Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, and the Argentinean cultural theorist Walter Mignolo. I explain later how the theories of autopoesis (Maturana and Varela), transculturación (Ortiz), and ccolo-
nality and border thinking (Mignolo) have interacted with those of others, mostly in the North American context, in ways that shape my theorizing of trans + languaging. I first discuss the concept of languaging, and then focus on the trans-aspects.

11.2.1 Languaging

In the last few years, many poststructuralist scholars have moved away from studying language as a monolithic construct made up of discrete sets of skills to a conceptualization of language as a series of social practices and actions that are embedded in a web of social relations. Many have rejected language as an autonomous system and instead claim that acts of language orient and manipulate social domains of interactions. Pennycook (2010) explains:

A focus on language practices moves the focus from language as an autonomous system that preexists its use, and competence as an internal capacity that accounts for language production, towards an understanding of language as a product of the embodied social practices that bring it about. (p. 9, our italics)

Grounding their scholarship on Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia (1981), poststructuralist sociolinguists analyze the social and political consequences of diverse speech types and interactions. Bailey (2007) explains that heteroglossia is “about intertextuality and both are about the ways that talk in the here-and-now draws meaning from past instances of talk” (p. 272). More recently, Blommaert (2010) has pointed to the superdiversity that produces different social, cultural, political, and historical contexts resulting in a complex of linguistic resources. Heller (2007) points out that we need to focus on “a more processual and materialist approach which privileges language as social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as products of social action” (p. 1). Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have gone one step further and postulate the “invention” of language, insisting that the metadiscursive regimes used to describe languages are located in Western linguistic and cultural suppositions.

This poststructuralist sociolinguistic position on language was foreshadowed by the Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela who in 1973 had referred to the language practices that are a product of social ones as languaging. It is Maturana and Varela’s concept of languaging that shapes my understanding as a Latin American of translanguaging. Languaging is directly related to Maturana and Varela’s theory of autopoiesis that argues that we cannot separate our biological and social history of actions from the ways in which we perceive the world. Our experience, Maturana and Varela say, is moored to our structure in a binding way, and the processes involved in our makeup, in our actions as human beings, constitute our knowledge. That is, knowledge is enactive. What is known is brought forth, and is not simply based on acquiring the relevant features of a pre-given world that can be decomposed into significant fragments. As Maturana and Varela (1998) say: “All doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing” (p. 26).

For Maturana and Varela, living beings are characterized by their autopoietic organization, which they explain by describing cell metabolism. Cell metabolism
produces components such as a membrane, but this cell membrane also makes up the network of transformations that produced it. That is, in cell metabolism there is a network of dynamic transformations that produces its own components, including the boundary that is the membrane, but the membrane is also essential for the operation of the network of transformations which produces it as a unity. As Maturana and Varela (1998) explain: "The being and doing of an autopoietic unity are inseparable, and this is their specific mode of organization" (p. 49, our italics).

Maturana and Varela see language in the same way, not as pre-given and able to be decomposed into fragments that human beings have, but as human action by someone in particular in a particular place. That is, language is an ongoing process that only exists as languaging. They explain (1998):

It is by *languaging* that the act of knowing, in the behavioral coordination which is language, brings forth a world. We work out our lives in a *mutual linguistic coupling*, not because language permits us to reveal ourselves but because we are constituted in language in a continuous becoming that we bring forth with others. (pp. 234–235, our italics)

For Maturana and Varela, *autopoietic languaging* refers to the simultaneous being and doing of language as it brings us forth as individuals, at the same time that it continuously constitutes us differently as we interact with others. Their understandings of our being constituted in language "in a continuous becoming" is reminiscent of Bakhtin's claim that we are always becoming through contextually bound contact with others. Translanguaging is enacted through contact with others that is always unfinished and unfinishable, thus, enabling the possibilities of acting for social justice.

Following Maturana and Varela's thinking, A. L. Becker (1995), writing about translation, further posits that language is not simply a code or a system of rules or structures; rather languaging shapes our experiences, stores them, retrieves them, and communicates them in an open-ended process. Languaging both shapes and is shaped by context. Becker (1995) explains: "All languaging is what in Java is called *jarwa dhosok*, taking old language (*jarwa*) and pushing (*dhosok*) it into new contexts" (p. 185). To learn a new way of languaging is not just to learn a new code, Becker says, it is to enter another history of interactions and cultural practices and to learn "a new way of being in the world" (p. 227).

