

Making music, making language: Minoritized bilingual children performing literacies

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Abstract

This article reframes how the making of music by minoritized bilingual Latinx children is interrelated to their languaging and their literacies' performances. Taking a translanguaging approach, musicking/languaging/performing literacies are described here as holistic critical meaning-making processes. Focusing on the *process* by which students make meaning of texts, and not simply on the output or product of such meaning-making, this article shows how a music education programme based on El Sistema and designed for social change transforms minoritized children's critical sense of their positions and subjectivities as producers of language and literacies. Through music education, long considered only an enrichment activity from which language minoritized students are often excluded, bilingual Latinx children are able to crack open a vision for themselves and others as competent, dignified, and valid meaning-makers—as performers of complex acts of language and literacies.

KEYWORDS: BILINGUAL; LANGUAGING; LATINX; LITERACIES; MINORITIZED BILINGUAL STUDENTS; MUSIC EDUCATION; MUSICKING; EL SISTEMA; TRANSLANGUAGING, KEYWORDS, KEYWORDS.

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1. Introduction

What does making music have to do with making language and performing literacies? What does making music mean for minoritized bilingual children who are perceived by educational authorities as lacking language and who are often relegated to remedial educational programmes? How is their musicking related to their languaging and their literacy practices? These are all questions that we pursue in this article as we reframe the making of music by minoritized bilingual Latinx children as constitutive of their language repertoire and of the performances of their literacies. We describe here how leveraging the bilingual children's musicking in a music education programme for social change starts to shift their subjectivities as competent meaning-makers. This enables them to produce texts that are not simply musical, but that engage all aspects of doing literacy. Musicking/languaging/performing literacies are described here as holistic meaning-making processes.

The Latinx bilingual children whose practices we describe here are not just in any music education programme, however. They are participating in a programme designed for children living in poverty that raises the children's awareness of sociopolitical injustices, while promoting their own signification as dignified and competent makers of their own texts. We show how the children's process of engaging in the creative and critical use and interpretation of the music texts is similar to that of what readers and writers do when engaging in literacy practices with written texts. And yet, most Latinx bilingual children are excluded from literacy activities that are said to be of the 'enrichment' type, like music education, because they are seen as needing 'academic literacy,' a construct that is defined by saying that these children do not have it (see, for example, García and Solorza, forthcoming).

Focusing on the *process* by which students make meaning of texts, and not simply on the output or product of such meaning-making, enables us to see how music education, long considered an enrichment activity from which language minoritized students are excluded, is indeed most important for minoritized children's sense of meaning-making and critical sense of their positions and subjectivities. Through this process, minoritized bilingual children are able to crack open a vision for themselves and others as competent, dignified, and valid meaning-makers—as performers of complex acts of language and literacies.

2. Languaging, musicking, and translanguaging

Making language, or *languaging*, is acknowledged as the distinguishing characteristic of human beings. Languaging is an activity, a product of social action (Becker, 1995; Maturana and Varela, 1984). Mignolo (2000:253) writes,

‘Language is not an object, something that human beings have, but an ongoing process that only exists in language.’

Paralleling this process of languaging, Small (1997) has theorised music not as a noun, but as a verb, *musicking*, and defines it as,

an encounter between human beings in which meanings are being generated. As with all human encounters it takes place in a physical and a social space, and that social space also has to be taken into account as well when we ask what meanings are being generated in a performance. ... These sets of relationships stand in turn for relationships in the larger world outside the performance space, relationships between person and person, between individual and society, humanity and the natural world and even the supernatural world, as they are imagined to be by those taking part. (Small, 1997:3)

Musicking has several correspondences with the concept of languaging. Languaging too is a verb, not a noun, grounded in human interactions instead of established ideas of language as an entity (Park and Wee, 2012).

When bilinguals and multilinguals make language without regard to the boundaries of named languages, many scholars have used the term ‘translanguaging’ (García and Li Wei, 2014; Otheguy, García, and Reid, 2015, 2019). Translanguaging has been defined as the process and actions by which bilinguals select and deploy particular features from a unitary communicative repertoire that goes beyond the simple addition of two named languages to make meaning and negotiate particular communicative contexts (Otheguy, García, and Reid, 2015, 2019). Translanguaging also refers to a pedagogical approach that affirms and leverages bilingual students’ diverse language practices for action in the world (Blackledge and Creese, 2010; Creese and Blackledge, 2010; García, Johnson, and Seltzer, 2017; García and Kleyn, 2016; García and Li Wei, 2014; Vogel and García, 2017).

