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Latinx Children's Push and Pull of Spanish Literacy and Translanguaging

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Abstract

We explored 19 Latinx children’s literacies in Spanish and translanguaging by asking, “What are Latinx children’s experiences and beliefs regarding Spanish and translanguaging reading and writing? How do tutorial staff and teacher candidates (TCs) help the youth to resist hegemonic and bracketing practices of English-only?” This study took place in a South Texas tutorial agency, where children voluntarily attended for after-school homework help. Data sources consisted of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, hobby essays, and newsletter articles. Most children reported negative school-related language experiences and expressed dislike and unease regarding Spanish and translanguaging reading and writing, although they lived less than 10 miles from the Mexico border. However, two tutorial staff and 15 TCs provided counter narratives and modeled that Spanish and translanguaged (hybrid) reading and writing are neither wrong nor difficult. Schools’ accountability pressures and the U.S. socio-political milieu move language to the center (centripetal forces), while forces that resist normalization are centrifugal. Implications relate to how neighborhood educational centers, TCs, and classroom teachers can help subaltern youth to resist centripetal language forces.

Keywords

Latino/Latinx, Translanguaging, Spanish Literacy, Writing, Bakhtin, Heteroglossia

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Latinx Children's Push and Pull of Spanish Literacy and Translanguaging

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We explored 19 Latinx children's literacies in Spanish and translanguaging by asking, "What are Latinx children's experiences and beliefs regarding Spanish and translanguaging reading and writing? How do tutorial staff and teacher candidates (TCs) help the youth to resist hegemonic and bracketing practices of English-only?" This study took place in a South Texas tutorial agency, where children voluntarily attended for after-school homework help. Data sources consisted of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, hobby essays, and newsletter articles. Most children reported negative school-related language experiences and expressed dislike and unease regarding Spanish and translanguaging reading and writing, although they lived less than 10 miles from the Mexico border. However, two tutorial staff and 15 TCs provided counter narratives and modeled that Spanish and translanguaged (hybrid) reading and writing are neither wrong nor difficult. Schools' accountability pressures and the U.S. socio-political milieu move language to the center (centripetal forces), while forces that resist normalization are centrifugal. Implications relate to how neighborhood educational centers, TCs, and classroom teachers can help subaltern youth to resist centripetal language forces. Keywords: Latino/Latinx, Translanguaging, Spanish Literacy, Writing, Bakhtin, Heteroglossia

Introduction

Some believe learning English guarantees one's U.S. academic success, but such a belief ignores other factors, e.g., official language and education policies and socio-political contexts (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Therefore, we situate our study of Latinx children's language experiences and beliefs amidst multi-factor U.S. oppression, such as linguisticism, racism, and xenophobia (Anzaldúa, 1990) and governmental policies (Smith & Murillo, 2012). This hegemony relates to monoglossia or positioning one language as the language of power (García & Kleifgen).

Although our study took place in the U.S., many non-dominant languages face marginalization worldwide in high-powered spheres, or official contexts, such as schools and governments, which tend to favor dominant groups (Fishman, 2001; Young, 2009). Low-power spheres are more intimate among family members and occur in homes (Fishman; Young). Because of normalizing influences in society, subaltern groups tend to speak languages and dialects perceived as less prestigious than the languages of dominant groups (García, 2014). For example, some characterize U.S. Spanish as a language of poor recent immigrants and translanguaging (hybrid language practices) as unsophisticated linguistically (Anzaldúa, 2007). Others minoritize Spanish by equating language with ethnicity and dichotomizing Spanish and English (Flores & Rosa, 2015; García & Mason, 2009). These notions have enabled banning Spanish literacy in many U.S./Mexico border schools (Anzaldúa; Smith & Murillo, 2012).

These "raciolinguistic ideologies" (Flores & Rosa, 2015) influence policies and practices, e.g., transitional bilingual education, a subtractive model that moves pupils into

English-only quickly (Hinton, 2015). Subtractive models of bilingual education prioritize learning the target language in school; subsequently, language-minoritized children learn to read and write in the dominant language at the expense of developing native language literacy (Flores & Rosa). Thus, the mother tongue is subtracted and replaced by the dominant language. Hinton found that schools in our region, serving mostly Latinx students like ours, tended to focus on English because of accountability pressures educators faced through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), now the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Part of NCLB, high-stakes standardized tests are mandatory, normed, and administered to public school children at pre-determined points in primary through secondary grades. Test results determine governmental funding and sanctions for school districts, school closures, staff career advancement, and educator bonuses (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). See also Hinton (2016) and Menken (2016) regarding implications of high-stakes testing on language teaching at the national level in the United States. Other implications of these tests relate to decisions regarding children who cannot advance to higher grade levels and graduate high school unless they pass certain standardized exams. These tests are available only in English after fifth grade in Texas (Nichols & Berliner; Texas Education Agency, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Furthermore, standardized, high-stakes assessments in English influence literacy and language curricula and pedagogy (Menken, 2006; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Palmer & Lynch, 2008) and relate to the educational attainment of language-minoritized youth (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In primary and secondary schools serving mostly low-income emergent bilinguals, teachers tend to prepare youth for these tests through English-only, discrete skill or phonics practice devoid of higher-order analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (Bussert-Webb, 1999, 2008; Poza, 2016). School gentrification still occurs in the U.S., with campuses serving predominantly rich or predominantly poor students; even within a campus, administrators tend to place low-income Latinx students in lower academic tracks that fail to prepare them adequately for college (Gándara & Contreras). These accountability-related pedagogical practices relate to the Latinx education crisis (Gándara & Contreras). In a national longitudinal study of over 200,000 students, those receiving the least home-language support in school progressed the slowest on standardized test scores in English (Thomas & Collier, 2003).

Conversely, bilingual students in developmental or maintenance bilingual education scored highest on these normed tests in English (Thomas & Collier, 2003; see also Chuang, Joshi, & Dixon, 2012; Goldenberg, 2008; Lutz, 2016) reflecting the benefits of biliteracy on students' academic achievement in the target language. Research also supports bilingualism for cognitive growth and flexibility (Cummins, 1976) and the delay of dementia symptoms (Bialystok, Abutalebi, Bak, Burke, & Kroll, 2016).

Perceiving non-dominant children's multiple languages as resources rather than problems represents a shift (Ruíz, 1984). We consider languages as repertoires. Moreover, we believe development of one's native, or heritage language, alongside additional languages, is a right and valuable resource (García & Sylvan, 2011; Ruíz, 1984). Furthermore, unlike subtractive bilingual education that focuses on target language acquisition, often at the expense of heritage languages, dynamic bilingual education includes mother-tongue language maintenance and development (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Besides plurilingualism, this dynamic model values children's translanguaging, or the flexible use of languages (Flores, 2016; García & Kleifgen).