Many poststructuralist sociolinguists, focusing on the social diversity of speech types, reject the concept of distinct languages and, thus, of bilingualism or multilingualism. Bakhtin (1981) had already referred to the fact that the concept of different languages is based on the way social actors distinguish among them, rather than on forms that are the result of a priori analysis. In maintaining that the notion of language is an invention, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) also disinvent the concept of multilingualism and plurality of languages. They claim that a strategy of pluralization reproduces "the same concept of language that underpins all mainstream linguistic thought" (p. 22). Despite the growing poststructuralist criticism of the pluralization of languages, however, as a US Latina I have needed to justify my languaging in "English" and "Spanish," for without the existence of "Spanish" I would not be able to claim a sociohistorical relationship with Latin America and my subjectivity as a US Latina. It was precisely the work of the Latin Americans Maturana and Varela that gave me the answer I was seeking. Just as the process of cell metab-
olism referred to earlier produces a cell membrane which also makes up the network of transformations that produces it as a unity, languaging orients social domains of interactions in ways that may produce the unity of certain language practices into so-called languages. These different language practices, in themselves, then make up a network of transformation that generates complex languaging and at the same time produces the unity of certain language practices as a “language.” An autopoietic organization of languaging across national, sociopolitical, and social interactions in ways that resist the asymmetries of power that are embedded in the web of social relations in which languaging is performed is then needed. It is not enough to claim that languaging consists of social practices and actions; it is important to question and change these when they reproduce inequalities. By appealing to the concept of translanguaging, I go beyond simple languaging as a social practice to emphasize that a new discourse is being produced by a new trans-subject.

11.2.2 Trans-

As the Chileans Maturana and Varela revealed for me the importance of languaging, it is two Latin American scholars, one Cuban (Ortiz) and the other Argentinian (Mignolo), who led me to the trans-. In the 1940s, the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1940) introduced the concept of transculturación to refer to the complex and multidirectional process in cultural transformation. In his monumental study, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* (1940/1978), Ortiz claims:

> In all embraces of cultures there is something of what happens in the genetic copulation of individuals: the child always has something of both progenitors, but it is always different from each of them. (p. 96, my translation, our italics)

In this conceptualization of transculturación lies the kernel of the questioning of the epistemological purity of autonomous languages enunciated by those with power, whether individuals of social and national groups. Transculturación is not simply about a passive adaptation to a static locus or cultural standard. Instead, it is, as Bronislaw Malinowski explains in the prologue to Ortiz’s (1940/1978) *Contrapunteo*:

> A process in which both parts of the equation are modified. A process in which a new reality emerges, compounded and complex; a reality that is not a mechanical agglomeration of characters, not even a mosaic, but a new phenomenon, original and independent (p. 4, my translation, my italics).

Transculturación dissolves solid differences while it creates new realities. We are not in the presence of a synthesis or even of a hybrid mixture. Rather, we are in a space that creates a new reality because not one part of the equation is seen as static or dominant, but rather operates within a dynamic network of cultural transformations. It is not two fixed identities that are combined. Coronil (1995) explains that the concept of transculturación “breathes life into reified categories, bringing into the open concealed exchanges among peoples and releasing histories buried within fixed identities” (p. xxix–xxx).
The concept of translanguaging goes beyond code-switching. Code-switching refers to the mixing or switching of two static language codes. Translanguaging, resting on the concept of transculturación, is about a new languaging reality, original and independent from any of the “parents” or codes, a new way of being, acting, and languaging in a different social, cultural, and political context. Translanguaging brings into the open discursive exchanges among people in ways that recognize their values of languaging. In allowing fluid discourses to flow, translanguaging has the potential to give voice to new social realities.

