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You Can't Say Pupusa Without Saying Pupusa: Translanguaging in a Community-Based Writing Center

Stephanie Abraham and Kate Kedley

Abstract

In this article, we share our experiences with the ongoing language and literacy practices and pedagogies of a bilingual, community-based writing center located in South Philadelphia's Italian Market. This writing center - one in a network of sites across Philadelphia and southern New Jersey - targeted bilingual, Latinx children from ages seven to eighteen. For the past four years, we have partnered with the center to create a translanguaging space. Here, we reflect on the experience of offering translanguaging writing workshops.

Keywords

translanguaging; community-based writing center; literacy; bilingualism; research partnerships

On a crisp, Saturday morning in October, five children and two teacher researchers were sitting around a large, rectangular table, located inside Autores Fuertes, a community-based writing center in Philadelphia. As part of a workshop on writing bilingual family stories, the children were busy writing and drawing, drafting revised versions of their stories. They were adding illustrations to a story board, stick figures for family members, and jotting down on yellow, sticky notes things that they wanted to add. The children checked their spelling using Google translate, and sometimes asked their peers how to say something in English or Spanish. Stephanie and Kate, the authors and teacher researchers, were checking in with each child, for more story details, complimenting their illustrations, and suggesting that they use more Spanish. When Stephanie sat down with Marcos (all participant names and sites are pseudonyms) he was revising his story, which centered around the things and people that he missed in El Salvador, and he had already listed his tíos, his primos, el calor, and now he had come to the word, pupusa, a popular food from El Salvador. He turned to Stephanie and asked, "How do you say pupusa in English?" Thus, Stephanie's response: "You can't say pupusa without saying pupusa." This short exchange illustrates the translanguaging nature of Autores Fuertes, as well as the unavoidable translanguaging of multilingual and transnational children who were in the workshop, whose lives are embedded in a translanguaging reality.

In this article, we explore this translanguaging reality and share our experiences with the ongoing language and literacy practices and pedagogies of Autores Fuertes.

Located in South Philadelphia's Italian Market, this community is a longtime receiving city for immigrants. Between 2000 and 2010 more recent immigrants began arriving in Philadelphia from Mexico, specifically the states of Puebla and Tlaxcala. Even more recently, immigrants from Central America, including Honduras and El Salvador, have found new homes in South Philadelphia. A new dual-language (English/Spanish) K-8 school opened a few blocks south of the center, in part to meet the linguistic and cultural needs of the community. The Italian Market has now become a new "Mexican Market" as proudly advertised by the Mexican American shop owners.

This community writing center—one in a network of sites across Philadelphia and southern New Jersey—targeted bilingual, Latinx children from ages seven to eighteen. The center itself is a bustling site, located amidst fish markets, produce stands, and tortillerías. It occupies about one thousand square feet of physical space, with an enormous Calendario Azteca in the front window display. Bookshelves line the dark pink walls, and there is row after row of high-quality children's literature, including bilingual books and Spanish language texts, free for the children and families to take home. There's a small kitchen area stocked with apple juice and bags of vegetable chips. Several areas in the center are designated as writing and learning spaces with long tables and chairs, and trays of markers, crayons, and pencils atop.

The center's central goal was "to teach children to write," and they offered services such as mentoring, homework help, evening and weekend writing workshops, summer camps, and a new Saturday morning toddler program. During the summer months when school was out of session, the center hosted daily writing camps where the children engaged in writing activities and participated in field trips to playgrounds and city museums. The center's afternoon academy ran from Mondays to Thursdays between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. During academy time, children did homework and engaged in various writing activities with volunteers and staff teachers. Importantly, the center is not a grassroots organization or founded by the Latinx community; however, it did host workshops for families which focused on a variety of relevant and urgent issues to the Latinx community, including immigrant rights, applying for foreign passports, and presentations and exhibits featuring community immigrant rights activists.