Translanguaging is a dynamic process in which multilingual speakers utilize their full lexical abilities to make and share meaning (García, 2009). Translanguaging combines two or more languages, e.g., Spanish and English, and is common along borders of countries with different languages, such as our geographic region in Texas. Translanguaging represents a linguistic strength in which people use their full linguistic resources for sense-making in

reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing and representing (García). Indeed, translanguaging disrupts hierarchical language dichotomies and models (García). For example, dynamic bilingual education includes translanguaging and plurilingualism, while the subtractive model focuses on rapid target-language learning and acquisition (García & Kleifgen, 2010).

Translanguaging also signifies socially-constructed, hybrid language practices focused on users and contexts (Ganuza & Hedman, 2017), which bi/polylinguals employ in creative, dynamic ways for sense-making and communicating (García, 2009). Translanguaging (which includes code-switching, translating, and interpreting), employs one's full linguistic resources (García). An example might be reading a book in one language but writing about the book in another language (García). Another example could be combining two languages when speaking or writing.

Besides language and education contexts, the context of our research site and participating children are also important as we introduce our work. In the neighborhood where we conducted our study, 99% of residents are Latinx and 97% speak Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). For over 10 years, the first author has conducted language and literacy studies in an after-school tutorial agency in this neighborhood; most respondents reported receiving English-only school instruction and homework (Bussert-Webb & Díaz, 2013; Bussert-Webb, Díaz, & Yanez, 2017). We wondered how these school-related practices played out with these children. Thus, our research questions were, "What are the children's experiences and beliefs regarding Spanish and translanguaging reading and writing? How do tutorial staff and teacher candidates (TCs) help the youth to navigate hegemonic, or dominant, language testing and pedagogical practices?" Studying the experiences and beliefs of language-minoritized Latinx children in the U.S. may provide insight into the simultaneous push to acquire fluency in the dominant language of instruction, English, and the pull of familial values for their cultural and linguistic heritage. These children live within push and pull language tensions; non-dominant youth negotiate these competing language forces in and out of school (Smith & Murillo, 2012).

Conceptual Framework

We used heteroglossia (multiple languages) as a conceptual framework for all aspects of this study, because heteroglossia signifies the embracing of variations of languages and voices. Additionally, bilingualism is about heteroglossic language use (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Bakhtin, a Russian literary scholar, coined heteroglossia and centripetal and centrifugal forces in *Discourse in the Novel*, which became part of a book edited by Holquist (1996). Bakhtin applied physics ideas to language to describe two simultaneous forces at work. Centripetal forces push language to the center and make it official, unifying, and regulatory, while centrifugal forces repel this unification of language. According to Bakhtin, this constant flux in language is natural,

Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the forces of language. A unitary language is not something given [*dan*] but is always in essence posited [*zadan*] and at every moment of its linguistic life, it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. But at the same time, it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative, unity – the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, "correct language." (Holquist, 1996, p. 270, original emphasis)

For Bakhtin, heteroglossia represents the space where competing discourses counter monoglossia, or one language. This conflict prevails in issues related to monoglossic language education policies and standards (García & Torres-Guevara, 2010). Heteroglossia relates to disequilibrium, as centrifugal (fleeing) and centripetal (centralizing) forces compete against each other (Holquist, 1996). According to Bakhtin, discourse (written or spoken communication) exists in hierarchical interactions related to power. Negotiations and conflicts exist between dominant language (standard English) and less-privileged language, for example, Spanish spoken by recent U.S. immigrants who may struggle financially (Holquist). These competing languages overlap as heteroglossic tensions in socio-historic contexts. For instance, a monolingual English teacher may enact an English-only policy in his classroom and may punish Spanish-dominant teens for speaking Spanish, but the youth, resentful, may whisper criticisms about the teacher in Spanish.

We imagine schools and governments that focus on English to be centripetal, unifying forces, while centrifugal forces could operate in neighborhood tutorial centers, with staff and teacher candidates who attempt to teach children Spanish literacy. Thus, centrifugal forces resist centering or centripetal forces; this tension relates to power and language use (Holquist, 1996). Translanguaging is part of this push and pull. If centralizing language tendencies exist that marginalize languages, then decentralizing practices can also exist as resistance, overt or covert.

With English privileged for school instruction and Spanish and translanguaging for homes and neighborhoods, children and families may feel torn. Yet, many transnational people, who live between two worlds regarding practices, may find it difficult to leave their cultures and languages outside of school. If educators do not recognize children's ways of communicating and their rich socio-political and linguistic practices, children may feel disempowered and might not participate in classroom activities (Williamson & Hedges, 2017). Anzaldúa (2007), who grew up in the same region where we conducted our research, discussed how border residents live in flux, especially linguistically. Deciding which language to use can cause discord because one may be comfortable translanguaging with siblings and friends at home, but embarrassed to do so in classroom settings, due to official language policies and U.S. socio-political contexts that privilege English (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

Translanguaging relates to Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia because people adopt and contest normative language beliefs and practices, such as bracketing (García, 2009). Bracketing, related to linguistic purism, attempts to segment languages in time and space, even in dual language classrooms that separate and alternate home- and target-language instruction, e.g., English one day and Spanish the next or English in one classroom and Spanish in the other (Velasco & García, 2014). Bracketing treats languages as "bounded autonomous systems" so that a pure or unified language is the goal (García & Kleifgen, 2010, p. 58). In contrast to bracketing or language purism, we acknowledge translanguaging as a strength one can leverage when developing literacy in two languages or more. We also perceive borderland sites to be ideal places to study children's language experiences and beliefs.

Methodology

This section describes our borderland site, our positionality as researchers and authors, participants, procedures, data sources, and analysis.

Site

Our research site was a faith-based tutorial agency, *Fuerza* (Strength), where the children voluntarily attended for homework help after school (all names are pseudonyms).

Fuerza functions along the U.S./Mexico border in a South Texas colonia. A colonia is an unannexed neighborhood without basic services and standard housing (Texas Attorney General, n.d.). Although most of our research site does have paved roads now and some homes would meet housing codes, the city surrounding our research site refuses to incorporate this colonia. Additionally, the adult residents' college graduation rate in this colonia is 1.3%, compared to the surrounding city's 16% (Bussert-Webb, 2015). With 54% of residents below the poverty line, this colonia is the poorest U.S. neighborhood; children represent about 40% of this colonia's residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Our research site shares challenges and strengths with other Southwestern colonias; challenges include marginalization from the surrounding cities and counties, but strengths include shared language (Spanish) and neighborhood unity (Bussert-Webb et al., 2017; Donelson & Esparza, 2016).