The Argentinean semiotician Walter Mignolo says that transculturación involves “border thinking.” Mignolo (2000) sees border thinking as “knowledge conceived from the exterior borders of the modern/colonial world system” (p. 11) and as “thinking between two languages and their historical relations” (p. 74, my italics). That is, border thinking insists that there are links between the place from which we theorize and the ways in which we enact our locus of enunciation. Unlike Makoni and Pennycook whose questioning of language led them to reject the notion of bilingualism and multilingualism, Mignolo sees the enactment of “an other tongue” as a way to crack global designs and to develop “an other thinking.” “An other tongue” is not for Mignolo simply a heteroglossic intertextual discourse with simultaneous use of signs and double voicing in the ways of Bakhtin. It also has little to do with the superdiversity that looks at language from different social, cultural, political, and historical contexts (Blommaert, 2010). This “other tongue” originates from coloniality, and not from poststructuralist and postmodern theories; it aims to decolonize dominant intellectual knowledge, including language. Mignolo claims that this “other tongue” (what he calls “bilanguaging”) “infects the locus of enunciation” (p. 220). From this different border position, from social practices and actions “between” two languages that are no longer static or linked to one national identity emerges what I call translanguaging. In translanguaging, the speaker is situated in a space where alternative representations and enunciations can be generated because buried histories are released and alternative, conflicting knowledges are produced.

For me then, translanguaging refers to social practices and actions that enact a political process of social and subjectivity transformations, which in turn produces translanguaging. Besides challenging the view of languages as autonomous and pure, translanguaging, as a product of border thinking, of subaltern knowledges conceived from a bilingual in-between position, changes the locus of enunciation and resists the asymmetries of power that “bilingual codes” often create.

Traditional conceptualizations of bilingualism insist that speakers perform two “codes” in additive ways, according to “standards” created by powerful agencies such as schools, or nations. In so doing, bilingual speakers whose languaging does not conform to the enunciations of the powerful are stigmatized and excluded. In speaking about US Latino bilingual students, Rosa (2010) observes that they are “expected to speak two languages but understood to speak neither correctly” (p. 38). Translanguaging, however, resists the historical and cultural positionings of monolingualism or of additive bilingualism, releasing speakers from having to conform to a “parallel monolingualism” (Heller, 1999). Translanguaging is the enactment of what I have called “dynamic bilingualism” (García, 2009). Many others have also
argued that bi/multilingualism is *dynamic* (De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2007; Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), that is, not only interdependent, but acting as a unity of language practices. I turn now to describing and analyzing how my understandings of translanguaging are enacted in one “English” classroom in a school for Latino adolescents who have recently arrived in the USA.

### 11.3 Enacting Translanguaging

Camila Leiva was born in Chile and came to the USA in fifth grade, and went back and forth to Chile until she was in eighth grade. Her father is Chilean, but her mother was born in the USA, although she has lived in Chile for more than 25 years and still does today. Camila is teaching in a public (government-supported) high school for Spanish-speaking newcomer immigrant adolescents who are new to English. All students are, thus, *emergent bilinguals*, Spanish-speakers who by developing English are becoming bilingual. Camila is bilingual, and is an English teacher of “English Language Arts.” Camila’s classroom discourse, as we see later, fits my definition of translanguaging. She uses her full linguistic repertoire, without regard to whether some might see it as “Spanish” or “English” in order to teach these students. Her pedagogical practice includes translanguaging as a way to scaffold English language instruction for students who are still emergent bilinguals and to develop their own translanguaging discourse. But in translanguaging, Camila is not simply displaying a heteroglossic discourse. In translanguaging Camila is enacting a process of social transformation, releasing US Latinos from the constraints of either Spanish or English monolingualism or a static additive bilingualism, and creating a space for the dynamic bilingualism (García 2009) that is in turn enacted through translanguaging. Camila is able to construct alternative representations by critically situating her translanguaging discourse within a socially, ideologically, and historically in-between locus of enunciation. But before we examine a specific part of the lesson, I offer a glimpse of the school context that allows for this critical use of translanguaging as discourse and pedagogy to take place.

#### 11.3.1 The School Context

The school in which Camila teaches is a high school that is part of a network of government-funded high schools for immigrant newcomers which uses a type of bilingual approach that I have called “dynamic plurilingual” (García and Kleifgen 2010; for more on these schools, see García and Sylvan 2011). Although the schools in the network are not structured as bilingual education programs in the traditional way, they are actively building on the students’ bilingualism “from the student up.” By allowing individual students to use their home language practices to make sense of the learning moment, these schools go beyond traditional second language pro-
grams (such as English as a second language, ESL, English structured immersion, or Sheltered English in the USA) or traditional bilingual education programs.

