

Chapter 2

Broadening the View: Taking up a Translanguaging Pedagogy with All Language-Minoritized Students



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Abstract This chapter revisits a question posed by García (NYS TESOL J 1(1):2–10, 2014): what does a shift to translanguaging English mean for TESOL? To address this question, this chapter applies a translanguaging lens to the teaching of English, in the TESOL classroom *and beyond*. We first lay out the theoretical perspectives of a translanguaging approach, which include a series of paradigm shifts, ranging from a reimagining of English as a named language (Otheguy R, García O, Reid W, Applied Linguistics Review 6(3):281–307, 2015; Appl Linguist Rev. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2018-0020>, 2018) to a “re-seeing” of language-minoritized students as speakers and writers who use their agency to shape “English” in creative and critical (Li Wei, J Pragmat 43:1222–1235, 2011) ways. Our chapter draws on examples from a high school English Language Arts classroom made up of bilingual students as well as those traditionally viewed as monolingual, namely African American students. We describe how one teacher enacted a translanguaging pedagogy (García O, Johnson S, Seltzer K, The translanguaging classroom. Leveraging student bilingualism for learning. Caslon, Philadelphia, 2017) by (1) embracing a translanguaging *stance* regarding the “acquisition” of English, (2) centering her translanguaging *design* around texts that challenge monoglossic “native speaker” and “standard language” expectations and engage students in critical discussions about English itself, and (3) making translanguaging *shifts* that destabilize the role of the English teacher as linguistic expert.

Keywords Translanguaging · Language ideologies · Language-minoritized students · English Language Arts · TESOL

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1 Introduction

On the very first day of their 11th grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, Ms. Winter¹ poses several essential questions that she tells her students they will investigate that year. She directs their attention to a bulletin board in front of the classroom where, written in neat, colorful handwriting, are the following questions:

1. How can I integrate multiple language practices and elements of voice into my creative work?
2. How can language be used to open and close doors?
3. How does the way I communicate connect with my identity and who I am?
4. What does it mean for us to have and use multiple language practices in our society today?

At their square tables where they sit in groups of four, students – all multilingual, multidialectical teenagers, almost all of whom are Latinx² and African American – read the questions to themselves and discuss them. They ask about the phrase “language practices.” They discuss what “doors” might be opened or closed by language. One student, looking around the brightly decorated room, remarks upon the quotes by famous writers and thinkers posted around the room in a variety of languages. Between the discussion of these essential questions about language in their lives, the multilingual ecology of the classroom, and the first day’s reading – an interview with a famous bilingual author about the process of translating his book from English into Spanish – students were introduced to a very different kind of *English³ classroom. As Ms. Winter tells her students right before the bell rings, “this is English, but it’s also English Language Arts.”

Ms. Winter’s organization of that first day of class – just one of her thoughtful and purposeful decisions about the physical and curricular design of her classroom – emerges out of her desire to emphasize the *language arts* that so often lie beneath the surface of the so-called English classroom (Gutiérrez, 2001; Martínez, 2012). And though Ms. Winter’s classroom is officially designated an ELA classroom with “push-in” English as a New Language (ENL) services,⁴ her approach – which Seltzer (2017, 2019) has referred to as a *critical translanguaging approach* – is rooted in a question that García (2014) once asked about the field of TESOL: what would it mean to shift from “merely teaching English to translanguaging English” (p.3)?

¹All names of participants are pseudonyms.

²We use the term Latinx as a gender-neutral way of referring to Latinos/as.

³We follow Lippi-Green’s (2012) use of an asterisk next to *Standard American English “to refer to that mythical beast, the idea of a homogenous, standard American English” (p.62) when we write about the ideological named language of *English.

⁴In New York State, students labeled “English Language Learners” receive mandated service hours through several program structures, including “push-in” English as a New Language (ENL) services. In “push-in” programs, a certified ENL teacher comes into a general education classroom to provide support for emergent bilinguals.

In this chapter, we consider what translanguaging theory could contribute to the teaching of *English to language-minoritized students whose language practices are different from those legitimated in traditional English curricula. Although we focus on the ways in which translanguaging has the potential to transform TESOL instruction, we consider here the reality of many urban high school classrooms, where African American students and bilingual students, especially Latinx, who fall along all points of the bilingual continua (Hornberger, 2003) are taught jointly. To address the TESOL profession explicitly, we revisit García's (2014) discussion of "TESOL translanguaged," focusing on "major misconstructions about English, its speakers, the learning of English, bilingualism, and the teaching of English" (p.4). By revisiting these misconstructions through a translanguaging lens, we offer an approach to instruction in the English-medium classroom – be it TESOL, ELA, or another content-area class – that views students not merely as "English learners," but as speakers and writers who bring creative and critical (Li Wei, 2011) perspectives and language practices and use their agency to shape the learning of *English.

The education of bilingual students, and especially those labeled "English Language Learners," but whom we refer to as emergent bilinguals, is often studied separately from the reality in which it occurs. That is, in focusing only on TESOL education, we miss what goes on when emergent bilinguals, alongside other language-minoritized students, are taught by an English teacher or a content-area teacher, often with little understandings of bilingual development. It is the purpose of this chapter to show how leveraging translanguaging in a "general education" ELA classroom can bridge the ways in which bilingual, and specifically Latinx emergent bilingual, students and students who speak minoritized varieties of *English perform *English. This is a most important contribution, for Latinx and African Americans often live in the same communities, attend the same schools, and spend most of the time in the same classrooms. Although educators who focus on "second language" development and bilingualism are highly important for emergent bilingual students, *all* general education teachers, and especially those whose role is to develop *English, must understand the potential of translanguaging for *all* students.