The first author has offered a service-learning summer class, Literacy Methods, which has taken place at *Fuerza* since 2006. Service-learning is a social justice pedagogical strategy in which TCs provide a service that benefits community members and TCs; the community receives help and TCs extend and reflect on course content and societal inequities (Boyle Baise & McIntyre, 2008). Through service-learning courses, TCs apply the concepts and methods they learn in the course while supporting the children's literacy development, as the TCs provide tutoring and lesson plans for the children. Engaging with the children within a tutorial center in the community offers an opportunity for TCs to see and explore community strengths and challenges in learning contexts outside of the formal academic setting of the schools, yet not within the children's homes. These informal settings (community centers for children) are not quite school, not quite home, and thus situate TCs and children to collaborate on projects that explore their experiences and tap into their academic and community strengths, such as through art (Gannon, 2010) to learn and express their knowledge. These community-based educational centers represent a liminal or third space (Bhabha, 1994). Translanguaging is also an example of third space because this interlanguage is on the boundary of two or more languages. During the co-authors' service-learning courses/programs, TCs tutor and teach children and assist them with homework. Additionally, TCs helped youth create a trilingual newsletter. For the newsletter, each child wrote an article on a topic of their choice in Spanish, then in English, and then in translanguaging.

Authors' Positionalities

We realize we are subjective research tools and part of the phenomenon we chose to study (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, we endeavored to acknowledge our roles, biases, influences, and the possible perceived power differentials of our professor status, and we realize participants' interactions with us remained inherently cross-cultural. Co-authors Bussert-Webb and Lewis are Anglos. Although Spanish is not our home language, we are polylingual. Bussert-Webb is bilingual and biliterate in Spanish and English. Ms. Masso, our research assistant and second author, is Latinx and speaks Spanish as a home language; she hails from the region and surrounding community where we conducted the study. Her insider-outsider perspective informed our study in meaningful ways as she provided a local cultural perspective.

Additionally, Author 1 (1999) has experience teaching remedial reading in the local school district and first-hand experience in high-stakes testing as a high school teacher. Her daughter also participated in dual language, or maintenance bilingual education, in this school district from grades first through fifth, also with test-preparation pressures. As university professors, Authors 1 and 3 have also taught local teachers and administrators who experienced high-stakes testing and accountability pressures. To mitigate our pre-conceived notions and biases, we were careful to involve Author 2 throughout the data analysis process and we ensured we included her interpretations.

As subjective beings, we acknowledge our passion for our research site. For example, an important subjectivity relates to Bussert-Webb's long-term relationship with the tutorial center, as she has offered service-learning classes at *Fuerza* for over 10 years. Author 1's academic expertise in bilingual literacy studies and collaboration with *Fuerza* informed our study. The language and cultural discrimination Author 2 felt when she and her family lived in rural Illinois (a U.S. Midwestern state) for a few years also informed our study. However, Author 3 relocated to teach at our university without any ties to the community or the region. Her transplanted outsider perspective also informed our study, as well as her academic background in cognition and learning and research interests in identity and diversity. Author 3 has also taught service-learning courses that supported *Fuerza* children. We remained cognizant of our research and interpretative stances, including our intimate, advocacy-based ontological relationship with *Fuerza* children, parents, and staff (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003; Cherland & Harper, 2006). An important aspect of this advocacy relates to affirming children's languaging practices and our beliefs that language is about making and sharing meaning.

Participants

Participants included 19 Latinx children, 8 parents, *Fuerza*'s 2 female staff members, and the first author's literacy methods undergraduate teacher candidates (TCs) (12 females and 3 males). All parents and children lived in the colonia, as did *Fuerza*'s tutorial coordinator. The assistant coordinator, TCs, and researchers lived nearby. All study participants were Latinx who spoke Spanish as a home language.

Since the children are the focus of this article, we describe them more in depth. Most of the children have participated in bilingual education but reported learning little or no Spanish reading and writing in school; we verified the youth's reports with the children's parents, *Fuerza* staff, and TCs. The children, ages six to 13, were enrolled in grades first through eighth. Twelve females and seven males participated; 17 children attended public schools and two children (sisters) attended a charter school. Only one participating child reported prior school attendance in Mexico; because of U.S. immigration and legal issues, we only noted previous residence when participants mentioned it. Although most children in this colonia were born in the U.S., some of their family members may lack official U.S. documentation. Immigration raids have transpired in this colonia.

Procedures and Data Sources

Data gathering took place from 3:30 to 9:00 pm, four days a week (Monday through Thursday), in May and June of 2017. TC and child tutorial sessions occurred 3:30 to 5:45 pm at *Fuerza*; Author 1 and *Fuerza* staff supervised all child and TC tutorials. After children and staff left, Author 1 taught her literacy methods course to TCs from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at *Fuerza*.

Recruitment of study participants and all data gathering, analysis, storage, and reporting adhered to the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved protocols. We obtained parental informed consent and child assent, and *Fuerza* staff and TCs informed consent before we collected any data. All recruitment and consent forms and questionnaires were in both Spanish and English. Participation was voluntary, and respondents chose their own pseudonyms.

The co-authors took turns each afternoon interviewing children one-on-one at *Fuerza* in an office adjacent to the tutoring space. Since our research assistant is a local Latinx who speaks Spanish as a heritage language, we wanted her to conduct most of the interviews with the children (63%) to ensure children would be able to interview in the language they felt most

comfortable using. Interestingly, all children chose to interview in English, regardless of the researcher interviewing them. Author 1 recorded and transcribed the TC focus group that took place during the last class session. During interviews and the focus group, the co-authors typed verbal response notes. At each interview's conclusion, we read the initial transcript to the respondent and asked for changes and confirmation of accuracy as member-checking. Each co-author listened to the recordings independently to confirm and refine transcription accuracy. For example, for transcription done by Authors 2 and 3, Author 1 provided validation of transcription accuracy. TCs provided focus group transcript feedback and continued clarifications via email. For peer debriefing, the co-authors conversed with each other, *Fuerza* staff, and a Latinx colleague who previously conducted research at *Fuerza*.

We paired each TC with one to two children to work with during the summer program. Author 1's internal grant paid for 20 iPads, which children and TCs shared daily. TCs helped children with homework first, then used iPads for strengths-based lessons they had learned in the literacy methods class. TCs engaged in translanguaging with children through conversations, Google translate, changing iPad settings to English and Spanish, and using the microphone and Notes App (unfortunately, we could not find many children's books online that had translations and other translanguaging examples). TCs facilitated children's writing of newsletter articles about each child's passion in Spanish, English, and purposeful written translanguaging. We wanted TCs to apply the literacy methods they learned in class, and we wanted children to embrace Spanish and translanguaging as learning and literacy tools. Following Lotherington (2017), children were encouraged to write in Spanish because, "the languages children import into the country (and classroom) constitute an asset in our global era, not a problem, and they should be creatively incorporated in classroom multimodal literacy practices" (p. 6).

