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Journal Title: Translanguaging and transformative teaching for emergent bilingual students : lessons from the CUNY-NYSIEB Project /

Volume: Issue:

Month/Year: 2021Pages: xv-xix

Article Author: García, O.

Article Title: Introduction

Imprint: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY :
Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021. ©2021

ILL Number: 208429883



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INTRODUCTION

Overviewing with CUNY-NYSIEB Lentes y Emergent Pasos

Ofelia García

We finish this book as our heridas hurt. Most of us live in New York City where the sounds of Broadway have been substituted by the sonidos de sirenas, where the streets are desiertas, and the escuelas are closed. Many of us have been ill, although we have fared well as a grupo, surviving Covid-19 up to now.

Although all of us have been impacted by the coronavirus, the virus has had disparate effects on racialized poor comunidades. In April 2020 in New York City, the death rate for Latinx was 22 people per 100,000; for African Americans 20 per 100,000, whereas for whites it was 10 per 100,000 (Mays & Newman, 2020). Seventy-five percent of the workers considered “essential”—mostly grocery clerks, delivery personnel, janitors and nursing assistants—are Latinx or African American (Buchanan et al., 2020), leading to higher rates of infecciones. The poor health care that racialized minorities in the U.S. have received has been also responsible for the higher death rates in these comunidades.

The children about whom this book is about have also been the most affected by the closing of escuelas. Many do not have the tecnología required to do online schooling, and as a *New York Times* article reported (Sharma, 2020), doing online schooling is most difficult for those who do not speak English. At the same time, many of the adults in racialized communities are still working and do not have the luxury of sitting by their children as they do their school tareas. Many emergent bilingual children have been left to school themselves.

The teachers of emergent bilinguals have also been challenged by school closings. They have been taught to listen to and observe children con cuidado, but they cannot do so carefully in an online classroom, even if the children are in virtual attendance. Teachers cannot engage students in meaningful sustained dialogue. They have had to rely more on written textos and mechanical written ejercicios. The rich and significant classroom interactions among the children and their teachers have been tempered. At the same time, teachers have had to make room to escuchar and listen deeply to children’s fears, pain, heridas, boredom, and sense of loneliness.

Likewise, all of us as teacher educators and researchers are struggling. How do we ask teachers to teach una lección, to show what they know how to do in real time, with real bodies, in real classrooms? How do we assess teaching when it is all online? How do we make room for easing the fear, el miedo, the heridas and the dolor, as our students deal with the illness and loss of familia and amigos? as they face the threat of job cuts? How do teacher educators help prospective teachers view un futuro en la enseñanza, when the future of education has been shaken? How do we face our own futuros? What is it that is importante to aprender, estudiar, investigar when we have *unlearned* so much as we have had to go into aislamiento? when we have had to pausar?

For a while, this manuscript sat unfinished, as we pondered el futuro de la educación. But as we once again read the manuscrito, we realized that there were also things to *relearn*. The work in this book calls us to question the understandings that we have had about lengua y educación as schools ceased to exist as we knew them. We asked ourselves: What are the lecciones we learned from the CUNY-NYSIEB work that we can still hold onto today? What part of the work helps us navigate the wounds, the heridas that have surfaced in these dark times to reconstruct life anew for all children, and especially for those who are the subject of this book—emergent bilinguals?

We have tried to look through lentes that focus on the emergent bilingual children as we find them in familias, comunidades, playgrounds, and not simply through lentes found and imposed by educational systems and traditional scholarship. But as we reread this manuscript, our lentes have once again become fogged through the breath of the masks that we wear in NYC to protect ourselves from the virus. What is it that we can continue to see? How do we carry on cleaning our lentes so that we make visible what had remained invisible about these minoritized bilingual children in many schools and scholarship?