Camila teaches in a school in Queens, a borough of New York City with a significant Latino immigrant population. Although most New York Latinos are either Puerto Rican or Dominican, the school population is predominantly from Ecuador. More than 85% of the students receive free or reduced lunch, an indication of a high poverty index.

Camila teaches ninth and tenth graders together. In addition, following the principles of the schools in the network—principles of heterogeneity and collaboration, experiential learning, and language and content integration—Camila’s classroom is project based, and language and subject-matter content are never separated. We describe later a 45-minute lesson in Camila’s English language arts class during one Monday in February. Because half of the class were ninth graders, about half the class had been in the USA approximately for 6 months to a year; the other half had been in the USA more than a year, but less than three. Thus, although all students were emergent bilinguals, they had different levels of English proficiency. In addition, although all were Spanish-speaking, the level of Spanish literacy varied. Some came to the school with age-appropriate literacy in Spanish, but many had very low levels of literacy in Spanish, and many had interrupted formal education, meaning they had stopped attending school before coming to the USA.

11.3.2 Si Se Puede Through Translanguaging

Camila Leiva is a teacher of “English” language arts. But for Camila, education is not just about teaching language arts, but also about producing alternative knowledge that releases immigrant students’ histories and discourses. To do so, she selects material carefully and uses a translanguaging discourse to critically situate her work. On this particular Monday, Camila is working on the theme of literary conflicts. Camila selects two music videos, one by the rapper El Chivo de Kinto Sol, and the other by the hip-hop artist Eminem. As we will see, it is not just literary conflict that she is teaching.

11.3.3 Producing Alternative Knowledge Through Translanguaging

Camila first plays the music video “Si se Puede,” by El Chivo de Kinto Sol http://www.myspace.com/video/kinto-sol/el-chivo-de-kinto-sol-quot-si-se-puede-quot-music-video-new/31015082. “Si se Puede” communicates the idea that “Yes, we can” fight against deportation of undocumented immigrants and the separation of children who are citizens from parents. The rapper came to the USA at the age of 13 from Mexico and raps mostly in Spanish, although his music is a blend of hip-hop
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and more traditional Mexican music. But it is translanguaging that creates the *si se puede* discourse with its sociopolitical reality.

The music video starts with a white middle-aged man, sporting a T-shirt that says “Deport Pedro” holding a school meeting behind an American flag. His message to the all-male audience of white working-class men is clear and in English:

I’ll tell you the truth about illegal aliens!
They only come here to take.
They take our welfare.
They’re taking over our schools.
They take our jobs.
They take our benefits.
They contribute nothing!
Illegals are invading our country & our government is doing nothing to stop them!
Immigration is out of control, Fellows.
We got to do something.
Think about that!

The men assent, and one wears a T-shirt that says: “Speak English.” But then, just as the man ends his speech, the school custodian comes in, clearly a Latino. There is silence.

The image now changes to mostly children, but also mothers and some fathers, all brown and clearly Latino, ascending stairs. The stairs go up, but not straight up. Rather they go round and round, indicating the labyrinth in which these children and parents are caught. We see children’s hands holding on to the rails as they ascend, and we see their sneakers marching up, and then, the rapper starts in Spanish with the refrain:

*Por una causa y la misma razón*
*Unidos todos si se puede.*
*Unidos todos con esta canción*
*Sí se puede.*

[For one cause and the same reason
United we can.
United with this song,
Yes, we can.]