In the fall of 2015, we approached the center to discuss a research partnership with our university. We sat down with Madison, the center's director at the time, to discuss what this partnership might look like and to express interest in learning about the language and literacy practices of the children who attended the center. Afterward, we observed the center to better understand their orientation to language and literacy and how the linguistic repertoires of the children were included in the center's practices. It was during those early observations that we noticed that though the site advertised itself as a "*bilingual*" space in Spanish and English, in practice, the language and literacy practices were overwhelmingly centered around English. The notable exception was when Madison spoke Spanish with the family members of the child attendees. After several weeks of observations, we asked Madison about this dynamic. Madison responded that she felt uncomfortable having the children read or write in

Spanish because she, as a non-native speaker of Spanish, was unable to correct the children's "mistakes" in Spanish.

We knew that hyper-focus on correctness and proficiency in language acquisition was a common language ideology for teachers, among others, to hold (Flores and Rosa 150). This language ideology is problematic in many ways, and in this instance, it positioned both the language and literacy practices of the teacher, Madison, and the children as deficit. However, we didn't want to correct or critique Madison or the center's efforts. Rather, we wanted to share a pedagogical model informed by a different language ideology known as translanguaging, which we believed would help Madison, and other volunteers and teachers, to think about and do language and literacy differently. Subsequently, we approached Madison about offering Saturday workshops, to be led by the two of us, that would model a translanguaging pedagogy focused on writing topics such as writing bilingual family stories, composing bilingual poetry, reading and creating graphica, and mapping community languages. These workshops began in the fall of 2017, and we have offered them each semester through the spring of 2020. All of the workshops that we sponsored were designed for children who were upper elementary or middle grades, or between eight and fourteen years old. Yet, every so often, younger siblings, as young as five years old, also attended workshop sessions. Attendance varied and was irregular, with as many as sixteen children attending some sessions, and as few as five in others. Several children attended multiple workshops.

Typically, our workshops ran from noon until 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. As there were occasionally other workshops overlapping with our time frame, the center was a busy place on Saturdays. Upon our arrival, we spread out our books and supplies on an empty table. Some children always arrived early, while others wandered in throughout the two hours of the workshop. Because of this, we knew it wasn't beneficial to have a tightly timed lesson, so we took a more flexible approach, using the first twenty minutes or so visiting with the children and their families informally. Once we determined the direction of the session, the children spread out to begin the activities. At some point during the two hours, we offered snacks, while the children continued to work. The center offered many, diverse kinds of workshops, from dance to making alebrijes, yet the main difference in our workshops was the emphasis on highlighting the children's bilingualism. Specifically, through the books that we shared, our speech, and the writing that we prompted from the children.

In this project, we wanted to intentionally produce new practices of language and literacy that drew on the children's entire linguistic repertoire, which was embedded in their temporal and spatial realities. Thus, we wanted to examine how we, as authors and participants, produced, or could potentially produce a translanguaging space.

A Translanguaging Space

So then, what is translanguaging? Translanguaging is a theory of language, which frames language as something we *do*, rather than something we *have* (García and Li Wei 11). This framing is important because it departs from traditional and formalist

views of language as something that is acquired individually through levels of proficiency (Li Wei 11). It eschews evaluations and assessments of language via terms such as native, first, second, home, and proficient. As well, it disrupts the easy naming of languages with terms such as Spanish or English, which are associated with the colonizing histories of their respective nation-states (Otheguy, García, and Reid 286). Instead of bounding languages in this manner, we thought of “*language*” as a verb enacted through our diverse linguistic repertoires. By taking up a translanguaging view of language, we also took a sociopolitical stance about the workings of power both behind and through language, which meant that we wanted to push back against monolingual language ideologies tied to nationalism, racism, classism, and post-colonialism.

Notably, we focused on both the language and *literacy* practices and pedagogies at the center. We believed the line between language and literacy is a blurry one and we viewed literacy as a multimodal social semiotic practice. In turn, our views and pedagogical design were heavily informed by scholarship stemming from New Literacy Studies (Gee 24; NLG 64; Street 77). While our views of literacy included the traditional notions of print, or reading and writing language, it also encompassed a range of modes in the social semiotic acts of meaning making (Street 78), such as images, sounds, and gestures. As well, just as language use is caught up in the systemic structures of power, we knew that literacy practices are also validated and invalidated based on similar power dynamics. Moreover, we needed to embrace this expanded definition of literacy so that more of the literate acts on the part of the children could be included or counted as literacy, such as their drawings or engagement with Pokémon.

