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INTRODUCTION

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Re- Exploring translanguaging in teacher education

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ABSTRACT

This special volume examines the role translanguaing has in teacher education. Authors explore how pre and inservice teachers enact translanguaging pedagogy in linguistically and culturally diverse K-12 classrooms and community settings. The special issue explores some of the current tensions and perspectives in the field of multilingual education and teacher education in ways that illuminate new ideas and offer new approaches associated with translanguaging.

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Public schools in many regions of the U.S. have high numbers of students who enter school speaking a language other than English. The overwhelming majority of these students become dynamic, emergent bilingual (EB) users of English and their home language. This dynamic bilingualism is now best understood as translanguaging (García, 2010; de Jong, 2013), the flexible use of two languages in meaningful communication with other bilinguals. Pedagogically, translanguaging has emerged as a means to engage academically with students who are developing their bilingualism. Translanguaging is now one of most cited terms in the field of bilingual and dual language education. In this volume, we bring attention to translanguaging as an important practice that pre-service and in-service teachers.

Studies on translanguaging in academic contexts have begun to examine how translanguaging pedagogy can foster development of the communicative repertoires of EBs and non-EBs. This special issue is devoted to addressing some of the current tensions and perspectives in the field of bilingual teacher education to bring to the forefront new ideas and pedagogical approaches associated with translanguaging. Current emerging perspectives by teachers, educators, and researchers are shedding important light on how cultural practices, diverse ways of using language, and student multiple identities intersect with core tenets of translanguaging pedagogy (García et al. 2012).

Translanguaging came into the literature as an innovative way to explain the how EB students use their communitive repertoires to express ideas and share information in the classroom or at home. Many argue that translanguaging is a way to decouple bilingualism from the monolingual parallel ideology often held in dual language programs and by foreign language and English as a second language educators. According to García et al. (2012), bilingual students translanguage to orally explain ideas or concepts using both or the

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languages rather that in one language or the other (Palmer and Martínez 2013). García argues that children and youth who translanguage draw a single underlying competence that includes all aspect of their bilingualism. (However, see MacSwan (2017) for a different view on how bilinguals draw from their languages).

Research studies on translanguaging have documented the influence dynamic bilingual practices have had on EB students in K-12 classrooms. Early work by Faltis (1996) showed that middle teachers could learn to teach bilingually by using a concurrent approach to codeswitching (now referred to as translanguaging), and in doing so, enable students use their dynamic bilingualism for making sense of academic content.

Translanguaging pedagogy and teachers

Studies associated with translanguaging pedagogy have shown the influence teachers who engage in these practices can have on EBs' language development and content learning. Of particular importance is the amount of time that the teacher and the students spend in each language because English tends to take precedence in academic contexts (Faltis 2020). Likewise, it is essential for teachers and educators to have a clear understanding of the rationale for enacting translanguaging and creating space for students in the classroom environment.

Throughout this volume, authors show various ways for preparing and developing teachers working with culturally and linguistically diverse students and English-only speaking students in almost bilingual classrooms (Allard et al. 2019). Teachers play a significant role in the success of all students in K-12 classrooms. It is well established that effective implementation of multilingual curriculum requires highly prepared teachers working in multilingual educational settings (Goldenberg 2012). Research studies associated with translanguaging in the past decade have documented the rise of interest in translanguaging in teacher education programs and in K-12 school districts (Martínez et al. 2015; Menken 2010; Ramírez et al. 2016).