Throughout the rapping in Spanish, there are signs in English that reinforce the attitude of the white middle-aged man in the beginning—the bumper sticker on his jeep that reads “America for Americans,” the word “criminal” on a sign, the deportation order for José Ramírez, the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) police. But the anti-immigrant messages are interrupted by the Latino children who are significantly wearing a T-shirt that says “Born in the US.” The children together with their parents are climbing the stairs to act, to write posters with counter-messages to the anti-illegal immigration, one at the beginning of the video. These counter-messages are clear and are written mostly in English, although some are in Spanish:

“If you take my mother, it will hurt my heart.”
“Families need to be together.”
“All families should be together.”
“It will not be the same if you took my mother.”
“No me separen de mi mamá y mi papá.” [Don’t separate me from my mother and father.]
“Yo no quiero que me separen de mis papás.” [I don’t want you to separate me from my parents.]
The anti-illegal immigration message at the start of the video is not only interrupted by the children, but by the many interactions of the man who gives the initial anti-immigration speech with others. After the man realizes that the school custodian is Latino, he gets in his jeep only to find out that he has a flat tire. It is a Latino mechanic who fixes his flat tire. In addition, when he goes to pick up his daughter from pre-school, it is a Latina teacher who greets him. Finally, when he takes his daughter to the dentist, he realizes the dentist is also Latino.

Almost immediately when the rapper starts, there is an image of a Latino family. The mother is lovingly spoon-feeding her son, while the husband watches over them. But it is this family that the ICE police interrupts as they ascend other stairs to arrest and handcuff the father and husband, José Ramírez. The child starts to cry, as does the mother, who is left praying, saying the rosary, and lighting candles to La Virgen de Guadalupe. This disrupted image of a Latino family eating together is contrasted to that of the white family of the man with the initial anti-immigrant message who is seen enjoying a peaceful family meal.

After much rapping, the video ends with the children repeating the messages mostly in English, but also in Spanish, that they have written on their posters, and with one final image with a message: “4 million US citizen children are fighting to keep their Moms and Dads.”

The video, with its translanguaging where English is performed alongside Spanish, both in sound and image relates one important message:

*Unidos todos con esta canción*  
*Si se puede*  
[United with this song,  
Yes, we can.]

It is the translanguaging that creates a unity that is difficult to express, neither immigrant nor native and yet both; neither Spanish nor English, and yet both in autopoietic organization. The music video is neither in English nor in Spanish, but in “both” that is “neither” because it is a new discourse, a product of coloniality, a transculturalization language. Because the students and Camila are constituted in the translanguaging of the video, they are involved in a continuous becoming that is of neither one kind nor another, but that constitutes the liberating action of an autopoietic “*Si se puede*.” As they follow the translanguaging, the students are confronted with alternative representations that release knowledge and voices that have been silenced by the discourse about illegal aliens in English that dominates the beginning of the video.

### 11.3.4 Releasing Voice and New Subjectivities Through Translanguaging

After playing the music video “*Si se Puede*” twice, there is a classroom dialogue in this supposedly “English Language Arts” which shows how and why both Camila and the students translanguage. The dialogue reproduced subsequently makes up a two-and-a-half-minute segment of a longer 5-minute dialogue: (C stands for Camila, S for students; a number after S refers to different students):
1. C: Four million US citizens are being separated from their fathers and mothers because their parents are being deported.

2. S1: *Que los niños nacieron aquí. Legalmente son ciudadanos. Pero los padres no.*

3. S2: *Entonces esta es la preocupación de que los separen....*

4. C: It's a very worrying situation. So, because we don't have that much time and I want to get to the Eminem video.... What are four keywords? *Las palabras importantes, palabras claves?*

5. S3: *Deportar*

6. S4: Families together

7. S5: Protection

8. S6: Discrimination

9. C: I love how even though the song is in Spanish, we're choosing words in English. Kinto Sol grew up in the US but they do hip-hop in Spanish, and we're doing the same.

10. C: What problem do you see in the song?

11. S7: That many white people don't like Spanish people.

12. S8: It's the voice of the people.

13. C: The chivo, the rapper, says that some people don't like Latinos but......

14. S1: *No sé cómo decirlo en inglés, pero.... que los latinos tenemos que pagar lo que otras personas....*

15. Ss: ......[inaudible].

16. C: Don't shoot her down. We're respecting each other's opinions. What else do we see?

17. S3: *Que las familias,* this guy, every time he has problem. Taking care something. It's a Latino that help. [.....]

18. C: The custodian is a Latino person. And who takes care of his daughter?

19. Ss: Latinos!

20. S2: *Miss, ¿yo puedo poner que muchas familias están separadas?*

21. C: ¿A causa de qué?

22. S2: *Deportan los inmigrantes.*

23. C: How did you start the answer?

24. S2: They want the Latinos to get out of America.

25. C: What do you think the problem is? What is the type of conflict?

26. Ss: Me, me, me....

27. C: I like the enthusiasm. What type do you think it is?

28. S3: I have three. Because he has a problem with other people, and *cuando fueron reparar el carro; no es, pero que tiene un problema, pues así,* character vs. character.