Because racialized bilingual children—immigrants, refugees, indigenous—are most often perceived as deficient, especially in language, the work of educators on translanguaging has mostly focused on the verbal and written aspects of language assessed in schools, leaving out the potential of other modalities to be leveraged in the classroom. Block (2014:56), for example, has pointed out: ‘Missing in far too many discussions is an active engagement with embodiment and multimodality as a broadened semiotically based way of looking at what people do when they interact.’

The communicative repertoire with which bilingual children and their families make language includes not only aspects of the spoken and written language; it also includes the sights, the sounds, the objects and instruments at their disposal, as well as how these are deployed (Zhu, Li Wei, and Jankowicz-Pytel, 2019; Li Wei, 2017; Lin and Li Wei, 2019; Moore, Bradley, and Simpson, 2020).

Musicking is considered here part of translanguaging theory, enabling us to consider the actions by which minoritized bilingual people orchestrate *all* the features of their communicative repertoire to make meaning (Pennycook, 2017). This is so without regard as to whether these are externally socially constructed and bounded as an autonomous musical language, oral language, written language, English or Spanish, or any other named language. Instead, the emphasis is on the internal *process* by which people make meaning, and use texts both socially and politically to generate new meanings for themselves.

3. The potential of making music for racialized bilingual students

Latinx bilingual communities in the United States have been minoritized through a process of racialization that marks their language practices as deficient. That is, Latinx bilingual communities have been subjected to a process of enregisterment (Agha, 2007:38) by which ‘distinct forms of speech come to be socially recognized (or enregistered) as indexical of speaker attributes by a population of language users.’ Schools have been instrumental in the enregisterment of Latinx children as deficient, at-risk, or non-academic. Through this process, Latinx bilingual children are often assigned to programmes where their education is restricted to language exercises that claim to ‘remediate’ their language deficiencies. As a result, Latinx bilingual children are often excluded from education experiences that are considered to be ‘enrichment’ programmes, for example, music education.

In the United States since the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2002, clear priority has been given to reading, writing, and math, areas in which schools are held accountable for student performance (Aprile, 2017). This trend away from arts education has affected almost exclusively minoritized, low-income communities, ‘who tend to be hypersegregated in schools with more limited budgets, less culturally responsive practices, and highly controlled curriculum based on discrete skill development’ (Chappell and Cahnmann-Taylor, 2013:243). Kennedy (2007) points out that:

As long as teachers and administrators feel pressure to focus only on English language arts and math, without understanding that participation in and exposure to arts education contribute to success in these areas, equitable access to arts education...for low-income students will continue to be problematic. (Kennedy, 2007:204)

Here we explore the ways in which participating in an instrumental music programme dedicated to social change is constitutive of practices that have been

constructed as school literacies, specifically for bilingual elementary school children of immigrants in low-income neighbourhoods.

Little has been said about how music education can embody a pedagogical approach that affirms and brings together students' diverse knowledge and cultural systems, as well as language practices. In fact, music education can extend a culturally sustaining pedagogical approach (Paris and Alim, 2014) that includes linguistic, literacy and other cultural practices. Here we show how a music education programme with a goal of social inclusion and empowerment can bring together what have been hereto considered always separate—students' social/arts literacies on the one hand, and school literacies on the other. The first is considered in schools as simply social/aesthetic, whereas the second is perceived as academic. Educators have been reluctant to see the connections among literacies.

Doing music calls for simultaneously leveraging the audio, the gestural, the kinaesthetic, the visual, the text, as well as individual interpretation and collective collaboration. Traditional educators in schools have much to learn from the process by which music students orchestrate all of these different resources. In so doing, students can simultaneously become not only better musicians and social-beings, but also better readers and writers, areas of great interest in all schools. That is, music education can work to resist the racialization processes to which bilingual Latinx students in the United States have been subjected as underachieving and deficient and not proficient performers of literate acts. Looking at the interactions in the music classroom as musicking and as being integral to bilingual students' translanguaging allows one to look beyond the immediate task to how students make meaning and use their full communicative repertoire.

4. A study of a music education programme

The data on which this paper is based comes from Ortega's research (2018) of the Corona Youth Music Program (CYMP), a tuition-free afterschool orchestral programme that is inspired by El Sistema. El Sistema, or the National System of Youth and Children's Orchestra of Venezuela, was founded in 1975 to serve mostly underprivileged children and as an instrument for social change. Its goal was:

to systematize music education and to promote the collective practice of music through symphony orchestras and choruses in order to help children and young people achieve their full potential and acquire values that favor their growth and have a positive impact on their lives in society. (Tunstall, 2012:45)

Students in El Sistema are required to develop a sense of civic engagement and social responsibility by embracing the rigours of disciplined personal practice, the interpersonal dynamics of playing in an instrumental ensemble, and the responsibility of building a critically conscious learning community.