Translanguaging in K-12 and the impact on bilingual education research

Beyond building relationships, one of the most important facts about bilingual families, children, and youth, both those who have either immigrated from Mexico or Central America, or who were born in the U.S., is that these families use language in ways that are considered dynamic and fluid, as vibrant assemblages of Spanish and English. In other words, Spanish-speaking children and youth who attend schools taught only in English eventually become bilingual users of translanguaging practices (García & Wei 2015). Translanguaging, which stresses the *trans*, means going beyond what are typically referred to as named language (i.e. Spanish and English), views the language practices of bilinguals as a unitary system rather than two separate systems. The key to understanding translanguaging is that as students become bilingual, they are appropriating language features into a holistic system which, as their bilingualism flourishes, enables emergent bilingual children and youth to use ways of speaking that involve features from their unitary system, a new vibrant assemblage of meaning-making constructed through repeated interaction with bilinguals. Although this sort of bilingual vibrant assemblage of language practices may tap into theories of 'second' language acquisition, translanguaging theory stresses the development of all language practices and ways of meaning making (Caldas and Faltis 2017).

Translanguaging practices among emergent bilingual students have also been referred to as codeswitching practices, but from a different theoretical perspective than the one argued for by García and her colleagues. García seeks to erase the term codeswitching from the literature on bilingualism, claiming that it misrepresents bilingualism as 'two separate languages'. That is, under a codeswitching gaze, bilinguals would draw on features from L1 and features from L2, and there would be constraints about how the features from the two languages would fit together. From a translanguaging perspective, as several authors in this volume have pointed out, all ways of creating translanguaged assemblages are both possible and probable, depending on the unitary, vibrant assemblage constructed for meaningful communication with other bilinguals. So, what does this mean for dual language bilingual education?

As several authors have alluded to in this volume and elsewhere, bilingual children in U. S. dual language programs, especially racialized bilingual children, are familiar with translanguaging practices, as these are widespread in their homes and communities throughout the Unites States. Bilingual teachers who work in dual language bilingual programs are also very likely to engage in translanguaging practices in their daily lives but may be restricted to a language-separation approach to dual language education. Under unified translanguaging theory, this sort of language-separation by teachers, content area, or time would be considered as *restrictive translanguaging*, where students translanguage in ways that are controlled by the school. Accordingly, they are expected to participate in Spanish for certain activities, and in English for others. Flexible, dynamic translanguaging inside dual language classrooms where the teacher has learned about and uses translanguaging pedagogy (García et al. 2017) may be limited to small group interaction or interactions with the teacher under a restrictive guise.

Translanguaging pedagogy for use in dual language bilingual programs has generated new research; however, as Guadalupe Valdés argues, translanguaging remains highly controversial (Valdés 2018). The lion's share of translanguaging research, as this volume shows, does not question the value of translanguaging for language learning, its authenticity, or transformative potential for most racialized bilingual learners (Kleyn and García 2019). And yet, to our knowledge, most bilingual teacher preparation programs continue to teach or insist that students complete methods coursework entirely in Spanish or some language other than English used in bilingual and dual language program. For example, Professor Carmen Mercado Barbosa recently posted on Facebook that Hunter College of the City University of New York will offer a total of 6 bilingual education courses taught entirely in Spanish in the Fall of 2020 (posted January 6, 2020), saying she was 'hopeful that 2020 will bring a revival of *quality* (our emphasis) bilingual education to New York City.' One implication from this statement is while translanguaging is culturally relevant and sustaining for emergent bilingual children and youth, bilingual teachers need to be prepared for instruction entirely in Spanish as a separate language, as some have argued (Guerrero and Valadez 2011; Aquino-Sterling 2016). Again, this is a *restrictive translanguaging* approach to bilingual teacher preparation, when in most dual language programs, children and teachers will flexibly translanguage throughout the day, leading to a mismatch between bilingual teacher education and translanguaging pedagogy for dual language programs. To be sure, several educators have argued that children learning indigenous languages within reservation bilingual schools need to be taught as much as possible in the indigenous language, as a way to de-colonialize learning through English (May 2022; Nicholas and McCarty 2022). That is, restrictive translanguaging may be necessary in certain contexts where the coloniality of

power. Nonetheless, there are solid reasons for encouraging emergent bilingual children and youth to translanguage, as long as the bilingual teachers remain mindful of and continue to fight against language ideologies that racialize bilingual children and youth who translanguage as transgressors of separate and pure language practices. (Faltis 2022), and translanguaging that fosters English over Spanish for teaching and learning