Co-authors 1 and 3 kept detailed field notes through participant observations; we focused on the children's language experiences and beliefs and any push and pull forces that might influence those beliefs, e.g., the language of homework and TC and child conversations about language. Child data sources included learning logs; interviews reflecting language experiences and beliefs in and out of school; a rapport-building questionnaire regarding experiences and beliefs; and hobby essays in Spanish and English and newsletter articles in Spanish, English, and translanguaging.

Parental data sources included a questionnaire assessing home experience with language. In addition, *Fuerza* staff participated in a questionnaire. TC sources included rapport-building reflective essays, daily learning logs, and an audio recorded and transcribed focus group conducted at the conclusion of the research. Table 1 illustrates our data sources.

Table 1
Data Sources and Procedures

| Participant | Source | Duration -minutes | Description and Sample Questions |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Child | Daily learning logs | 5-10 | The English version of the prompt was, "What did you learn? Why was it important?" Children typed or used the ShowMe App to hand-write daily logs, included screen-shots or photos, and Airdropped these things to Author 1 daily. |
| Child | Interview | 20-30 | Semi-structured, recorded, and transcribed interview with 7 demographic questions and 14 main questions. We re-phrased questions if children were confused. We asked follow-up questions if a response intrigued us. We practiced interviewing each other and changed questions and prompts during this process to improve the instrument before we interviewed the children. Sample questions included, "What did you learn about Spanish reading or writing from this program?" and "How do you feel about translanguaging (mixing Spanish and English) when you write?" The interview was in the child's preferred language. |
| Child | Rapport building questionnaire | 30-45 | 15-question rapport building activity, completed by the child's tutor and the child on day one of the tutoring program. Each TC introduced her/himself and discussed their own families and majors. The TCs used a hard copy to ask oral questions and to jot down child responses. Sample questions included, "What have been your schooling experiences in Spanish (bilingual education)?" and "How many years did you learn to read and write Spanish in school?" Each child's tutor wrote as the child spoke for automatic transcription. The activity was in the child's preferred language. |
| Child | Hobby essays | 15-20 | Children hand-wrote an essay unassisted in English and then an essay in Spanish based on this prompt, "Write 20-30 words ... about your favorite thing to do." |
| Child | Newsletter articles | 300-360 | Each child wrote an article in Spanish, then English, and then translanguaging based on the child's interests. TCs assisted in planning and drafting, but were not to alter the children's words. Author 1 told TCs to focus on higher-order concerns, e.g., voice, content, and organization. |
| Parent | Parent program questionnaire | 5-20 | Six demographic questions (close-ended) and seven main questions (open-ended). A sample questions was, " <i>¿Cuáles cosas ha aprendido su hijo/a acerca del inglés o español en este programa de [universidad]?</i> " (What did your child learn from this [university] project about English or Spanish literacy?) Parents hand-wrote their responses outside of the tutorial center. |
| Fuerza Staff | Staff program questionnaire | 15-20 | Seven open-ended questions. A sample question was: "What could school teachers do to help the tutorial children to read and write well in Spanish?" |
| TC | Rapport building reflection | 60 | One written TC reflection. After TCs recorded children's answers to questions on a hard copy of the questionnaire, TCs answered reflective questions, including, "Write a one-paragraph interpretation of how your conversation went. What insights did you gain about the child, teaching your child in your content area, and the child's Spanish and English experiences?" |
| TC | Daily learning logs | 5-10 | Two daily questions each day of our program. The prompt was: "What did you learn? Why was it important?" Children typed or used the ShowMe App to hand-write daily logs, included screen-shots or photos, and Airdropped these things to Author 1 daily. |
| TC | Focus group | 30 | Nine open-ended questions. Sample questions asked were: "Can you speak about translanguaging?" and "Can you speak about the newsletter?" |

Data Analysis

Because we tried to gain a deeper level of understanding of Latinx children's experiences and beliefs related to Spanish literacy and translanguaging, we employed qualitative thematic analysis of the narrative data. We examined data holistically, attempting to be "systematic, careful, attentive to detail," yet open to anomaly (Atkinson et al., 2003, p. 192). We included conflicting data, e.g., children who made conflicting statements about translanguaging. We did this because not all children reported the same thing; some liked Spanish literacy, expressed positive Spanish literacy experiences, and wrote Spanish well. By balancing methodological rigor and openness, we attempted to understand and interpret our data vis-à-vis our frameworks and research questions (Atkinson et al., 2003). Thus, we selected key quotes from different data sources and participants to ensure robustness of our findings and help us answer our research questions with integrity.

Data analysis followed an iterative process and constant conversations and writing. All of our data were narrative in nature, for example, words, not numbers. First, we individually read through all data and jotted down notes. Recursive reading focused on identifying instances of centrifugal and centripetal forces. Next, we discussed and verified each other's selected illustrative stretches of narrative as representative. We coded data and attempted to synthesize and interpret centripetal and centrifugal language instances related to the youth's experiences and beliefs (Atkinson et al., 2003). Recurring patterns emerged within and across data sources and we grouped narrative excerpts to exemplify themes. We then organized by major themes and sub-themes. Two initial themes that emerged included children's experiences with language bracketing (separation of English and Spanish), yet after further analysis we realized this language segmentation (e.g., English as the language of instruction in school and Spanish only for use at home or outside of school) related to a larger theme of centripetal or centralizing language forces.

We strove to achieve four aspects of trustworthiness put forth by Lincoln and Guba (1985). We established transferability by reading manuscripts continuously from diverse perspectives throughout data collection and analysis, e.g., sociocultural (García, 2009) and postcolonial (Anzaldúa, 2007; Flores & Rosa, 2015). For credibility, we each read data individually and identified initial themes and then we met to discuss emerging themes and to determine representative quotes. Regarding dependability, we kept detailed logs of our processes and sources. Additionally, each researcher kept notes on her own process and perspectives. For confirmability, we engaged in member-checking by asking TCs to read the focus group transcription and to provide feedback. Additionally, we typed children's responses as they spoke and read aloud what we typed at the end of each interview and asked the children to change, delete, or add information for accuracy. Co-authors 1 and 3 also checked the transcriptions from the audio-recordings and engaged in peer debriefing.

Last, the co-authors connected findings with extant literature (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), such as García's and Mason's (2009) historical contextualization behind U.S. language policies and environments and García's (2014) discussion of plurilingualism, the concept of different language acquisition and practices. García's concept of transglossia, or functional interrelatedness of dynamic uses of languages, resonated with and aligned with our Bakhtinian language theories and our interpretation of findings. García and her colleagues have studied similar populations and topics and have applied Bakhtin's language discussions to their work (García, 2009, 2014; García & Kleifgen, 2010; García & Mason, 2009; García & Sylvan, 2011; García, & Torres-Guevara, 2010; Velasco & García, 2014).