Translanguaging also bridges understandings of language diversity for different types of students – those who are said to be bilingual and those considered to be multidialectal. By focusing on linguistic features, and not language as an autonomous structure, translanguaging theory makes it possible for African American and Latinx students to understand their language development as being part of the same process, despite the socio-political differences between what are seen as "varieties of English" and "different languages." In so doing, students become better listeners for one another, engaging in developing each other's repertoires without regard to whether they are said to be "bilingual" or "multidialectal." This development of what Martínez (2017) calls linguistic solidarity between these two populations of students offers the opportunity "to incite transformative learning experiences for youth who often do not have a language to express their own frustration, anger, and sadness about their collective experiences" (p.182).

To make tangible this kind of approach, we step into Ms. Winter's ELA classroom and describe the three strands of what we have termed a translinguaging pedagogy: the *stance*, or the philosophy that teachers bring into their work with emergent bilinguals; the *design*, or the organization of both the physical space and the curriculum, instruction and assessment that is informed by the teachers' stance; and the *shifts*, or the unplanned, moment-by-moment "moves" that teachers make within a translinguaging design that allow for students' language practices, interests, and needs to take center stage (García, Johnson & Seltzer, 2017). We will show how Ms. Winter enacted a translinguaging *stance* regarding the "acquisition" and development of *English, centered her translinguaging *design* around multilingual, multidialectal, multimodal texts that challenge monoglossic "native speaker" and "standard language" ideals and expectations and engage students in critical discussions about *English itself, and made translinguaging *shifts* that destabilized her own role as the linguistic expert and instead positioned her as a co-learner, allied with students in resisting oppressive language ideologies.

2 *English with an Asterisk: Translinguaging English

The teaching of what is said to be English to today's learners with highly diverse language practices cannot rely on traditional understandings of language, but must incorporate critical post-structuralist sociolinguistic understandings (García, Flores & Spotti, 2017). In this section we explore how translinguaging theory disrupts traditional understanding about English, and the consequences that this might have for teaching language-minoritized students.

With regards to the *English language, scholars working with translinguaging theory have posited three principles that must be fully understood by all educators:

1. *English is not simply a closed and autonomous system of lexical, morphological, syntactic and phonological features that correspond to what is named as English.

Although *English is an important social construct that has had real and material effects, it does not have psycholinguistic reality. That is, what we call *English is not what anyone actually speaks; it is what has been "invented" (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015) for purposes of nation-building and colonialism. It is this invented, homogeneous "standard English" that is then presented as *English in schools.

2. All speakers engage in *linguaging*, a series of social practices that they perform as semiotic beings, as they are given opportunities to interact with listening subjects who legitimate their practices (or do not). To do so, speakers assemble a wide range of linguistic, multimodal, social, semiotic and environmental resources. This linguaging is different from the "English" or "Spanish" or "Chinese" that is legitimated in schools.

3. The linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional components of speakers' languaging are inseparable. All speakers perform their languaging with a *unitary repertoire of features* which they assemble, and that reflects the languaging opportunities that they have had, and the interlocutors and listening subjects with whom they have come into contact. It is from this "assemblage" (Pennycook, 2017) that speakers select the features that offer the best "hints" to engage with their listeners.

These three positions on language clearly support the idea that *all* speakers engage in selecting features from a unitary repertoire that they have constructed in social interaction. Those considered to speak *English "appropriately" (Flores & Rosa, 2015) are those whose language practices and other semiotic features match those of powerful speakers legitimated in institutions like schools. Many language-minoritized students – some who are called "bi/multilingual" and others who are called "multidialectal" – have a semiotic repertoire that is much more extensive than those authorized in institutions, but many of their linguistic and multimodal features have never been legitimated in schools.

It is the inability to consider the languaging of *all* language-minoritized students as "appropriate" for their education that has led to their extensive failure in schools. And it is the inability to understand their language practices from this translanguaging perspective that has led to the complete separation of educational programs to teach *English to "multidialectal" African American students, "bilingual" Latinx students, and Latinx "English Language Learners." We explore in the study below how English Language Arts instruction steeped in translanguaging theory has the potential to expand the linguistic repertoire of all language-minoritized students, while paying attention to the different sociolinguistic realities of African American and Latinx bilingual students, and especially those labeled English Language Learners.

It is important, of course, for all teachers to understand how *bilingualism* operates in the world, and especially in contexts where *English is dominant; for despite the understandings that *English has been invented, it exists as a social reality with many material effects. For example, high school students are asked to perform in assessments with features considered "standardized English." When bilingual Latinx students use features considered "Spanish" in such assessments, they are penalized. Translanguaging provides a way to view bilingualism without reference to the dichotomies that have been essentialized – that bilingualism refers to the presence of a first and a second language (an L1 and L2), and that it is either additive or subtractive (Lambert, 1974). Instead, translanguaging theory acknowledges that bilingualism, like all languaging, is dynamic (De Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2005; García, 2009; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Herdina and Jessner (2002) have proposed a dynamic model of multilingualism based on Dynamic Systems Theory, which posits that there are no separate language systems and that bi/multilingualism produces a change in the systems involved, as well as in the degree of metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness of the speaker (Jessner, 2006). English learners add

new features (not *A new language*) to their unitary repertoire, as they then assemble, select and enact the features that are most meaningful for the interaction at hand.