29. C: What else can he say? Good... new hands. People who haven't spoken.

30. S4: *Porque tiene un problema consigo mismo: character vs. himself.*

31. S5: *Porque los Latinos es una sociedad, y él es un character.*

32. C: Why do you think......

33. S5: *que lo quieren matar?*

34. C: *Ramón, cuéntanos en español.*

35. C: Latinos, are we the majority or the minority?

36. Ss: Majority/Minority!/Somos mayoría en números!/No minoria!

37. C: They call us a minority, even though we 're a majority in many places. I'm going to give you some time before you finish. *Si ya terminaron, avancen a la segunda parte a la canción de Eminem.....* (Observation, February 28, 2011).
Clearly the fact that Camila allows students to translanguage in the dialogue means that the voices of emergent bilinguals who otherwise would have been silenced are released. The students’ translanguage serves three important discursive functions—to enable:

1. Participation
2. Elaboration of ideas
3. The raising of questions

First, translanguage allows all students to participate. In interaction 14, the student clearly states that he cannot say it in English and, thus, has to use Spanish. In interaction 17, another student uses Spanish to initiative participation and finds her voice. Second, it enables students to elaborate ideas, something they cannot do in their limited voice in English only. For example, although the student in interaction 28 starts speaking in English, it is clear that if she’s going to say more, she’s going to have to use Spanish. Finally, students clearly understand that although the class is an English language arts class and the teacher is mostly using English, they can raise questions in Spanish, as the student in interaction 20 does.

What is interesting in this dialogue is the way in which the teacher uses translanguage. As with the students, translanguage fulfills some discursive functions, but there is much more going on in this dialogue. The discursive functions of translanguage for the teacher are five:

1. to involve and give voice,
2. to clarify,
3. to reinforce,
4. to manage the classroom, and
5. to extend and ask questions.

First, Camila translanguages to involve students as when in interaction 34 she calls on Ramón to tell her what is going on in Spanish: “Ramon, cuéntanos en español.” Second, Camila translanguages to clarify what she’s been saying, as when in interaction 4 she asks the students to tell her “the four keywords/las palabras importantes/las palabras claves.” Third, when students tell her in Spanish that the concern is that families would be separated, she reinforces in English by saying: “It’s a very worrying situation” (interaction 4). Fourth, she uses translanguage for classroom management, for example, when in interaction 37, she turns to Spanish to tell students to hurry up, “avance a la segunda parte…” Finally, Camila translanguages to go beyond the lesson, to extend it, to pose questions, as when in interaction 21, she turns to Spanish to clearly pose a Why question, “¿A causa de qué?” Camila uses language flexibly to enable students to learn, to develop academic concepts and language, and to think.

Beyond the important discursive functions that translanguage fulfills, translanguage, as “an-other tongue” as Mignolo would say, clearly opens up an in-between space where alternative representations are released. When a student starts saying something and the rest of the class yells at her, Camila firmly tells them, “Don’t shoot her down. We’re respecting each other’s opinions” (interaction 26).
Translanguaging opens us a space of tolerance and respect that goes beyond the illegality and criminality that is transmitted in the rap.

This space of tolerance is not a static space, but a new emerging and dynamic space where sociocultural transformations are possible. For example, through translanguaging Camila is helping students construct a Latino pan-ethnicity. The Latino immigrants in this school are from many different national backgrounds. In the USA, they come together for the first time, bringing their different histories, geographies, cultures, and language features. It is not enough simply to construct English fluency. For this US Latino population to succeed, it is important to also construct a Latino pan-ethnicity. Camila clearly points this out when she translanguages to say in interaction 31, “Los Latinos es una sociedad.” It is significant that she says “es.” Not we are, not they are, but “is a society,” a new space of possibilities, neither we nor they, but in an act of transculturación. Translanguaging makes it evident that we cannot separate our languaging from the way in which we perceive the world, our autopoiesis, but it also makes it possible to assume an in-between position that resists the asymmetries of power instilled by standard language practices in school.