Findings

Based on emerging themes from data analysis, our key findings reflect the children's Spanish and translanguaging experiences related to school and negative Spanish and translanguaging beliefs overall; however, some children reported liking Spanish and translanguaging. These experiences and beliefs appeared centripetal and aligned to the U.S. milieu that privileges English. Conversely, we found that the tutorial staff and TCs helped the children to push back on and resist negative associations with Spanish and translanguaging. The latter appeared to be a centrifugal phenomenon that resisted closure (Holquist, 1996). Although being asked to be monolingual in school and then polylingual at *Fuerza* might cause conflict within a child, we did not find any instances in our data that this push back from TCs and *Fuerza* staff put pressure on the children. In some cases, the children reported enjoying the opportunity to write in Spanish and to translanguage in their newsletter articles.

Centripetal Forces

Spanish Experiences and Beliefs. The children reported the centralizing role of English in school and for school-related homework. Most mentioned that their teachers told them to forget about Spanish, which represents centripetal forces that attempt to make people homogenous in U.S. society. During the focus group discussion, TCs shared that their tutees reported being forbidden to use Spanish in school, even for bilingual education classes. Diamond, age 10, described her experience in this type of bilingual education by saying "Bilingual classes are a waste of time." Diamond stated she received no Spanish reading or writing instruction in bilingual education; her teachers did not speak in Spanish and they prohibited Spanish speaking. Most child participants echoed these experiences, although most were officially in bilingual education. Diamond also associated school with test preparation. She said, "Here [at *Fuerza*] you get to do fun stuff. Here we don't do tests, like the STAAR." Several participants mentioned testing and English when asked during interviews to describe their school experiences. We saw no homework or homework instructions from school in Spanish, not even for our first-grade participants. See also Bussert-Webb and Díaz (2013) and Bussert-Webb et al. (2017) for similar results in the colonia.

Hinton (2016) found that even though local school districts (and others in the U.S.) stated they offered bilingual programs, their actual practices were English-only. Thus, Hinton stated that districts should call bilingual education in name only what it actually is, monolingual education. With public schools' monolingual legislative policy and the U.S. English push, even children in bilingual education in the U.S./Mexico borderlands receive mostly English instruction (Hinton, 2015, 2016). Texas elementary school teachers faced so much pressure to prepare Latinx children for high-stakes accountability tests administered in English that they chose to teach bilingual classes in English only (Palmer & Lynch, 2008).

English-only curricula in schools serving predominantly low-income emergent bilinguals create a twofold setback. Not only do these youth lack the linguistic right of home-language instruction (UNESCO, 2003), they lack authentic, challenging, inquiry-based curriculum (Bussert-Webb, 1999, 2008; Bussert-Webb & Díaz, 2013; Bussert-Webb et al., 2017). Poza's (2016) Latinx participant resisted the centripetal push of discrete-skills English-only curriculum. When she was supposed to attend an English pull-out program (*Language!*) during school, she said she did not want to attend because it was worthless, "But it's so booooring. *No aprendemos na-da! Puro* [pure] spelling and grammar!' [We don't learn anything!]" (p. 28). Much English-only code-based instruction for emergent bilinguals relates to English-focused, high-stakes standardized accountability testing (Kibler, Heny, & Andrei, 2016; Poza).

Schooling put into motion centripetal forces through these mandated assessments and ensuing curricula.

We also found that most children showed dislike and uneasiness regarding Spanish literacy; some disliked speaking Spanish and felt uncomfortable speaking it. Because of their reported bracketing experiences, or language-segmentation, some children expressed discomfort in communicating in Spanish outside of their homes. The tutor of Supergirl (age six) reported: “She told me that her teacher does not allow Spanish speaking.” Internalized monoglossic, unified language forces may contribute to children’s experiences with discomfort. Although TCs encouraged the youth to use Spanish, some youth hesitated and stated Spanish was for home. A TC wrote about Sophia, “My student is more comfortable with writing and talking in English.” We believe this is because the children had little Spanish writing instruction at school. JoJo, 9-years-old, stated, “About Spanish I knew it would be hard because I never write with it.”

As per Author 1’s field notes, *Fuerza’s* coordinator, who grew up in the colonia and promoted Spanish, verified, “One of our students came into our program two years ago not knowing any English. Now, she can’t speak any Spanish. She only knows English.” Several of the children characterized Spanish reading and writing as “difficult” and “hard.” Most children complained about writing in Spanish and wrote very little for their hobby essays; two children reported inability and left their essays blank. Supergirl only wrote “*Ola mama*” (Hi mom). Questionnaires showed that 84% of the children reported disliking Spanish reading and writing. Frozen, age 13, stated on several occasions she “hated” Spanish, even though her Spanish-dominant grandparents lived with her and her family. Frozen’s mother, like most parents of child participants, reported stopping Spanish literacy instruction when her child entered public schools.

However, some children did report positive experiences with Spanish reading and writing in school and about 16% reported liking both. One participant, Elizabeth, 11, had attended kindergarten in Mexico and said she learned how to read and write in Spanish during that time. When Author 1 invited Elizabeth to write in Spanish for her hobby (or interest) essay, Elizabeth smiled and said, “Great, I love to write in Spanish. Additionally, Messi, seven, who created his pseudonym after a soccer player from Spain, said he learned to read and write in Spanish in his bilingual education classes; Messi expressed liking Spanish reading and writing. Yet, these children’s positive regards for Spanish were anomalies.

Public schools serving predominantly low-income, non-dominant students tend to push English-only because of high-stakes tests (Menken, 2016; Poza, 2016). When children from Spanish homes enter schools that promote English only, the children may reject familial languages and internalize schools’ English-only centripetal forces and societal factors that marginalize Spanish and Mexicans (Anzaldúa, 2007). Similarly, Smith and Murillo (2012), who studied low-income Latinx families’ language and literacy practices, e.g., financial and religious reading and writing in Spanish, found schools did not support Latinx children’s written Spanish.

In the present study, parents expressed in the questionnaires the importance of their children communicating in Spanish with adult family members, but no parent in our study stated that their children’s learning of Spanish would help their children academically. A few mentioned, however, that knowing Spanish would help their children’s job prospects. Yet overwhelmingly, the parents noted that their children’s knowledge of English would help the children in school and in their careers. Smith and Murillo (2012) reported similar results. During their home visits and interviews, parents indicated ambivalence about Spanish literacy and were “less inclined to resist English-only instruction or advocate for Spanish instruction in their children’s schools” (p. 647). Smith and Murillo connected parental ambivalence about Spanish literacy to school accountability pressures and the socio-political contexts of language.

“... For generations of border residents, Spanish literacy has been banished from school as early as possible” (Smith & Murillo, p. 637).

Indeed, this language resistance versus acquiescence represents an important issue among marginalized populations. How much can or should they resist the dominant culture, school, and government, given that they could suffer consequences for protesting or objecting? Even if we believe they should stand up to these forces, we must respect the family’s assessment that they should “go along” for their own safety and security. Yet, language represents an important aspect of identity. As Anzaldúa (2007) stated, “I am my language” (p. 81).