Of course, TESOL teachers have to be mindful of the sociopolitical dimension connected to the power hierarchy of *English and the other language. But it is important to understand that the inventory of signs and meanings that bilingual students develop is not compartmentalized into items belonging to *English and items belonging to the other language. The language repertoire of bilingual students is unitary (Otheguy et al., 2015; Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2018), as is that of those students considered monolingual. In learning *English, emergent bilinguals extend their repertoire with additional features that they appropriate and use differently depending on the listeners. Bilingual speakers engage overtly in translanguaging when interacting with bilingual listeners in unmonitored situations such as the home and community. But if interacting with those who are said to speak *English only or “the other language” only, bilinguals are forced to select only from those linguistic features of their repertoire with which there is overlap with the listeners. In most cases, this means that bilinguals are forced to speak with less than half of the resources in their repertoire. This last point is important to consider when thinking about language education, for it turns out that the gap observed between those students labeled “English Language Learners” and others is *produced* when they are taught and assessed with less than half of their repertoire. A translanguaged TESOL profession could change this.

In 2014, García outlined five principles of what it would mean for TESOL to understand *English and English education through translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014). We repeat them here:

1. The English language is not a system of structures, rather languaging through what is called English is practicing a new way of being in the world,
2. “Native” *English speakers are neither the norm nor the objective fact, and yet positioning them as such creates an order of indexicality (Blommaert, 2010) that favors the language practices of white prestigious monolingual speakers,
3. Learning *English is not linear, and does not result in *English monolingualism. Rather, students are emergent bilinguals with full capacities who add new features and foreground some features, and not others, as they interact with different interlocutors and tasks.
4. Bilinguals are not simply speakers of a first and a second language, but use their unitary repertoire dynamically to interact in the world,
5. The teaching of *English cannot be enacted in total isolation of other language practices because speakers’ translanguaging is always with them. Instead, teachers must leverage the students’ existing repertoire and encourage the appropriation of new features into the learner’s unitary repertoire.

Many TESOL teachers think of translanguaging only as scaffold, that is, they understand it only as temporarily using the students’ home language to learn *English. They understand the *trans-* as simply going across two named languages and they claim to use it to support emergent bilingual students’ meaning-making. But the

translanguaging theory that we espouse in this chapter goes *beyond* named languages, and thus beyond simple scaffolds.

We posit that translanguaging has the potential to be *transformative* for all students whose language practices have been minoritized because it wipes out the psycholinguistic reality of the English language as a simple structure of forms that are objectively the norm. Instead, translanguaging acknowledges the invention of the English language norm and makes evident the political and economic reasons for upholding it in schools, which render those whose language practices are different as inferior and unqualified. In its transgression, translanguaging pedagogy has the capacity to transform *English classrooms and the subjectivities of those language-minoritized students within them. Translanguaging takes us *beyond* what we have learned to call “language,” as the teacher acts on the students’ translanguaging with political intent. As we will see, translanguaging in Ms. Winter’s classroom is what Flores (2014) has called “a political act.”

3 The Classroom and the Research Project

The classroom at the center of this chapter is that of Ms. Winter, a teacher in a borough of New York City. Though Ms. Winter is an ELA teacher – her New York State teaching certification is for secondary English education, and not English as a New Language education (ENL) – her classroom includes many emergent bilingual students. Learning alongside them are bilingual students not labeled English Language Learners as well as African American students whose English practices are marginalized by both the school and society at large. As we will see, though an ENL teacher only pushed into one of her four classroom blocks, she enacted with *all* students a critical translanguaging pedagogy that encouraged them to view *English as a complex set of linguistic features and social practices that could be integrated into their rich existing linguistic repertoires and fostered their criticality around *English itself, setting up opportunities for students to interrogate the ideologies that elevate one form of English (and one group of English speakers) and devalue others.

3.1 The Project

The classroom examples we feature in this chapter emerge out of a larger research project that took place over 9 months in 2015–2016. The project, an ethnographic case study of Ms. Winter’s ELA classroom carried out by Seltzer (2017), involved co-designing a yearlong ELA curriculum that aimed to challenge the ideologies that lie beneath the traditional *English classroom. Together, Seltzer and Ms. Winter designed a series of units around such topics as exploring linguistic diversity, understanding links between language and power, and grappling with the role of language in our identities. To engage students in this inquiry, Seltzer and Ms. Winter drew on

a variety of multilingual, multidialectical, and multimodal texts ranging from spoken word poetry to sketch comedy to political speeches to blog posts. They also designed a number of literacy activities that engaged students in an interrogation of language ideologies through the use of translanguaging in their own writing across different written genres like poetry, reflective journals and, ultimately, a college essay.