Camila is not constructing a closed Latino pan-ethnicity, but one where fluid identities are being brought forth with others in a process of continuous becoming. In interaction 9, she says: “Even though the song is in Spanish, we’re choosing words in English. Kinto Sol grew up in the US, but they do hip-hop in Spanish, and we’re doing the same.” Camila wants to create through translanguaging a discourse that goes beyond autonomous languages that represent sole national or transnational identities. Rather, translanguaging for her opens up possibilities of participation, while generating the fluid subjectivities that US Latinos need to succeed in US society. Translanguaging gives back the voice that had been taken away by ideologies of monoglot standards (Silverstein, 1996), whether of English or Spanish. The US Latino “languagelessness” (Rosa, 2010) is converted into voice.

Translanguaging in this classroom is not simply about learning a new way of doing and being. Translanguaging is about bringing into the open the often concealed exchanges among people and releasing subjugated histories. Thus, Camila exposes students to a music video where sociohistorical representations, as well as language practices are juxtaposed. Furthermore, she does not stop there, but translanguages in her dialogue to decolonize the dominant intellectual knowledge. She uses translanguaging to problematize. In interaction 25, she clearly asks the students: “What do you think the problem is?” And she is not satisfied with “solving problems,” but builds and accepts tensions so that border thinking and alternative representations are generated. Up to the end of this exchange, Camila had referred to Latinos in the third person: they/he/she. And she had reserved the “we” to speak of the classroom itself. But now, in interaction 35, she asks students: “Latinos, are we the majority or the minority?” Clearly, she has changed the locus of enunciation, giving power to the students who are no longer separate from her, the teacher. In addition, when students chorally call out “mayoría” “minority,” she does not rush to solve the tension. She again positions herself as one with her students and in opposition to others who are not Latinos: “They call us a minority, even though we’re a majority in many places.” Translanguaging is
the discourse in that in-between space that is full of tension so that new realities can emerge, realities that offer possibilities of being released from subjugation.

11.3.5 Performing Academic Discourse

Besides enacting translanguaging in actual classroom discourse, as well as by bringing in the sociopolitical reality of the students’ lives through images, signs, and the spoken word in the music video, this lesson offers students the opportunity to translanguage in writing and to perform academic discourse. Camila has distributed a worksheet at the beginning of the class period. The worksheet, which appears as Fig. 11.1, first asks students to list the four types of conflict as a “Do Now” which is the common activity that NYC secondary education students do as transition from one class period to the other. After the students listen to the music video (#2 in Fig. 11.1), they are asked to do #3, that is, translate into English a verse of the Spanish rap. Finally, Camila asks them to do some activities—identify the key words, the conflicts, the types of conflicts, and the reasons for the conflicts (#4).

Students fill out the worksheet in collaborative groups, and as well as they can. Some of them use their emerging English for the translation, but many of them use Spanish, although incorporating features from “English,” mostly lexicon. Their English translations also show features of “Spanish,” this time in lexicon, syntax, and morphology. By asking the students to put their “English” text next to the Spanish text, Camila is helping students construct their own translanguaging, while enabling them to use their entire linguistic repertoire to make sense of the lesson.
At the same time, she is facilitating the process of ensuring that new language features emerge in interrelationship with the old ones. It is this flexible linguistic repertoire that bilingual Latinos require in order to meet their communicative and academic needs, including literacy in standard academic English and the learning of challenging new content. Translanguaging is not a “crutch” for emergent bilingual students to develop English, but is recognized as the way in which American bilinguals sustain their home language practices as they appropriate English. That is, translanguaging offers the opportunity of rejecting the common proposition in “second language” acquisition studies that emergent bilingual students have a “first” language that is used solely at home, and a “second” English language that is used in schools. Instead, translanguaging reinforces the notion that the language practices of American bilingual children include, flexibly and simultaneously, features of languages other than English, as well as English. It engages bilingual students with their entire range of language practices, including those associated with academic English, as their very own.