The most important lección that we have relearned as we have reread this manuscript during this time is that of *emergence*, based on what the Chilean biólogo Francisco Varela has called “the loopiness of the thing,” the connect- edness of cells, of human beings, of life. Rather than understand teaching and learning, and especially language learning, simply as boxes of inputs and out- puts, we have focused on visualizing an emergent network that has no beginning and no end. Rather than thinking of languages as home language and school language, we have insisted on the “the loopiness,” on the network that cannot separate one part of life from another, one named language from another.

In this volume, we have tried to limit ourselves to a time and place—the work done by one project, the CUNY-NYSIEB project. However, our work around translanguaging also represents an emergent network that has no begin- ning and no end. The work started long ago with others outside this group and continues under different guises. The banyan tree of translanguaging, an image

that I used in my 2009 book on Bilingual Education to capture the rootedness of the work that spreads differently and that is also captured by the Together/Juntos tree of the frontcover, fits well with the emergent network that continues to sprout new branches and spread roots among the team members. For example, Sara Vogel continues to think of translanguaging and computer science with a grant from the National Science Foundation, in which Laura Ascenzi-Moreno and Kate Menken are involved. Tatyana Kleyn has initiated another New York State Education Department Initiative, focused on Immigration and Education, CUNY-IIE, to which Maite Sánchez brings her expertise as Advisor. Maite has provided much of the glue that has kept us rooted in the work throughout the existence of the project. Carla España and Luz Herrera published their book *En Comunidad* recently; Cecilia Espinosa and Laura Ascenzi-Moreno are putting finishing touches on a manuscript on translanguaging and literacy; Maite Sánchez and I are coediting a book focusing on Latinx students and the role of translanguaging. Beyond this, there is much work going on from different members of the team that fill us with expectation and hope for a futuro.

As the chapters here attest, we have grown in all different directions and will continue to do so in the coming years. The different work in which many of us have engaged in the last few years, individually and with others, for example, the conceptualization of raciolinguistics by Nelson Flores with his colleague Jonathan Rosa, continues to shape our understandings of translanguaging. It is indeed an emergent network of scholarship that has grown beyond our specific time and place to other places and times. We hope this greater network of scholars will continue to bear witness to the translanguaging potential of minoritized students. Just as the theory/practice of translanguaging cannot be said to have had a specific beginning, but rests on the lives and scholarship of many throughout the years, its end is not within these pages.

The steps/pasos taken by all of us in the project have been slow, deliberate, at times sideways, sometimes even backward, but always pushing us forward, to act on a vision of what is possible, not in a future, but in the present, to open up a space of potentiality now even during these dark times; to gift the children, their teachers, communities, and families with emergence. They are pasos of emergence.

In this volume, we trace the beginnings of the CUNY-NYSIEB pasos, as the New York State Education Department reached out to the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society (RISLUS) and the Ph.D. Program in Urban Education at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Ricardo Otheguy who was director of RISLUS at the time became principal investigator, with Ofelia García and Kate Menken as co-principal investigators. The work could not have been done without the four project directors that we were fortunate to hire—Nelson Flores who initiated the project with courage and foresight; Maite Sánchez who sustained the project through five years, made

us the familia we are today, and continued to offer her leadership and work throughout the life of the project; Kate Seltzer who graced us with her intelligence and organización for one year; and Ivana Espinet who was a formidable closer, always generosa, calm y persistente. As Maite Sánchez has always said, we have become a familia, as we have worked juntos, with some tensions and conflictos, but always with amor for those who have suffered the racismo and discriminación that comes with being a member of a bilingual racialized community, and for their teachers.

The volume starts out with *Section I* in which we lay out the *Foundations* of the project. It starts with the concept that grounds the project—the development of translanguaging theory/practice (García & Otheguy, Chapter 1). This is followed by the role of the process of writing translanguaging school policy visions (Menken & García, Chapter 2), and a roadmap of the proyecto (Kleyn & Sánchez).