Seltzer and Ms. Winter began their collaboration by reading theoretical work across fields like bilingual and TESOL education, English education, and sociolinguistics. They engaged in rich discussions about this theory, talking through how these ideas might be applied to Ms. Winter's practice. Once the school year began, Seltzer observed Ms. Winter's classroom approximately three times per week. Taking on the role of a participant-observer, she looked for the ways in which Ms. Winter translated her new learning and thinking into her lesson planning and delivery as well as her interactions with students. Seltzer sat with students at their tables, listening and at times participating in their conversations about the class content. She had informal conversations with students during lunch, after class, and in the hallways. In this way, Seltzer maintained twin lenses on how the teacher and the students were shaped by and themselves shaped understandings of *English in the classroom.

Seltzer's weekly observations of Ms. Winter's classroom resulted in a large body of data, including field notes, reflective memos, audio recordings and transcriptions of classroom sessions, student and teacher work, and informal interviews with Ms. Winter and select students. Analysis of this data included multiple rounds of both inductive and deductive coding and elements of discourse analysis (Allan, 2008; Gee, 2011). Data analysis was also subject to member checks and peer debriefing to increase its credibility and build trust with participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, the triangulation of multiple data points enabled Seltzer to create thick descriptions that took multiple perspectives into account and painted a fuller picture of the teaching and learning that occurred.

3.2 Research Site and Participants

The project took place at South Bronx High School⁵ (SBHS), a small school that served approximately 440 students in 2015–2016. SBHS, which had been part of the 2014–2015 cohort of schools participating in the City University of New York – New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB) Project, was made up of students whose demographics reflected that of its neighborhood. According to the school's demographic information from 2015–2016, 71% of students were identified as “Hispanic” and 26% were labeled “Black”, and nearly 90% qualified for free and reduced lunch. Students whom the state identified as “English

⁵The name of the school is a pseudonym.

Language Learners” made up 19% of the overall population, most of whom spoke Spanish.

As a participant in the CUNY-NYSIEB project, SBHS committed to improving the experiences of emergent bilinguals in the school community (for more on the CUNY-NYSIEB project, see García & Kleyn, 2016). When Seltzer was assigned to the school as a research assistant in 2014, she provided professional development and worked with a small group of teachers to integrate translanguaging strategies into their teaching. It was in this capacity that she worked closely with Ms. Winter, who not only demonstrated an avid interest in translanguaging but also expressed her desire to continue working with the approach outside of her participation in CUNY-NYSIEB. Because of this, and the fact that Seltzer and Ms. Winter had known one another for more than 10 years (they had been colleagues when Seltzer herself was an ELA teacher at SBHS), Seltzer approached Ms. Winter about partnering for this larger research study and Ms. Winter enthusiastically accepted.

The students in Ms. Winter’s four blocks of 11th grade ELA mirrored the larger demographics of the school. Most of her students were Latinx and African American, though she also taught several students whose families had recently immigrated from Yemen and several countries in West Africa and one white student who had moved to New York the previous year from the South. Students were introduced to the project in the first week of classes, had the opportunity to ask questions about their potential participation, and were provided with a letter of consent that both they and their parents/guardians could sign. All but three of Ms. Winter’s students agreed to participate in the project and, over the course of the year, several became interested in talking to Seltzer about what she was seeing and hearing, providing her with important insights into the research.

As will be shown in the next section, Ms. Winter and her students shaped a critical translanguaging approach to *English instruction. To understand how such an approach can result in meaningful critique of the kinds of myths that reify monoglossic understandings of *English, we organize the finding from this classroom study around the three strands that make up what García, et al. (2017) have termed a translanguaging pedagogy. First, we describe how Ms. Winter’s *translanguaging stance* regarding the “acquisition” of *English enabled her to broaden and redefine the language and vocabulary of the classroom and make space for students’ diverse language practices. Next, we explore Ms. Winter’s *translanguaging design*. By organizing her curriculum around multilingual, multidialectal, and multimodal texts that were metalinguistic in nature, Ms. Winter invited students’ sophisticated understandings of those ideologies that elevate certain language practices above others. The use of these different texts also provided students with models for engaging in their own translanguaging writing. Lastly, we explore Ms. Winter’s *translanguaging shifts* that revealed her own critical stance towards *English and fostered this criticality in students. Though Seltzer and Ms. Winter were the initial architects of the curriculum, it was the students’ translanguaging and their complex metacommentary (Rymes, 2014) that shape this discussion of teaching *English.

4 Translanguaging Stance: Broadening and Redefining Classroom Language

Early in their planning work, Seltzer and Ms. Winter spoke at length about subtle shifts in language that revealed new ways of thinking about *English in the classroom. As noted in the vignette that opens this chapter, instead of using the word “language,” Ms. Winter took up the terms “linguaging” and “language practices.” Rather than uphold the myth that the teaching of *English can be enacted separately from other language practices (García, 2014), Ms. Winter’s use of the term “language practices,” as well as “Englishes” and “linguistic repertoire,” point to her critical stance. Though these choices about language may seem small, taken together they created a sense of flexibility around traditional concepts in the *English classroom. For example, early in the year, Ms. Winter introduced an on-going reflective journaling project. As students engaged with new ideas about language in the classroom, Ms. Winter asked them to connect those ideas to things they read outside of class, came across on social media, heard from friends and family, etc. Students shared their journal entries with one another, and several became the basis for whole-class discussions throughout the year. When introducing the language journal, Ms. Winter explicitly opened up the assignment to linguistic flexibility:

So, your language journal is yours, right? It’s about your language use, your language practices, and your identity. So you can write in whatever style of language or language practices you see fit. You want to be paying attention to how you use language and how that connects to who you are. (Classroom transcript, 11/5/15)

Ms. Winter’s redefinition of *English was integral to broadening the scope of the class overall. During one class discussion, one African American student and one Latinx student, Jania and Steven, were engaged in a debate about the difference between “standard” English and “proper” English, which they argued were separate concepts. The debate had emerged after students were asked to answer the question, “Do you have to use ‘proper’ English to sound smart?” The provocative question engaged the whole class in lively discussion, and after Jania and Steven had talked for a few minutes, Ms. Winter stepped in:

The two of you are bringing up an important point, which is why I used quotation marks. There’s no standard definition of “proper” English. If there were a “proper” then there’d be an “improper.” We’ve talked all year about the idea of language practices, not right or wrong, or good or bad, or proper or improper. So the question I’m asking with “proper” in quotation marks is, if we use any other of our language practices, are people going to misjudge us as unintelligent? Do people only judge you as smart if you use only what’s considered “standard” or “proper” English? (Classroom transcript, 3/14/16)

In her reframing of Jania and Steven’s debate over the difference between “proper” and “standard” English, Ms. Winter is, in effect, asking students not to lose sight of the forest for the trees. This broader take on language practices and the ideologies that deem certain Englishes “proper” (or “standard”) and others “improper” made way for students to see *past* such terms. Through this reframing – and through her choice to surround the word “proper” in quotation marks in her question – Ms.

Winter modeled a contestation of the term's authority and of the larger language ideologies that render certain practices "proper" and others not. In short, Ms. Winter's stance emerged through her redefinition of certain terms that are ideologically naturalized in the *English classroom. This broadening of the shared language of the classroom, as we will see in the next section on *translanguaging design*, made room for students to openly contest such terms and concepts themselves.

5 **Translanguaging Design: Multilingual, Multimodal Texts as Mentors**

Throughout the academic year, Ms. Winter created lessons, literacy activities, small projects, group activities, and other instructional designs that aimed to bring to the surface students' translanguaging and their metacommentary (Rymes, 2014), or their talk about language itself. At the center of many of these designs were texts that served as translanguaging mentors (Seltzer, 2020) for students' own translanguaging and articulations of linguistic understandings. Sketch comedy by the duo Key and Peele provided insights into how African American people are not only master linguistic style shifters (Alim & Smitherman, 2012) but also experts on how different English practices are viewed in our society. Spoken word poets Jamila Lysicott and Melissa Lozada-Oliva served as mentors for how an artists' linguistic medium – their translanguaging and language play – can elucidate powerful messages about language and power. And, of course, authors like Gloria Anzaldúa, Amy Tan, and Alice Walker, among others, demonstrated the role that language – and Englishes in particular – plays in the lives and identities of minoritized people. It was through engagement with these mentors – reading excerpts of their work, analyzing both the content of what they read as well as the linguistic choices they made, and making connections between these texts and their own understandings of language – that students were privy to examples of translanguaging in action by established writers and artists and voiced their own criticality about *English.

After reading a blog post by a bilingual writer about his experiences in school, Ms. Winter facilitated a whole-class discussion around the question of whether teachers at the school "tend to have a bias for or against the language practices you use." Students voiced that indeed teachers did have a bias against their language practices, in particular their use of Spanish in school. Students Juan, Natasha, and Jacqui shared the following experiences:

Juan: I see it sometimes when I start speaking Spanish, the teachers that don't speak Spanish be like, "speak only in English."

Natasha: I remember that happened to me. The teacher told me that it was rude but I didn't find it rude because it was like eight kids in the classroom and we all spoke Spanish.

Jacqui: That's like the passage we read... I want to be comfortable to use my languages when I want to. Like I shouldn't be criticized for the way I speak. If I want to speak this language I want to speak it. Maybe it's helping me more than English. (Classroom transcript, 2/28/16)

Juan and Natasha, both emergent bilinguals from the Dominican Republic, shared similar experiences about Spanish being explicitly devalued and penalized by teachers at their school. Both students point out how their teachers voiced a common ideology: that *English is the only language appropriate for school and that is “rude” to speak anything else, even if, like in Natasha’s class, all the students speak Spanish. These “discourses of appropriateness” (Flores & Rosa, 2015) are commonplace in schools and beneath them are raciolinguistic ideologies that render people of color “linguistically deviant even when engaging in linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects” (p.150). In other words, the appeals for emergent bilinguals to speak “English only” because it is the only “appropriate” language ring hollow: even if students like Juan and Natasha speak *English, they will still be *heard* by their teachers as “rude,” not to mention less intelligent, less professional, and less competent.

When Jacqui, a bilingual Latinx student of Puerto Rican descent who was not labeled an “English Language Learner,” jumped into the conversation, we see her resistance to this silencing of Spanish. Citing the class reading explicitly, Jacqui resists such criticism of speakers like her for “using my languages when I want to.” Going against one of García’s (2014) “myths” around *English and *English learning, that “switching” languages is detrimental and that speaking only *English is most helpful to emergent bilinguals, Jacqui asserts that perhaps it is her other languages that are helping her *more* than *English.