CYMP's mission is 'to promote social inclusion in New York City by empowering youth and children in Corona, Queens, to excel through their participation in musical ensembles' (www.nucleocorona.org). Currently, the programme resides at P.S. 19Q, an elementary school with the largest K-5 student enrolment in New York City.

Corona has the largest Latinx immigration population in New York City, with 23% hailing from Mexico, 21% from Ecuador, and 17% from the Dominican Republic (Lobo and Salvo, 2013:56). A report by Cappello (2018:7) finds that while gentrification has changed the racial and socioeconomic composition of traditionally minority neighbourhoods across New York City, in Corona the Latinx community has more than doubled since 1990 and continues to outpace growth of all other demographics in the neighbourhood. Significantly, Corona had the highest rates of coronavirus infections and deaths in New York City during the spring of 2020, revealing a reality of racism, poverty, and inequality, as reported by Holpuch (2020).

CYMP provides tuition-free access to music instruction and musical instruments in an orchestral setting. A mentor model is followed, where older and more experienced students facilitate sectionals and sit side by side with the younger students during rehearsals. Students put on several performances across the year in school, in the community, and collaborate with other ensembles in the New York City metro area. In this way, CYMP upholds El Sistema's mission to provide communities with public performances. At the time of the study, prior to the pandemic of spring 2020, close to 200 mostly Latinx students participated in the programme.

Ortega spent four months observing orchestra rehearsals, mentoring sessions, group lessons, and performances. She focused her attention on 12 Latinx bilingual students who were in third through sixth grade—that is, they were between 8 to 11 years old. She observed them in class, and outside of class, and she interviewed them intensively. In this article we include the data from the music class observations, the work done by students, and the interviews with these 12 students and their families. The children were learning to play six instruments: clarinet, French horn, percussion, trumpet, viola, and violin. All 12 children were born in the United States. All but one student, whose parents were from Ecuador, were children of Mexican immigrants. In conversation with Ortega, many parents shared their undocumented status.

We describe how the students' behaviour as music performers enabled other school literacy performances. Adopting a translanguaging lens that

acknowledges the bilingual's entire repertoire (and not just one language or another, or one mode or another) enables the resistance toward the enregisterment of Latinx immigrant children as impoverished, non-academic, or at-risk. Instead, through a translanguaging lens, the children's performances are viewed as 'talented.' Although we refute the use of the word talented as a biological musical disposition, we use it here to signal a social practice that counters the enregisterment of Latinx bilingual students as impoverished.

This music education programme has allowed Latinx students to experience learning as their bilingual selves, able to use all their resources to make meaning. We show how participation in this music education programme does not quite erase the racialization process that Latinx bilingual communities have undergone as a result of the raciolinguistic ideologies of others (Flores and Rosa, 2015; Rosa and Flores, 2017) and the structural inequalities that continue to exist. However, it enables Latinx bilingual students and their communities to reposition themselves as talented and competent and to reinvent their identities as integral members of the community and the school. This also has an effect on how others start listening to Latinx children—peers at first, but also their teachers. The success that Latinx bilingual students and their communities experience as they make music has a durable, generative, and transposable impact on their identity formation that goes beyond the music classroom.

Just as translanguaging has been said to be a political act (Flores, 2014), the type of music education which the CYMP espouses could be transformative for the immigrant Latinx community. By facilitating the music making of Latinx students in public spaces, CYMP repositions music making from family practice to a celebration of students' assets and agency. The director of the programme expresses this potential, saying:

I hope that this is a space for the students to be active in the community. That it's a space for them to give back to the community. To be active in bringing about social change, so that this becomes a true community orchestra...and that the tools that they acquire here, not just help them in their musical pursuits, but in other careers, such as law or public administration. (Cited in Ortega, 2018:54)

5. Community orchestration at the centre

Whereas other asset-based educational programmes (Bartolomé, 1998; López, 2017) take up the community's funds of knowledge (González, Moll, and Amanti, 2005) as a scaffold or bridge toward dominant knowledge-systems, this music education programme *centres* the community's repertoire as dynamic, developing, and inclusive. That is, it does not dichotomise knowledge systems

as residing in the home or in the school separately. Instead, it enables understandings of the actions of people who live ‘entre mundos’ or in borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) and how they experience these as unitary, as they leverage their entire repertoire in all their meaning-making activities. In this way, this and other music education programmes like CYMP are culturally sustaining as they go beyond valuing the community to *sustaining* community practices by developing ‘the skills, knowledges, and ways of being needed for success in the present and the future’ (Paris and Alim, 2017:5).