Section II, on the *Juntos Structures* of CUNY-NYSIEB, starts out by laying out the different leadership of the project and how it was adjusted to changing times (Espinet, Flores, Sánchez, & Seltzer, Chapter 4). All leadership in CUNY-NYSIEB has been distributed, and this same principio operated in the development of emergent bilingual leadership teams (Sánchez & Menken, Chapter 5). It then incluye un capítulo in which the autores address how they engaged with different stakeholders—teachers in ESL, bilingual education, English Language Arts, as well as community (Collins, Kaya, Pappas, & Zaino, Chapter 6).

Section III addresses the *Shifting Educational Spaces* with which the project worked. We start out with a chapter that describes the material pedagógico that was developed throughout the years (Vogel, Seltzer, Carpenter, Ebe, Celic, & Martin, Chapter 7). One of our concerns was how to work with translanguaging theory/practice in dual language programs. The following chapter shows how this was done in one classroom en particular (Aponte, Espinet, & Seltzer, Chapter 8). We then end la section by considering how we encouraged the development of multilingual ecologías in schools (Menken, Pérez-Rosario, & Guzmán Valerio, Chapter 9).

In *Literacies*, *Section IV*, we focus on aspects of instruction and assessment. We consider instruction in early childhood classrooms (Morell and López, Chapter 10), followed by two chapters that focus on literacy instruction. Children's literatura takes center stage in Chapter 11 (España & Herrera, Chapter 11), and writing in Chapter 12 (Espinosa, Moreno, & Vogel, Chapter 12). We end *Section IV* with a chapter on assessment (Ascenzi Moreno, Chapter 13).

Because the community was an important part of the project, *Section V* focuses on *Inquiry en Comunidad*. First, there is a chapter which describes a community language inquiry unit (Espinet, Aponte, Sánchez, Cárdenas Figueroa, & Busone-Rodríguez, Chapter 14). This is followed by descriptions of how las familias collaborate in the classroom context (Espinet & Le, Chapter 15).

The last section of the book, *Section VI* is reserved for the *Transformation of Teacher Education*. We first exploramos this topic en el context de City University of New York, CUNY (Espinosa, Ascenzi-Moreno, Kleyn, & Sánchez, Chapter 16), followed by the impact the project had in higher education institutions in which some of us were hired after obtaining our Ph.D. (Woodley, Cioè-Peña, Hesson, & Solorza, Chapter 17). Finally, the section closes with an account of how involvement with CUNY-NYSIEB also transformó the teacher education programs in upstate New York, specifically in the State of New York higher education system, SUNY (Kearney & Mahoney, Chapter 18).

It would be impossible to include all the many teachers, teacher educators, and researchers in New York State, the U.S., and the world, with whom we have interacted and worked throughout these years. But we did not want to exclude their voices, so we decided to include a very small sample. The *Teacher/Researcher Boxes* are only loosely associated with the topics of the chapters, but they give readers an idea of how the particular topic has been taken up differently in various contexts. All the teachers here included have directly worked with CUNY-NYSIEB. The researchers and teacher educators we include in Section VI demonstrate how this work is being taken up in national and international contexts.

We are grateful to Danling Fu who agreed to write a Foreword to the book. Early on, Danling Fu showed us, without naming it, that translanguaging was helpful to develop the writing of bilingual children in New York City's Chinatown. She taught me in particular that with language, the same lesson I had learned from my progressive educational mentors—Lillian Weber and Cecelia Traugh—worked. Start with the children's strength, their own language practices; listen to them, observe them deeply; make them visible in your mind's eye, re-view them; re-listen to them with generosity; and then teach them by building on their strengths. It is all so simple, and yet so difficult. Danling Fu is an important link in the continuous emergent network of scholars who have given us the courage to name and comprehend what has always been here for us to see. 谢谢

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TRANSLANGUAGING AND TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING FOR EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

Lessons from the
CUNY-NYSIEB Project

*Edited by CUNY-New York State Initiative
on Emergent Bilinguals*

First published 2021
by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this title has been requested

ISBN: 978-0-367-43501-1 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-367-43498-4 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-00367-0 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo
by KnowledgeWorks Global Ltd.