In addition to providing them the opportunity to voice their critical metacommentary about *English, Ms. Winter’s translanguaging design featured models of how students could use their own translanguaging in their writing. The final unit of the academic year was an author study of translingual authors, or those that integrate different language practices in ways that transgress monoglossic language ideologies (for more on this author study see Seltzer, 2020). Students were grouped and assigned an author whose work they would study over the course of 5 weeks. Each week, Ms. Winter organized students’ engagement with that author’s work around one of five themes: the authors’ influences, voice, linguistic choices, engagement with audience, and censorship and critique. To engage in discussions around these topics, students read excerpts of the writers’ published work as well as short biographical readings, articles and criticism, and interviews with the authors. The articles and interviews chosen were those that dealt specifically with how language was used in the authors’ work. The combination of the authors’ writing and writing *about* their writing provided models of both translingual text production and critical metacommentary about language. For example, in addition to reading excerpts from *The Color Purple*, students studying Alice Walker also read an interview in which Walker talked about her linguistic choices for the character of Celie, watched a video clip of her reading and discussing her poetry, and read think-pieces on the use of African American Vernacular English⁶ in writing.

⁶Though there are many terms to describe this language practice, we have chosen to use African American Vernacular English, or AAVE, because it is the term that Ms. Winter elected to use with students.

As students read about how their assigned authors thought about audience or made choices about how to integrate different language practices in writing, they were also posed questions about their own writing. How (if at all) might they “mesh” different language practices in their writing? In what ways (if any) would they accommodate their audience, who might not understand their languages practices? What would they do if faced with critique or push-back about their translanguaging writing? Some students expressed ambivalence about translanguaging in their writing, citing reasons such as fear of being misunderstood or getting penalized by a reader for not using “standard English” only. Others, however, took up the invitation to integrate languages other than *English into their “academic” writing, which took the form of a mock college essay in which students were tasked with articulating their thoughts on the role of language and language ideologies in their lives. This translanguaging design, inspired by the authors studies, aimed to bring forth not only students’ learning over the course of the year but also their experimentation with translanguaging writing. One student, Andrew, who was of African American and Dominican descent but often expressed insecurity about his ability to speak Spanish, demonstrated his own grappling with language ideologies in his essay.

Andrew began his essay by retelling an event that made him aware of his own language practices and how those practices related to (mis)perceptions of him by those in authority. During an interview for an internship, Andrew “slipped” in his response to the interviewer’s question of why he would be a good candidate, saying, “I think because of my determined mentality and how fast and good I work, I will be good for this job and also I ain’t no slacker. I get the job done by any means.” Andrew realized later that this response, which made his interviewer’s “eyebrows raise,” may have been the reason he did not get the internship. In a draft of his college essay, he reflects on that realization:

I have seen those who speak my language practices succeed and yet our language is still considered inferior. We grow up in a society where the way white people speak is considered the “correct” way of speaking. What makes the way they speak so different than ours? Throughout our country’s history the white population has been dominant and we, Hispanics and African Americans, have been struggling, struggling to make us all feel equal but things aren’t. Our country is run by rich white men and women so people view the way they speak as the “correct” way of speaking and we get judged because we do not speak “proper” English like them. We get put in a category of unintelligent speakers.

My mother always told me just because yo hablo un poquito de Español does not make me dumb! Just because I curse does not mean I am a criminal! (College Essay, Andrew)

Here we see Andrew’s articulation of his understanding of raciolinguistic ideologies and their impact on speakers like him. Writing with a sense of history and using the rhetorical device of repetition, Andrew writes that because of forces of white supremacy, people like him have been “struggling, struggling to make us all feel equal but things aren’t.” He makes the explicit connection that because of the dominance of “white men and women” in the U.S., their ways of speaking English have been deemed “correct” and “proper” (terms Andrew puts in quotation marks) and that “Hispanics and African Americans” like him are heard as “unintelligent.” After this section, Andrew sets two lines of his essay apart from the others, letting them

stand alone on the page. Here he includes translanguaging, meshing linguistic features that are said to be from English and Spanish to make the point that his use of language in ways that do not merely reflect what is deemed to be “appropriate English” or “appropriate Spanish” do not make him “dumb” or a “criminal.”

These two lines show Andrew’s critical metalinguistic awareness. Andrew demonstrates his understanding that, as a bilingual writer, he has access to linguistic features which are said to be from Spanish, as well as those that are said to be from English. In *English classrooms, features that are regarded as being from Spanish are often forbidden, just the same way as profanity is. But Andrew makes the point that when he uses features from Spanish in an *English essay, he is engaging in feature selection of the same type that he does when he includes, or not, “curses.” That is, he is not restricting his language repertoire in writing to features that are authorized in the *English classroom. Instead, he is writing using the full critical and creative power of his extended repertoire. This in no way makes him “dumb” or a “criminal.” This powerful two-line paragraph seems to serve as an emotional appeal to his reader, driving home his point through the use of translanguaging as well as other rhetorical devices like repetition and the use of exclamation points. This explicit critique of “proper” English and the ideologies that reify it – as well as the translanguaging used to express that critique – came to the surface because Ms. Winter’s pedagogical design actively invited it. By providing students with translanguaging mentors that integrated their language practices in ways that destabilized oppressive language ideologies, Ms. Winter made space in the *English classroom for students like Andrew to demonstrate their own creativity and criticality (Li Wei, 2011).