Because language relates to how one perceives oneself in relationship with others, official language and educational policies and societal forces that marginalize one’s home language may cause negative beliefs about cultural identities for language-minoritized youth (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Wong Fillmore (1991) lamented that many youth immigrants in the U.S. learned English quickly, but lost their heritage language in the process, which is troubling because language, family ties, and identity are related (Anzaldúa, 2007). Wong Fillmore’s study shows that these centripetal language forces are not new and that they are rooted in societal contexts.

In the present study, TCs mentioned racism associated with linguisticism regarding their tutees’ schooling reports. See also Anzaldúa (2007) and Flores and Rosa (2015). With 92% of the city’s population and 87% of local teachers being Latinx, one would not expect discrimination, yet effects of colonization and racism remain multi-faceted (Anzaldúa, 1990; Bussert-Webb, 2015). “It is a rare peasant who, once ‘promoted’ to overseer, does not become more of a tyrant towards his former comrades than the owner himself” (Freire, 2000, p. 46). According to Freire, this behavior toward one’s own group is because the worker’s context and oppression do not change. Similarly, Valenzuela (2008) shared her centripetal experience while a seventh grader in Texas. Connecting her negative language experiences to school and societal factors, Valenzuela stated, “We Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants were subjected to English-only school policies and practices premised on cultural erasure” (p. 52).

Translanguaging Experiences and Beliefs. Similarly, in our study most of the children expressed negative experiences and beliefs regarding translanguaging at school. Although only one child connected translanguaging to testing policies; most stated their teachers told them not to mix languages, which demonstrates a bracketing belief from these educators. When JoJo was asked about translanguaging, she stated “I don’t like it because the STAAR [mandated standardized accountability test in Texas] test might not know it.” We connect JoJo’s translanguaging fear in writing to schools’ mandated high-stakes accountability testing in English. High-stakes standardized exams have major consequences for children, families, educators, and schools (Nichols & Berliner, 2007).

Other children reported that their teachers did not allow translanguaging. Moana, 9-years-old, said during an activity involving translanguaging, “My teacher told me not to translanguage in writing.” However, after her TC engaged Moana in purposeful translanguaging for the electronic newsletter, Moana said she liked it because it was something new she got to try and that translanguaging helped her to learn. Moana’s remark demonstrated that she may not have been encouraged in school to translanguage as a learning strategy.

Similarly, Frozen’s tutor explained how bracketing from schools influenced Frozen: “When trying to write using translanguaging, she felt uncomfortable because she was told at school she could only speak one language at a time.” This language bracketing for speech appeared to influence Frozen’s views of bracketing when writing.

Another child, Blue, age 13, was aware of translanguaging and called it “Spanglish” but his tone conveyed negativity as he also made a sour face. However, in another instance, he

expressed liking it and that he grew up with it. This instance illustrates that our results were not clear-cut, as not everyone said the same thing. Even within an individual respondent, our results varied. Yet, most of the children did not report liking translanguaging and their negative statements did not change. When asked about their feelings toward translanguaging during interviews, some children said, “I don’t really like mixing it. Because sometimes I get confused when I’m reading it” and “I felt weird writing it, I don’t know why.”

We interpret these statements to mean that the children were not experienced reading translanguaged writing, nor translanguaging when they wrote. Most youth expressed confusion about purposefully translanguaging for their newsletter articles, even when TCs and authors gave them examples. Asking them to purposefully translanguage appeared to be something new to them and they lacked experience in discussing language decisions when reading and writing. Flores (2016) posited that this lack of metalinguistic awareness relates to teachers’ focus on academic language and the deficits of their emergent bilingual students. Furthermore, their hesitancy to translanguage may reflect the U.S. milieu that centralizes standard English as the most appropriate. Flores and Rosa (2015) discussed how many minoritized youth receive deficit labels in school for not speaking and writing in standard English. Moreover, youth in the present study believed they were supposed to use Spanish and translanguaging only in informal settings, such as home and in their colonia, and English in academic settings, no in-between. This may have related to the English-only directives the children in the present study reported hearing from their teachers.

This insistence on separating languages and the children’s hesitation to purposefully translanguage in writing is particularly curious given that in the surrounding community we see examples of the blending of languages all around (seeing signs in stores with words in English and Spanish, hearing adults—including professionals in various settings—combine Spanish and English as they talk on their cell phones with interlocutors or face-to-face with each other, etc.). We see and hear examples of translanguaging around us in our region. However, the children seemed metalinguistically unaware of such occurrences, which may have demonstrated their teachers did not call their attention to language decisions and the effects of such decisions on readers and listeners (Flores, 2016). Again, most reported little dialogue in school with peers and teachers. When the co-authors and TCs pointed out instances of the children’s naturally occurring translanguaging, only then did the children realize that they translanguaged. The children would then say things, such as, “Oh that? I do that all the time with my sister at home,” or “I translate for my mom when we’re watching TV in English.” Furthermore, some of the participating parents reported teaching their children basic reading and writing in English and Spanish before the children entered first grade. Thus, it appeared that only in the schools was there such a concerted effort to separate languages and to privilege English.

Across data, we found that most child participants resisted tutorial staff and TC efforts to encourage translanguaging and Spanish reading and writing at *Fuerza*. Thus, we perceived TC and staff efforts as centrifugal, fleeing the center, while the youth’s internalization of monoglossic beliefs appeared to be centripetal. At first glance, this appears to be a case of adults pulling and pushing children in different directions, e.g., school teachers, TCs, and *Fuerza* staff pushing and pulling English, Spanish, and translanguaging in and out of the youth. However, we must remember that the children reported being immersed in Spanish and translanguaging at home and that translanguaging is common in our region. If there were these tensions within the children, they did not express them to us or to TCs, with whom they had closer relationships due to their intensive daily interactions. Furthermore, if the youth did experience language tension and confusion, it may have been a good thing. After all, tension and productive instability can cause learning (Gannon, 2010).

On a positive note, Stewart and Hansen-Thomas (2016) developed a translanguaging thematic unit in a Texas high school, which benefited their Mexican-heritage student and her mostly Anglo peers. This affirmation created a centrifugal resistance for their participant and helped her to embrace translanguaging and her transnational identity. In Rubenstein-Ávila (2003-2004), a middle school English teacher invited a Mexican-heritage middle school student to read books in Spanish but write reports about them in English. Translating is also translanguaging (García, 2009). In another study at an elementary school in the northeast, Velasco and García (2010) found that translanguaging helped children from diverse languages with idea development, usage, audience awareness, and self-regulation (see García & Kleifgen, 2010 regarding the benefits of translanguaging to enhance students' cognitive and literacy abilities). "In emergent bilinguals, [translanguaging] can function as a self-regulatory mechanism that expedites the process of language learning" (Velasco & García, 2014, p. 12).