Campbell (2010:219) writes, ‘many of the world’s societies continue to advocate the full participation of their members in musical performance and invention.’ Likewise, Latinx families at CYMP often commented on how important family music performances were for them. The families shared how holidays, family gatherings, and faith gatherings all include family musicking—singing, playing an instrument, and dancing. Making music in the Latinx community is not considered simply ‘a talent’ that is innate to certain people; it is a social endeavour in which people of different expertise perform together. The parents of the children attending CYMP share this cultural expectation, choosing to enrol their children in an afterschool programme that will further develop their musicality and give them access to an instrument. This sense of the Latinx community’s musical socialisation, said to have roots in Africa and indigenous American communities, is very differently valued than that of a white European tradition, especially the one simply understood as ‘classical,’ learned in conservatories, performed in theatre spaces, and representative of what is considered ‘high culture.’

The afterschool music programme in which the Latinx bilingual children were involved taught them to play classical music, different from the musical genre which they hear at home. But because of the programme’s critical aspect and its commitment to social change in the community, children were taught the value of performing *all musical traditions*. Instead of abandoning the music of the home, children simply extended the music repertoire with which they socialised at home, as the home also extended theirs in negotiation with the new understandings of classical music that the children were bringing home. Further, the collaborative nature of family musicking is seen as an asset and a mentoring model at CYMP, where older students teach younger students, similarly to an older sibling or cousin in the family. In this way, the families’ musicking and what they learn at CYMP form a firm and generative terrain in which to grow not only new music, but also new identities and possibilities, as it embraces family and the past, while expanding the present of the families with possibility.

The family participants in CYMP continuously asserted that making music was part of a process that is not from here or there, from Europe or Mexico, but that emerges from their own bodies, hearts, and spirits. Because music

is made by many actors who live with experiences forged in the past, as well as the present, and in different social and geographical spaces, when a child picks up the violin or the trumpet they connect to *all* music. One mother explains it thus:

Desde chiquita estoy escuchando esos instrumentos. El violín, la guitarra, la trompeta...Porque eso es lo que se toca en la *música de nosotros*, música de banda.

[I grew up listening to these instruments. The violin, the guitar, the trumpet... because this is what is played in *our music*, banda music.]

This mother believes that her children's familiarisation with classical music does not in any way obviate performances of what is considered traditional Mexican mariachi 'música de banda.' And she does not see these as different. Her children's musical repertoire includes features of both social traditions.

Older students do not simply abandon the *música de banda*; they are proud to take it up with 'orgullo.' They join mariachi and cumbia bands, not only affirming the musical value of the community, but re-making it, and at the same time enabling them to earn some income to help their families. The music they perform in many ways helps reposition the families, empowering the communities.

Despite living in what is defined as poverty by government standards, these families have rich lives, with music adding to their cultural assets and their social responsibility. For example, in one family, the father plays the string bass and is part of a cumbia band, publishing his music on iTunes. Rehearsals are often held throughout the week and the children have been taking on the role of audience members since they were little. In another family, music serves as a way of extending and enriching their practices as indigenous Mexicans who are also speakers of Nahuatl. The father narrates how he took up the learning of platillos, the cymbals, when his daughter started to learn how to play the trumpet. In that way, he was able to connect with his daughter. He and his friends, all immigrants from the same hometown, formed a banda as a way to maintain cultural connections. The participation in music performances also extends this family's language performances, as the children now hear not only English and Spanish, but also the Nahuatl of the community. In this space, through this joint musicking, fluidly performing classical and traditional music by young and old, Nahuatl is also repositioned not just as an 'indigenous' language of the past but as a language with a present and a future. Musicking in this way allows these Latinx bilingual children to reclaim 'those historical and existential experiences that are devalued in everyday life by the dominant culture in order to be validated and critically understood' (Giroux, 1983, in Freire and Macedo, 1987:157).

The children's families are supportive of the children's participation in CYMP. They are convinced that their children's musicking with instruments and production of classical music in no way obviates the family's musicking but *extends it*. That is, these families understand that one is capable of learning other knowledges without forgetting one's own. Yet, many school educators often feel as if minoritized children's participation in practices at home *take away* from those in school. That is why so many Latinx parents are told not to speak Spanish to their children, not to play Spanish music, not to read to their children in Spanish. When educators talk about acknowledging the practices of minoritized families and home, whether language-wise or music-wise, they often consider them solely as 'a bridge.' Home-language practices are thus considered only as scaffolds as children move towards the only 'side of the line' that is considered valuable. This has to do with what the Portuguese decolonial philosopher Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls 'abyssal thinking' (2007). This abyssal thinking of educators ensures that the 'other side of the line' remains invisible and non-existent. This is very different from what happens in CYMP.