11.3.6Justice For All Redefined Through Translanguaging

After the students finish the first worksheet, Camila turns to the Eminem video, but this time the rap is in English (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8M9MTle-8AM). The music video starts with school children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. The words of the Pledge, “one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” are contrasted with the deaf ears of then President George W. Bush, the US Supreme Court, and Congress to the pleas of the people against the war in Iraq. Students are asked to fill out a worksheet that parallels that given for the “Sí se puede” rap. This time, however, students are asked to translate one verse of the rap into Spanish:

All you can see is a sea of people, some white and some black
Don’t matter what color, all that matters we gathered together
To celebrate for the same cause don’t matter the weather
If it rains let it rain, yea the wetter the better
They ain’t gonna stop us they can’t, we stronger now more than ever
They tell us no, we say yea, they tell us stop we say go
Rebel with a rebel yell, raise hell we gonna let em know.

The message is the same as in the “Sí se puede” video. All, “unidos todos con esta canción,” “all that matters we gathered together” and it is then that “sí se puede” against injustice because “they ain’t gonna stop us” since “we stronger now more than ever.”

There is much more than unity of people, black and white, Latinos and not, in the message. There is also a call for unity of the “languages” “some white and some black” that make up the people, and it is in Eminem’s rap that this becomes obvious. Just as Eminem takes liberty with the “standard” use of “English,” enabling his poetry, his resistance, his liberation, the students’ use of “English” and “Spanish” evolves into a translanguaging that is simply not one or the other, but that takes liberties to enable their voices to emerge. When these emergent bilingual students
translate into Spanish, their literate Spanish is also freed. Most of the time, the choices students make show traces of colonization, of historical oppression, and of subjugation that has been the result of collapsed Latin American educational systems, the result of war, colonization, rural conditions, and neoliberal economies. The students’ developing Spanish literacy is also coming into being in relationship to that in English. Thus, as when they translated into English, their Spanish is also interspersed with features from “English.” The emerging “English” and “Spanish” voices of these students are poetic and they speak of resistance, of liberation, but always of meaning, pointing to a new, generative, and better “locus of enunciation,” than that of poor “languageless” Latinos. Students are empowered as they are given voice, a voice that is not one or the other, but both, and yet neither. A new voice of US Latinos, of a new “trans-subject” that truly generates “justice for all,” “unidos todos en esta canción.”

11.3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at how translanguaging in an “English” classroom for immigrants resists the historical and cultural positionings of English monolingualism or “heritage language” bilingualism in the USA by creating a “new” American subject that is engaged and educated. Translanguaging is here theorized and analyzed from a US Latino perspective, through practices and ideologies of trans-subjects—the author, the teacher, and the students—in a classroom for Latino immigrant youth. For US Latinos, and especially for new immigrants, translanguaging offers the alternative of performing a dynamic bilingualism that releases them from the constraints of both an “Anglophone” and a “Hispanophone” ideology that has rendered them “languagelessness” in the US landscape. We have seen how translanguaging is action that constitutes knowledge in autopoiesis, how as in transculturación it modifies the parts so that a new reality emerges, and how it decolonizes dominant intellectual knowledge of language and allows subaltern knowledge to emerge from an in-between position.

We have made tremendous progress in advancing theories of language that go beyond autonomous language systems and insist on languaging as action. Furthermore, we have shown how dynamic bilingualism and flexible language use exists in most classrooms around the world where there are bilingual children (Blackledge and Creese 2010, García, Zakharia and Otcu, 2013). Now our understandings of dynamic bilingualism and flexible language use must impact educational policy that continues to insist on monolingual standards to educate and especially to assess.

Only when educational systems, whether monolingual or bilingual, understand that, extending Becker, all doing is knowing and languaging, and all knowing and languaging is doing, will there be a space to educate all children equitably and for social justice. For that to occur, bilingual students must be allowed to build on their translanguaging practices, their peers must be engaged in translanguaging discourses, and teachers must value translanguaging and build on those flexible practices.
By exposing alternative histories, representations, and knowledge, translanguaging has the potential to crack the “standard language” bubble in education that continues to ostracize many bilingual students, and most especially immigrants.

References