Conversely, Canagarajah (2011) stated that translanguaging in writing as a classroom pedagogy is controversial among language and literacy scholars. For instance, Barbour (2002) approved of spoken combinations of English and other languages but deemed interlanguage practices as "inappropriate for written communication" because nonlinguistic signals, such as gestures, are unavailable in writing (p. 17). However, Canagarajah showed how his Saudi graduate student used several nonlinguistic cues, such as hand-drawn illustrations and end-of-section motifs, to communicate more effectively with her class members in writing.

Another argument against translanguaged writing being taught in school relates to mainstream societal norms. Perhaps translanguaging pushes too much against centripetal or unifying forces focused on language and cultural homogeneity (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Because of these U.S. norms in written languages, Elbow (2002) believed that for the short term, teachers should help students with writing in standard English until the mainstream culture ceases perceiving nonstandard published writing as unsophisticated. Delpit (2006) would agree, in part. She believed it was important for educators to discuss the codes of power with students and teach them to write with different language varieties, depending on the purpose, context, and audience. Anzaldúa (1990, 2007) refused to change her mode of communication for publication and made translanguaged writing more acceptable for academic purposes in the U.S.

Centrifugal Forces

Fuerza Staff. However, *Fuerza* tutorial staff created a centrifugal force, pushing back on the children's monoglossic experiences and beliefs from school and U.S. socio-political contexts that prioritize English. *Fuerza* staff engaged youth in creating Mexican Mother's Day tapestries in Spanish. The children selected the note most appropriate for their mothers, based on several written examples the staff members provided. The youth, engaged and excited, copied the messages and painted them in bright colors on their wall hangings. This experience modeled to the children that reading and writing in Spanish were neither difficult nor wrong. Staff also spoke with children in Spanish and explained to the children the importance of Spanish. When Author 1 asked a staff member why the wall hangings were in Spanish, she indicated that the mothers did not know English. Some of the notes were, "*Mamá, te amo mucho*" (I love you a lot, mom) and "*por tu paciencia infinita*" (for your infinite patience). This activity validated the children's home language and culture and pushed against the privileging of English and devaluing of Spanish most children reported encountering at school.

Furthermore, the children mentioned appreciating the dialogue, collaboration, and one-on-one attention at *Fuerza*. In contrast, they mentioned the absence of dialogue at school. Following are some of their interview responses when we asked them to describe school, "In school they just talk about social studies," "They kinda rush us to do the work," "... It makes

me bored because we can't talk," "Sit behind a desk and listen to the teacher yak," and "I usually work by myself at school ... because our teacher tells us to do our work by ourselves." Based on our experiences with high-stakes testing (Bussert-Webb, 1999) and our research in this region regarding this issue (Bussert-Webb, 2008; Bussert-Webb et al., 2017), we understand why the children described engaging in much more dialogue in *Fuerza* than in school. Perhaps the school teachers rushed to prepare children for these tests using a transmission style direct instructional approach, rather than interactive and inquiry-based pedagogies.

Teacher Candidates (TCs). TCs also engaged in their own centrifugal pushback. TCs would speak, read, and write with the children in Spanish, but some children resisted. TCs also alternated between Spanish and English with the children, modeling that Spanish and English are both important. A TC said about Futbolista, 10-years-old: "And I would tell her, like 'It's okay, you can speak in Spanish, or you can mix the languages.'" This same TC, who also helped Pokémon, age 10, said, "So, I would praise them all the time for doing that [translanguage writing] and they felt like, 'Wow, I could do this. I can talk in Spanish and I can even mix both languages and it's okay to do that.'" A TC said of Supergirl: "You need to help encourage them (to translanguage in writing). I know my tutee, she was like, 'I can't, I can't do it.' I [took her] hand and said, 'You *can!* You can do this! I'm gonna help you.'"

The newsletter that the TCs and children worked on collaboratively modeled and exemplified the value of writing and reading in both Spanish and English. The newsletter publicly acknowledged the value of the children's translanguage practices in writing. In their written reflections and during class discussions, TCs mentioned how they engaged the children in learning to read and write in Spanish. TCs provided a counter-narrative to the messages the youth have received that English is more important than Spanish. Within a third space between school and home (Gannon, 2010), the TCs demonstrated that they valued and validated the children's holistic language repertoires and interests, conveying the importance of Spanish, also. Because the children characterized *Fuerza* as a place for dialogue and collaboration, this tutorial center provided a space for working through the conflicting language practices the children face in school and home. Thus, these liminal places, not school and not home, can be empowering for language-minority children who collaborate with TCs and community-based staff members in "relational, affective and embodied space" (Gannon, 2010, p. 27).

Conclusions

Children's language experiences and beliefs regarding Spanish and translanguage related to their perceptions and experiences related to school and societal monoglossia. Pedagogies focused on monoglossia and correctness, at the expense of creativity and voice, reproduce "racial normativity by expecting language-minoritized students to model their linguistic practices after the white speaking subject" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 151).

The children appeared to equate Spanish and translanguage writing with correctness, an ideology one might learn in classrooms focused on decodable, phonics-based reading materials and activities, not meaning and inquiry (DeFord, 1981). Perhaps this resulted in many children's negative experiences and beliefs that Spanish should be for home and that translanguage was wrong. Making Latinx children use English-only cultivates mother tongue difficulty, shame, and avoidance (Anzaldúa, 2007), which disadvantages them in a rapidly changing, global society where bilingualism and biliteracy are assets (UNESCO, 2003). Most of the children's expressed beliefs and discomfort indicated they thought it was somehow bad to speak Spanish or translanguage outside of their homes or colonia. However, *Fuerza* staff

and TCs provided empowering counter-narratives and demonstrated that Spanish and translanguaging were assets.

Although we could not control what *Fuerza* staff did and said with students, we ponder the ethical dilemmas of Author 1's language project, in which TCs encouraged Spanish and translanguaging during their interactions with children. We co-authors associate these ethical issues with our advocacy research for the language rights of participating children (Cherland & Harper, 2006; UNESCO, 2003). Participant well-being is an important aspect of all IRBs (protection of human subjects in research) and we were careful to watch for and listen for any indication of child duress. Although we found no such duress, TC and *Fuerza* staff centrifugal forces appeared in opposition to the centripetal, or centralizing, language forces children reported regarding school. Thus, this language push and pull may have caused conflict within the children that we did not recognize outright. Although many children expressed confusion or hesitation, they displayed no more stress than that which they would likely experience in typical days at school. Some might argue that it is best to not expose youth to conflicting language ideologies, to maintain the monoglossic status quo they experience at school.

However, Bakhtin, who lived in the Soviet Union and experienced censorship, believed monoglossia was dangerous and totalitarian (Holquist, 1996). Instead, he believed heteroglossia and opposition were necessary aspects of life (Holquist). Discussing critical heteroglossia, Bazerman (2004) stated that Bakhtin was interested in evaluating issues of power. This critical language stance aims to "deflate oppressively powerful ruling forces rather than to stigmatize the powerless" (p. 58). Moreover, as per bilingual education experts García and Kleifgen (2010), "... emergent bilinguals need to become aware of the power differential between languages in society and in their schools" (p. 132).