The line between home and school practices is not the only one that is drawn by an educational system that is interested in marking boundaries of privilege and exclusion. Also drawn in schools are boundaries around subjects. The so-called three Rs—reading, writing, and arithmetic—continue to be the matter of education for minoritized students, whereas the arts is reserved for privileged White elites. And yet, as we will see in the next section, the process of musicking/languageing/performing literacies is one and the same. By focusing on the children's actions as they participated in CYMP, as well as what they said in interviews, we show how the children's musicking is constitutive of their literacies' performances. We attempt to present a view of literacy that views 'both sides of the line' simultaneously and that demonstrates the possibility of copresence of the two sides of the line, of a 'post-abyssal thinking' (Santos, 2007). In so doing, we bring together an ecology of knowledges that recognises the interconnectedness of learning and of musicking/languageing/performing literacy.

6. Children's musicking/languageing/performing literacies

In schools, literacy instruction is most often shaped by *hegemonic* ideologies, as evidenced by the emphasis on instruction geared towards high stakes testing. These exams measure proficiency in English, privileging White English-speaking monolingual students, and not truly measuring literacy. Whereas linguistic and even visual codes are used to promote learning in schools, auditory codes beyond speech are rarely validated (Gromko and Russell, 2002). This constructed definition of literacy, which emphasises performances in written

English in standardised tests, results in privileging not only the English language, but also printed written texts.

Freebody and Luke (1990) have identified four roles that successful readers and writers take on: code breakers ('How do I crack this?'), text participants ('What does this mean?'), text users ('What do I do with this, here and now?'), and text analysts ('What does this do to me?'). But Freebody and Luke warn that simply accepting these roles can actually open up new forms of bureaucratic colonisation for minoritized students, unless students are also made aware of how and why they are positioned in social hierarchies that are the product of colonisation and nation-building. The Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2000) has coined the term 'coloniality' to explain the 'colonial power matrix' that continues to operate today, not simply through exploitation of labour and domination by authority, but also through the hierarchies of people into superior and inferior constructed through race, gender, language, epistemology, and knowledge.

Because of the CYMP's goal of social change, the participants in this music programme are engaged not only in playing an instrument and producing classical music, but also in drawing from the Latinx students' own knowledge system and repertoire to make music that orchestrates all aspects of their lives together. As such, these Latinx bilingual students learn to position themselves as engaged actors, central to the development not only of their music literacies, but also of *all* their literacies.

The musical text is 'cracked as a code,' but this is not done as a simple 'skill and drill,' but as a way of engaging the students in making meaning of the music, in feeling and sensing their emotions and their positionalities, in stepping into and embodying themselves as active agents, and in taking social action. That is, music is not simply understood and felt individually. Individuals share their interpretation of the music, their new understandings, with the rest of the orchestra and the audience in ways that are collaborative.

This musicking sharpens the process of positioning oneself as agentive actor and participant in all literacy activities, including those validated in schools. We are not suggesting that these musicking processes then simply transfer into the making of literacy with written texts. Rather, we are suggesting that these are single unitary processes, shared by anyone fortunate enough to be engaged in literacy activities that liberate knowledge-making systems from the hegemonic ones that are imposed in schools.

Much of the hesitation in providing minoritized bilingual students with multimodal experiences with art and music have to do with misunderstandings of bilingual theory and scholarship. The pioneering work of Jim Cummins (1981) on bilingualism distinguished what he called Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) from Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

(CALPs). Cummins posited that schools needed to develop CALP, which Cummins saw as associated with higher-order thinking and the ability to manipulate language with texts that were cognitively demanding and context-reduced. Despite some criticism (Bartolomé, 1998; Edelsky et al., 1983; MacSwan and Rolstad, 2003) and Cummins's (2000) own move beyond an abstract definition of academic language to emphasise its power dimensions, this division of language into BICS and CALPs has continued to frame the discussion of what bilingual students need, understood many times as simply intensive skill and drill practice using decontextualized language.

We posit here that minoritized bilingual students' performances of literacies are facets of a single process of creative and critical meaning-making. To do so, we consider how the music instruction in CYMP contributed to the four roles of good readers and writers identified by Freebody and Luke (1990): code breaker, text participant, text user, and text analyst.

6.1 Positioning oneself to crack the code

To be a successful reader or writer, a person needs to successfully engage with the technology of the written script (Freebody and Luke, 1990). But this technology is not outside of people as an independent autonomous text, but is *in them, in their own bodies*.