6 Translanguaging *Shifts*: Invoking a Language of Solidarity

Translanguaging shifts are the “moves” that teachers make that respond to students’ languaging, questions, and critique, none of which can be predicted. A teacher’s translanguaging design must be flexible enough to accommodate these shifts; in fact, these shifts often signal places in the design that could be changed or adapted to better meet the needs and interests of the students. In Ms. Winter’s case, her shifts demonstrate her commitment to destabilizing such “myths” as the existence of “native English speakers” or “standard English.” A close analysis of one such classroom shift, which occurred in response to a student’s question, reveals Ms. Winter’s use of a *language of solidarity* (Seltzer, 2017), which not only allies her with her students, but also upends her role as the “linguistic expert” in the *English classroom and instead foregrounds her status as a co-learner (García & Li Wei, 2014). During one class, Ms. Winter paused a conversation when she noticed students struggling to answer her questions about a particular text. After she reassured students that the work they were engaged in was “really sophisticated stuff,” Oscar, an emergent bilingual student who had moved from the Dominican Republic only

2 years prior, asked a question that pushed Ms. Winter to expand upon her role as a co-learner:

Ms. Winter: We're doing really sophisticated stuff in our class because you guys are extremely intelligent and can handle it. But the outside world isn't quite ready for us. So if you're feeling like, "I'm not sure how to answer this, I don't really get this question," that's ok. These are really big questions and I think a lot of the teachers at this school don't quite have the – they don't think about language the way we do in here.

Oscar: Including yourself?

Ms. Winter: Well ... I certainly have evolved a lot in my thinking about language over the course of this year. Because I've learned a lot with you guys about the history of different language practices and how people who have power determine what language is considered good or valid and people who don't have power, their languages – or language practices – are considered inferior. But that's not actually the case. There's not good or bad, there's just different. (Classroom transcript, 3/14/16)

By first acknowledging the complexity of the task and then characterizing the class as engaged in a kind of radical learning, Ms. Winter set the classroom apart from "the outside world." Though Ms. Winter, a white, elite-educated, monolingual English-speaking woman, did not find herself marginalized by those ideologies that devalue certain language practices, she aligned herself with her students over "society" and even over some of her fellow educators at the school. This, in particular, seemed to prompt Oscar to question Ms. Winter's affiliation with students ("we") rather than other teachers ("they"). By asking Ms. Winter if she, herself, thought like those teachers, Oscar was understandably attempting to figure out where Ms. Winter stood. In her response, Ms. Winter takes up a co-learning stance (García & Li Wei, 2014), which "moves the teacher and the learner toward a more 'dynamic and participatory engagement' in knowledge construction" (p.112). She credits her "evolution" to the learning she has done "with" students. Interestingly, a few minutes after this exchange, Oscar offered his thoughts on whether, as the class was discussing, writers should change their language practices to be compatible with what has been legitimated as the "standard." The following exchange ensued:

Oscar: I think no, Miss, we shouldn't change our language practices because then it's never gonna change. If we keep changing our language practices, everybody's gonna keep thinking that we're not educated – that the way we speak is not educated. So if we start, maybe, incorporating our language practices, they gonna get, like, a different perspective.

Ms. Winter: Well, that's right up there as one of the most intelligent things I've heard today. Really, really profound. If we always adjust our language practices, then we perpetuate, we keep up, the idea that there are certain ways of speaking that are good and certain ways that are bad. So let's not change, let's use our language practices and resist the ideas of what's good and what's bad that society has. (Classroom transcript, 3/14/16)

In his response, Oscar seemed to take up the language of solidarity set forth by Ms. Winter in her initial classroom shift. His use of "we" and "our" could be seen as referring to a classroom of writers (or, perhaps more broadly, a larger community of writers whose language practices do not align with expectations of a "standard"), and that by "incorporating our language practices," perhaps "they" will gain a different perspective. Oscar's comment, which earned high praise from Ms. Winter, prompted her to express an even stronger language of solidarity, aligning herself

with students and encouraging the class as a whole to “use our language practices and resist” society’s marginalization of those practices. Though it is important to restate that Ms. Winter had not experienced this kind of linguistic marginalization – in fact she would quite easily fit the ideological mold of the “native English speaker” tasked with teaching *English in “standard,” “academic” ways – her shifts in the classroom reveal her desire to serve, instead, as an ally and co-learner with her students.

7 Discussion & Implications

In their discussion of what they term a translingual orientation in TESOL teacher education, Flores and Aneja (2017) ask a series of important questions:

How would TESOL teacher education look if we provided spaces for students to develop projects that explore this linguistic diversity through a translingual lens? How might this help these programs more effectively prepare students—regardless of their language backgrounds—to become agents of change in challenging monoglossic language ideologies? (p.460)

We believe the examples from Ms. Winter’s 11th grade ELA classroom presented in this chapter provide a window into how we might begin to answer such questions. We also draw on Ms. Winter’s classroom to push these questions even further: what might it look like for *all* teachers of *English – across *all* program types – to take up a translingual orientation and challenge the monoglossic ideologies that inform the teaching of *English?