The special volume begins with 'Singletons and Survivors: Translanguaging and affect in almost-bilingual classrooms,' by Elaine Alllard and colleagues The authors discuss the complex impact of pedagogical translanguaging on student affect in almost-bilingual classrooms, contrasting its positive impacts on Central American students coping with immigration-related traumas with the alienation it inspires in some *singletons*, students with no same-language peers. The authors examined these tensions and shared teachers' recent attempts to address them, thus illuminating challenges and offering possibilities for meeting the diverse and sometimes-conflicting needs of students in complex multilingual classrooms.

Next, Blanca Araujo and colleagues in 'Engaging in Translanguaging Practices: Creating Safe Spaces for Learning Along the U.S.-Mexico Border,' present data from a three-year ethnographic study of transfronterizo students in a dual language program. The study illuminated a variety of translanguaging practices that transfronterizo students used to navigate U.S. schools along the U.S.-Mexico Border. The authors discuss concrete examples of teacher's lessons and practices and provide general guidelines for in-service and pre-service teachers to create a transformational translanguaging space. Further, the authors point to the sorts of pedagogical practices that all teachers would benefit from developing so that Emergent bilingual students can succeed in schools.

In 'Translenguaje y El Arte en Unión: Fostering Pre-Service Teachers' Languaging and Multiliteracies through Bilingual Community Art Gallery Lessons,' Lucía Cárdenas presents an analysis of pre-service teachers' practices when co-teaching bilingual art gallery lessons as a field experience in a bicultural teacher education program.

Luz Herrera'a study examined how preservice teachers in a California teacher education course take up a culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy that centers students' ways of knowing and the creation of translanguaging spaces. She discusses the opportunities that teacher candidates experience in their mainstream student-teaching placements.

Next, in 'Un Día De Lo Padre: A multigenerational plática with bilingual pre-service teachers and their elders, sharing perspectivas about translanguaging and bilingual education,' Mitchell Ingram and Deborah Palmer analyze and examine these perspectives after having witnessed a snapshot of this dialogue in the Fall of 2018, as bilingual pre-service Latinx teachers (PSLT) in a university Second Language Acquisition course invited their elders to class. After conducting a discourse analysis, the authors discussed what these critical conversations meant to bilingual pre-service teachers and bilingual preparation programs in the university.

In 'Conceptualizing translanguaging through the body: Towards an Anzaldúan inspired vision of transfronteriza language/culture,' Cynthia Saavedra and Mónica Gonzales draw from Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of geographies of selves to expand notions of translanguaging that center and begin from the body. The authors argue that crossing borders, migrating and transnationality are seen as important experiences that offer teacher educators new ways to understand how border and hybrid bodies/identities express different realities through language. This article has implications for teacher educators and students of bilingual education as well.

Lastly, Adam Sawyer and Fernando Rodríguez Vals in 'I Found Comfort in Spanglish: Translanguaging and the Linguistic Experiences of Bilingual Teacher Candidates in Rural California,' present a study that examines the linguistic experiences of those who have overcome the odds to pursue their bilingual teacher certification. Through analysis of participant case studies of Latinx candidates studying for their bilingual teacher certification in California's southern San Joaquín Valley, the authors found translanguaging to be a critical tool of identity expression, interethnic solidarity, and plurilingual/bilingual sustenance within a decidedly conservative and subtractive sociocultural and sociolinguistic context. The authors discuss the implications of these findings for the centering of translanguaging in bilingual teacher education and the cultivation of future bilingual/plurilingual educators in California. The special concludes with a book review of 'Transformative Translanguaging Espacios: Latinx Students and their Teachers Rompiendo Fronteras sin Miedo,' by Mark B. Pacheco.

Taken together, these articles contribute to a more robust and critical understanding of how translanguaging is shaping the field of teacher education and consequently, impacting the preparation of teachers working with emergent bilinguals and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Disclosure statement

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