In music education, students learn a *body technique* that helps them acquire new ways of knowing and relating to the world, as well as learning to know themselves (Crossley, 2015). For example, explicit instruction on posture is part of what is done in CYMP. Ortega observed how a conductor reminded the trumpets to 'stand tall like a tree when playing.' A flute teacher reminded students to put pressure on the chin like a magnet, and to employ the 'i-Phone Technique'—that is, to imagine one has a smartphone on one's shoulder to prevent the chin from dropping. By performance time, posture became a visual way of assessing a certain level of mastery not only for the audience, but for the students as well. The manner in which students carry themselves when they are confident about what they are doing is key in shifting the habitus of students from learners who do not know to emergent performers. An enriching learning habitus is fundamental to the continuing development of literacies across all social domains, including the classroom.

6.2 Positioning oneself as text participant: Relating

In order for learners to listen to each other and their teacher so that they know what the text means, they have to focus. Many students mentioned how music education helped them overcome their restlessness. One of the girls shared:

I was kind of like that, like, I really never raised my hand up for anything. I was really, I had a lot of energy, always had a lot of energy, but I didn't know how to use the energy. So, I always got in trouble in school. I never paid attention. I always moved around.

But after taking up music, the student notices a change in how she positions herself as a learner and a doer: 'I started getting more focused on the things that I was doing.' It turns out that it is musicking that enables her to listen, open herself to learning, and act agentively. It is this quietness that enables students to relate other aspects of their knowledge so that they can participate as doers.

Agency permeating across different social spaces was a recurring theme that Ortega found among the students. Students acted out their literacies at CYMP in a variety of ways. For example, during rehearsal breaks they would self-select into smaller groups to tackle tricky passages. Students were also observed engaging in spontaneous musicking, improvising melodies or playing music they had looked up on You Tube the night before; they also coached or led rehearsals, providing their peers with strategies for improvement. In the classroom too, good readers and writers are those who can engage in literacy practices not only independently, but also in community through shared reading/writing and guided reading/writing activities.

Similar to literacy in the classroom, the agency observed comes from pedagogical practices that instil in students a sense of standing tall and confidently. This positioning is not carried out in isolation, but in collaboration with a strong learning community.

6.3 Positioning oneself as text user: Audiation as envisionment

In reading, the ability to make a picture in one's mind as one reads is called *envisionment* and is regarded as fundamental to reading comprehension. In music, the ability to make musical meaning requires what Sloboda (2005) has called *audiation*, a process by which individuals hear and comprehend music in order to play expressively. Webster (1987:164) has noted that subconscious imagery, a component of audiation, 'plays a role in problem solving over time, a task that is common in composition and analysis. It may play a role in performance as well.' Just as it is not enough to decode a written language in order to be a good reader, it is insufficient to have fluency in musical syntax to be a good musician. Musicians need to comprehend what they play. Musicking involves not just the process of performing from notation, but engagement in what Ortega (2018) has called *audiation as envisionment*.

During interviews, students often expressed how coming up with images and pictures helped them in music-making. For example, one student described: 'The notes are going up and down, and they are bouncy.' Musicking involves much more than notes that are being read as static symbols on

the page. It requires that the musician visualises the dynamic interchanges of notes climbing and descending as different pitches are reached.

This process of audition as envisionment is what allows students to make meaning of what they are playing. In reflecting on how he performs Dvořák's 'The New World Symphony,' a student says: 'The crescendos and decrescendos start to make me think it's like a forest. There is a person trying to run away. They are scared, but at the same time happy they are free.' This mirrors the process by which written texts are composed and the ways in which readers understand them. To understand a written text, readers first make a mental picture of the setting, in this case the forest. There is then a catalyst, a person running away, who is experiencing a crisis—the person is scared. The student as text analyst evaluates the situation, in this case thinking they are scared, but also happy. Finally, there is a resolution—they are free. This is the same process that good readers go through.

The music performances engage all of the children's experiences, and their audiation often includes envisioning immigration and family separation. One child tells Ortega: 'When I play the song *Las Mañanitas*, I imagine a girl writing to her cousin on her birthday. She moved from New York to Mexico and misses her a lot.'

Another boy writes in his music journal about his envisioning when he plays and listens to 'The New World Symphony.' His text is accompanied by a drawing and appears as Figure 1.