In our study, it appeared the children gravitated toward English and away from the Spanish language of adult family members. Given the context of U.S. schooling, many low-income immigrants may take on the language policies of English as the centralizing language of power (Wong Fillmore, 2000). Parents who wish for their children's biliteracy may move as adults toward the language center (centripetal forces) when their children face English-only test preparation starting in first grade (Bussert-Webb, 1999, 2008). Texas school districts want (and need) high accountability ratings (Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Palmer & Lynch, 2008), as do many districts across the U.S. (Menken, 2016). Public school teachers and parents in our area have expressed this English-language testing pressure (Bussert-Webb et al., 2017). In the present study, local schools the children attended appeared to focus on English. As stated, one child connected translanguaging explicitly to high-stakes testing, "I don't like it because the STAAR test might not know it."

It is foolish and difficult to separate these legislative and societal influences from school curricula; they are interrelated, as are language use, ideology, and context (Holquist, 1996). Although the centripetal forces may be too difficult to overcome because of the issues of dominance and power, centrifugal forces exist in heteroglossic tension with different world views. Bakhtin stated, "... Alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted process of decentralization and disunification go forward" (Holquist, p. 272). Bakhtin offered dialogue as a way to manage this centripetal and centrifugal tension.

Next, most child respondents participated in subtractive bilingual education; subtractive models focus on preparing youth for a monolingual English world (Hinton, 2016). Our participants reported English-only practices in school, to the disservice of their heritage language development. Subsequently, most struggled in both English and Spanish literacy. Children attended *Fuerza* because they experienced academic challenges; 79% reported struggling with English reading and writing. If participants had learned to read and write in Spanish as a foundation, the outcome may have been different (Chuang, Joshi, & Dixon, 2012; Goldenberg, 2008; Lutz, 2016; Thomas & Collier, 2003).

Although TCs recognized translanguaging as a strengths-based linguistic strategy and de-emphasized correctness (Hornberger & Link, 2012), perceptual and cultural shifts take time. When we asked youth to purposefully translanguange, metalinguistic requirements were high because they wrote mostly in English, with attention to correctness, perhaps replicating their reports of basic-skill instruction in school (DeFord, 1981).

Implications

Although this paper may sound critical of schools, this was not our intent. Because of U.S. and state accountability pressures, public school staff face pressure to prepare children for standardized tests in English (Hinton, 2015, 2016; Kibler et al., 2016; Menken, 2016; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Texas Education Agency, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Some states have opted out of high-stakes testing, but Texas has not. Thus, these outside influences relate to children's language experiences and beliefs. Projects like ours may serve to open and foster discussions and bridge understandings among TCs, school staff, and professors for children's learning and success. As the TC's participate in local schools for field experiences and student-teaching, and ultimately become public school teachers facing the daunting task of preparing children for high-stakes testing, they may draw on their community-based experiential learning from our project to inform their practices. Perhaps they will become the catalysts for opening conversations in and out of school regarding hybrid language practices. Including public school teachers in future projects will extend our work to support children and teachers facing accountability pressures and to connect classrooms with the community. As a first step, we will share the children's newsletter with the children's schools. Next, we plan to invite the children's teachers to our after-school program to engage in dialogue regarding which projects we can incorporate that will support the teachers.

Thus, an important implication relates to schools and communities working together to affirm and extend children's multilingual languaging (García & Kleifgen, 2010) and metalinguistic awareness (Flores, 2016). For instance, children can interview family members and find web-based information in their heritage languages and can write results in other languages (Dworin, 2006). Like the gifted sociolinguists that they truly are, children can discuss their language decisions for certain effects (Flores). In polylingual settings, parents can visit their children's schools to teach heritage language songs (García & Kleifgen). With compensation, teachers could also visit their pupils' homes to learn about families' linguistic funds of knowledge or strengths and can incorporate these family language practices into the curriculum (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Teacher and parent bidirectional understanding is important (García & Kleifgen).

Other implications relate to how community service-learning projects could extend into classrooms using children's home languages and translanguaging as resources. For example, teachers can work with after-school community centers, like *Fuerza*, to create translanguaging homework that involves children, families, TCs who serve as tutors. Sites such as *Fuerza* may represent supportive "interactional spaces where children can use their two languages [to] support bilingual literacy skills" (Velasco & García, 2014, p. 9). This space can occur in school classrooms that honor children's languaging, also (Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016).

For future research, we recommend interviewing teachers and parents about their language beliefs and experiences and obstacles they face in helping youth to reach their full language and literacy potential. Our study took place in an after-school tutorial agency in a neighborhood setting that serves children attending multiple schools. Subsequently, interviewing teachers in the schools the children attended was beyond the scope of our study. However, given the reports of the children, having conversations with educators to determine school policies and practices is important.

Some children embraced writing in their home language (Spanish) and written translanguaging. These findings are promising given that Latinx youth's biliteracy relates significantly to higher math and reading achievement, compared to English monolinguals (Lutz, 2016). Furthermore, translanguaging, which helps children cognitively and linguistically, builds children's literacy skills (García & Kleifgen, 2010). Also, Bakhtin believed that one thinks only what one's languages allow her or him to think. Thus, bilingual, polylingualism, and translanguaging open one's mind to different communicative potentials and perspectives (Holquist, 1996). We started by stating that many believe learning English will ensure one's U.S. academic success. Our child participants struggled academically with English, yet they had attended schools that had to institute English-only practices because of high-stakes tests administered in English. The U.S. can gain much by embracing polylingual educational policies because linguistically and culturally-diverse children are our future. By 2020, Mather (2009) predicted, about 33% of U.S. children will have at least one immigrant parent. Latinx will represent one-third of the U.S. by 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). As translanguaging spurs creativity (Kharkhurin & Wei, 2015), linguistic and cultural diversity spur innovation (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2012).

If children living along the U.S./Mexico border experience and believe such disassociations from their heritage language and translanguaging, what about others elsewhere? Classroom teachers grapple with the complexities of minoritized children's social and language belonging amid school, district, state, and national policies (Lotherington, 2017). Yet according to Williamson and Hedges (2017), "It is important for all teachers to consider and work with local and culturally responsive frameworks relevant to their context to empower children's voices" (p. 72). These frameworks include valuing children's languaging and utilizing a dynamic bilingual education model, which includes translanguaging and polylingualism (García, 2009). Yet we must be clear that monoglossia goes beyond individual schools and regions; U.S. and state educational policies must change for the implications we proposed to be sustainable. Ironically, standardized testing does not improve students' reading and writing scores in English (Nichols & Berliner, 2007).

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