Through the examples of Ms. Winter’s translanguaging pedagogy – her stance, design, and shifts – in action, as well as students’ metacommentary and writing that was brought to the surface through this pedagogy, we can see several implications and possibilities for the field of *English teaching, particularly the TESOL field. First, teachers of *English must become well-versed in recent translanguaging scholarship which actively resists the very myths and misconceptions about English and English speakers articulated by García in 2014. Rather than tacitly uphold such naturalized ideas as the existence of a native speaker or an objectively standard form of the English language, *all* educators – but particularly those tasked with teaching *English to language-minoritized speakers – must engage with post-structural theories of languaging that can contribute to their translanguaging stances. Like Ms. Winter’s small linguistic turn from using the term “language” to “language practices,” teachers of *English can model their own shifting and evolving stance in ways that ally them with their language-minoritized students.

Second, educators must do more than teach English as though it is an isolated, bounded system devoid of history and socio-political significance. Ignoring the myriad ways that speakers of English around the world appropriate and shape English not only ignores a global reality; it ignores the very languaging students are engaged in on a daily basis. Instead, teachers of *English must explicitly design

classroom activities, choose texts, and pose questions that foster students' criticality of English as a named language and turn their attention to the ways in which minoritized speakers – including them! – have *always* appropriated *English in creative and critical ways. In doing so, teachers invite *all* language-minoritized students to take up linguistic solidarity (Martínez, 2017) with one another, collectively critique oppressive language ideologies, and integrate features of different Englishes into their repertoires on their own terms. As we saw in Andrew's college essay, when given the opportunity, students can voice sophisticated critical metalinguistic awareness in ways that are linguistically inventive and rhetorically powerful – writing skills that will find students much success outside the classroom.

Lastly, teachers of *English – especially those whose language practices, backgrounds, and lived experiences are different from their students – must be open to the kinds of shifts that position them as co-learners. Given Ms. Winter's positionality as a white, monolingual English-speaking woman, she fit the ideological model of who “should” teach *English to language-minoritized students. Instead, Ms. Winter attempted to subvert this positioning by designing a flexible curriculum that enabled her to shift with the questions and interests of her students. No lesson was too rigid for the kinds of conversations about language that emerged authentically from students' metacommentary. No project was closed off to negotiations about changes and extensions of the proposed task. In this way, Ms. Winter communicated the message that she was receptive to students' inquiries and interests and that her own thinking evolved by learning alongside them. These kinds of small shifts are integral for teachers of *English who wish to take up translanguaging pedagogy.

8 Conclusion

In this chapter we have questioned conceptions of *English that have resulted in the separation of *English language education into programs for different language-minoritized students. For some, such as African American students, the thinking has been that their English has “non-standard” features. Their language education thus focuses on silencing a dialect that some call “African American Vernacular.” For others, such as Latinx bilingual students, the thinking has been that their language evidences “language mixing,” that they “code-switch” between English and Spanish. In providing these Latinx bilingual students with an English-only education, the focus is on encouraging a total shift to *English, stigmatizing and silencing their bilingualism. It is important to note that the bilingualism of Latinx students is recognized in schools only when it falls along the beginning points of *English language development, that is, when they are labeled “English Language Learners.” Then schools buckle down, making visible a “problem” that has to be remediated. Schools focus on intensive ESL or TESOL instruction, as if learners did not already have a language repertoire. That repertoire then becomes invisible and schools fail to acknowledge what students know how to do with language, their languaging,

unless it consists only of features that are socially associated with what is named *English.

We argued in this chapter that translanguaging theory can transform the teaching of *English to *all* language-minoritized learners. It can do so first and foremost because translanguaging does not reify named languages that one *has*, but takes a feature-based approach to what speakers *do* with their linguistic and multimodal repertoire. Furthermore, translanguaging also takes a speaker/listener-based approach to communication and language learning. If listening subjects and audiences are most important to developing speakers, then it behooves us to familiarize *all* students with translanguaging. Translanguaging theory provides a conceptual platform to work against the naturalization of *English that often accompanies *English education of all types. For example, translanguaging pedagogical practice develops listeners and interlocutors who are attuned to the bilingual performances of Latinx students, especially those who are labeled “English language learners.” At the same time, translanguaging pedagogy develops Latinx listeners who acknowledge and legitimate the linguistic practices of their African American friends. In centering the linguistic and multimodal feature selection practices of African American and bilingual students, and not an object named *English, translanguaging theory transforms our understanding of the process of performing, teaching and learning *English.

Lest we are misunderstood, we emphasize here that TESOL and bilingual specialists are needed to teach bilingual students, and especially those who are emergent bilinguals. But ELA and general education teachers, with understandings of translanguaging and dynamic bilingualism, are also needed. We advocate for a translanguaging approach that engages *all* language-minoritized students. By making students aware of how *English operates in education and society to create differences and inequalities, translanguaging theory can do much more than simply develop the *English language performances of emergent bilinguals. Translanguaging theory can transform the way we have naturalized an object called *English as the language of U.S. schools for purposes of exclusion and stigmatization, instead of recognizing the diverse language practices that students bring with them and with which they perform outside of classrooms. As Ms. Winter has done, translanguaging can transform ELA/TESOL instruction, focusing with intent on how bilingual and multidialectal students perform language with their existing semiotic repertoire, and revealing the invention of school *English in ways that continue to produce unequal opportunities in U.S. society.

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