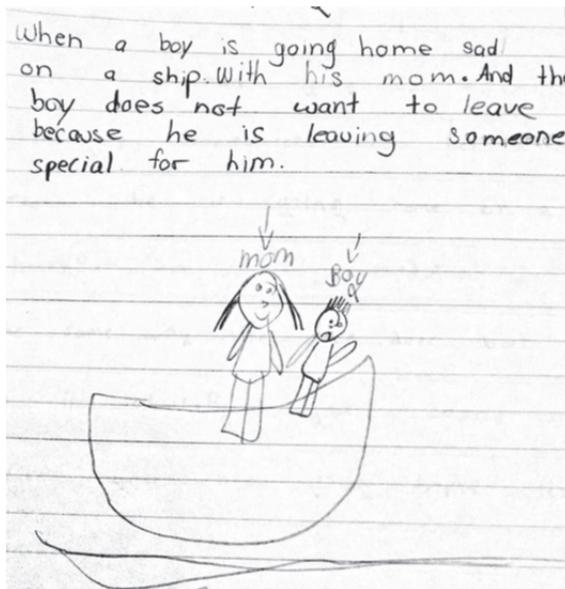


Figure 1. New World Symphony Response, Grade 4.

In the envisioning of texts by these children of immigrants—whether expressed through music, through drawings, or through writing—the feelings around leaving and staying, losing and loving, missing and finding, are forever present. The ship which the child draws in Figure 1 is not moving forward with the current; it is creating a firm terrain, where despite the flows and the waves, it cannot move. The ‘boy is going home’ but he is pulled (notice how his body is slanted in the opposite direction from the way the corriente is moving) by the love of ‘someone special.’ The ship, like the children’s musicking/languageing, captures the flows of their lives, but also gives them the possibility of feeling sadness and love simultaneously within the same space. The ship is symbolic of a ‘third space’ (Gutiérrez, 2008) that frees him from making a choice between what are presented as dichotomous alternatives—going or staying. It is not about one or the other; it is about living in both. In many ways, this child’s envisionment captures the feeling expressed by Gloria Anzaldúa, the Chicana scholar, when she says:

Being Mexican is a state of soul—not one of mind, not one of citizenship. Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders. (Anzaldúa, 1987:84)

It is the power of envisioning and the imagination that can transform the realities that many minoritized children experience. Anzaldúa (2015:20) reminds us: ‘We can transform our world by imagining it differently, dreaming it passionately via all our senses, and willing it into creation.’ The process of audiation as envisionment and the creative process practiced in this music education programme enables children to see, as Anzaldúa says, from where ‘the outer boundaries of the mind’s inner life meets the outer world of reality, a zone of possibility’ (2015:122).

Because musicking evokes emotions, children engaged in doing music acquire a deeper sense of feeling, of envisioning. Hearing and seeing are usually described as being different senses, as are smell, touch, and taste. But in musicking, children are able to experience *synaesthesia*, simultaneously perceiving the touch of the instrument, the hearing of the music, the sights, tastes, and smells that the music evokes. This process of synaesthesia is lost in reading and writing when mechanical school exercises do not evoke the imagination and do not bring together ordinary and non-ordinary realities. And yet, we know that this inner sensibility is most important in order to participate in literacy and to use texts with others.

6.4 Positioning oneself as text analyst: Composition and performance in community

Previous studies have looked at the role that listening to music plays in eliciting writing (Elbow, 2006). But when interviewed by Ortega, these Latinx children

said that the role of music is greater than simply inspiring writing. The children claim to think musically as they engage in writing. For example, when asked about the relationship between music literacies and school literacies, a girl says: 'It helps me be more creative and add more to my writing.' Another one reveals: 'In my class, when I am writing, and then I think of music, and then I remember. Once I think of music, I think, okay, I remember.' The sentiments expressed by these children as they think musically in writing are similar to those articulated by Salmon (2010) when she writes:

When music awakens children's prior experiences, it intrinsically motivates them to express their thoughts through different sign systems such as writing, drawing, dancing and singing, making the uncovered information visible. (Salmon, 2010:4)

Similarly, Howard Gardner (1997) has observed the relationship between literary work and musical compositions:

My literary work reflects the sort of organization that I observed in compositions I studied and played (i.e. the development of themes, the effect that something introduced at one point has much later, the posing of what I call questions and answers in a musical way, the way symbols can capture not just reference but aspects of moods and the form of moods). (Gardner 1997:32)

When students are working in the music classroom as an ensemble or in partnerships, they have to go beyond their individual playing. Working with another person or a group of people changes the learning space as well as the strategies used to make meaning. Children are not ashamed to ask for help, or to follow what others are doing. A student reflects on this collaborative process of being text producer when she says: 'Sometimes, when I don't know my fingerings or I forgot my fingering chart, I play a chromatic, or I ask my partner for help.' Another one recalls how she follows her peers in ways that in a school classroom might be considered cheating: 'I listen to my group and go up and down with my bow when they do it.'

Performing music is not simply an individual endeavour, but a social one. In their interviews, children expressed the many ways in which they 'made up' for the performances of others to make sure that their collaborative performance was enhanced. One said: 'I play low notes with the other countermelodies to make sure that the countermelodies is blended.' Another one reveals: 'I listen to them, or if they aren't playing the right rhythm I play louder.' In this way they position themselves in a continuum of musical learning, as their expertise emerges. Their actions are not evaluated in comparison to that of others who 'have' expertise and are said to be 'complete.' Instead, every performance is

incomplete, enabling or impeding different emotions, feelings, actions, and opening up the present performance to a future of possibilities.

It is not enough to play an instrument. Confidence as text analyst comes from listening to each other, from performing with others, and from understanding each other and the systems that are brought into play when a text is used. About the collaborative process of making music, one student explains: 'I learn how to communicate with others...carefully and to be a better listener.' The deeper listening and confidence come because it is a group that is producing the composition. Everyone is contributing to an emergent performance, to the production of a text that communicates feelings, but also ideas, orientations, and dispositions. The students are not being evaluated individually through a single test that results in one number, as literacy performances often are in schools. In schools these individual evaluations work to disperse the existence of a collaborative community and instead accentuate competition and individualism. However, the Latinx bilingual students involved in producing these musical compositions feel like family. One student says: 'I feel confident because I'm with my orchestra. And it's like a whole family going somewhere.'

All of these four processes—cracker of code, text participant, text user, and text analyst—are part of musicking/languageing/performing literacies. The musicking process in which CYMP engaged these Latinx bilingual children moved them beyond the trauma and rage they sometimes feel as children who have been enregistered as deficient, at-risk, and non-academic. Instead, the musicking heals the 'herida,' reaching, as Anzaldúa (2015:10) tells us, 'through the wounds to connect with others.' Musicking connects classical music/banda, home/school, families/teachers, the three R's/the arts, the imagination/reality/spirituality, Mexico/the United States. But it does not fully annihilate the herida. At least, however, it forms a scab—a scab that serves as a reminder to these students of the practices of racialization, exclusion, and marginalisation to which they have been subjected, but allowing them to re-exist as dignified people and competent learners. The children's musicking is part of their translanguaging, their ability to leverage all their communicative repertoire to make meaning.

7. Conclusion

Language as an autonomous single unified entity has been used to structure social inequality since the seventeenth century (Bauman and Briggs, 2003). This concept of language has played an important role in the processes of colonisation and nation-building that have minoritized most bilingual populations in nation-states (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). When scholars have studied

the ways in which bilinguals do language, their translanguaging, the verbal modality has been prioritised. In trying to resist the enregisterment of these bilingual students as deficient and non-academic, scholars have focused on showing how their ways of languaging are actually more complex than those of monolinguals. But in studying this complexity, many scholars have ignored how bilingual communities leverage the arts, and specifically music, to make sense of their lives. Musicking is an integral part of translanguaging.

This paper has showcased an afterschool music education programme for a low-income immigrant community. The programme's commitment to social change has resulted in our viewing the Latinx immigrant community as a whole with the richness of all their languaging practices—without divisions of English and Spanish, the United States and Mexico, citizens and undocumented persons, children and adults, school literacies and arts literacies. In making music together, this community produces subjectivities of creativity and talent for themselves. And children involved in this music programme position themselves as agentive actors, and users, producers, and analysts of all texts, as they build a firm terrain for their many literacies performances.

Adopting a translanguaging stance means that educators stop seeing English and Spanish, homes and school, academic literacies and arts/music literacies as separate dichotomies, and instead start nurturing the many features of the students' communicative repertoires as valid and important. This transformation in the stance of educators does not change the structural racism that Latinx students face, and the racialized ideologies through which the White monolingual middle-class community views them. But for us, adopting a translanguaging stance in education creates a way of helping minoritized children live with the herida of what it means to be a racialized bilingual child in the United States today. 'Conocimiento,' Anzaldúa says, 'hurts, but not as much as desconocimiento' (2015:137). A translanguaging stance that leverages the entire semiotic repertoire of people reveals *heridas*, but it is the only way to *conocer*, to know fully, and not to *desconocer*, to not know. This knowledge has to consider 'both sides of the line' so that Latinx bilingual minoritized children develop understandings of how to cross boundaries of knowledge and performances that have kept them in the dark, in *desconocimiento*.

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