Translanguaging Emerges from Authentic Community Language Practices

Rather than enforcing a language policy or practice *down* onto people, a translanguaging theory of language is built *up* from the authentic language practices of people in their respective homes and communities. For example, Creese, Blackledge, and Hu have documented the translanguaging nature of language practices across community food markets in England, noting that even those who are “supposedly” monolingual engage in translanguaging and transemiotic practices to negotiate transactions and communicate (841). Likewise, Canagarajah has shown the translanguaging natures of global workplaces, specifically showing the disconnect between schooled language learning pedagogies and the authentic language practices of workers (57). Thus, turning to this theory helped us account for and include the lived language practices of multilinguals or how the families and their children practiced language outside of the center, specifically in their homes and communities. At the same time, it disrupted some of the pedagogical practices that were excluding the translanguaging practices of the children.

Enacting Translanguaging Pedagogies in Community Literacy Spaces

While there is sufficient research that documents the practice of translanguaging pedagogies in K-12 schools, there is less work that has been done to examine these practices in community learning spaces (Creese and Blackledge 104; de los Rios and Seltzer 55; García and Kleyn 1). Alvarez's long-term research in an after-school, bilingual literacy program located in a Mexican neighborhood in New York City, showed the complex translanguaging practices and pedagogies of mothers and children, noting specifically how the children acted as language brokers, disrupting power dynamics between children, parents, and other official actors (1). Additionally, Alvarez and Alvarez showed how a translanguaging space in a public library located in a transnational, bilingual community was a safe space to leverage the language resources of the community (412). Kim and Song's recent project on creating a translanguaging space in a family literacy workshop showed how the workshop built upon the community translanguaging practices. More specifically, it allowed families to leverage their cultural and familial funds of knowledge while repositioning translanguaging from an individual competency to a collective practice (268). And in Axelrod and Cole's study, in a before-school program in the US South, they showed how translanguaging pedagogy allowed bilingual children to demonstrate their acute awareness of a writing audience and deploy their linguistic repertoires in nuanced ways to appeal to such audiences (146). Notably, there is also scholarship that shows some community-based "bilingual" programs advertise themselves as bilingual in name, but in practice, they may default to monolingualism in English in practice and pedagogy (Gast, Okamoto, and Feldman 96; Martínez-Roldán 55; Pastor 21).

In our translanguaging pedagogical approach, we intended to pull down the rigid walls between languages to allow the children to more flexibly draw on their linguistic repertoires in this space. To do this, instead of conceptualizing that the children spoke "English" and "Spanish" as two separate languages, we believed that the children had a linguistic repertoire that was rich and full for deployment through a translanguaging pedagogy. We also complicated what it meant to be proficient, correct, or standard in a language by resisting "*correction*" in our oral or written feedback to the children about their writing. Finally, we modeled in our speech what it meant to be "bilinguals" and "languageers," who were not two monolinguals in one person (Grosjean 3), so that the children, too, would take up "languageing" in their speech and writing acts (García 519). Ultimately, we hoped that enacting a translanguaging pedagogy in this manner would help us and the center to make larger pedagogical shifts to alter the deficit thinking around language and literacy.

Finally, as we moved forward in the project, it became pertinent to better account for how we shaped the language and literacy practices and pedagogies of the space itself. We knew, for instance, that this "bilingual" community engaged in translanguaging, both in their home lives and work lives (Creese, Blackledge, and Hu 843), and we wanted to draw those languageing and literacy practices into the community center through our practiced pedagogy (Mills and Comber 413). In this manner, we departed from documenting what *was*, and moved toward documenting what *could be* in this space. Specific to translanguaging pedagogies, Li Wei stressed that translanguag-

ing spaces *must* be intentionally created due to the power relationships that undergird all language practices and values (23). In these translanguaging spaces, all actors must seek to disrupt boundaries between languages and the ideologies that position one language, or one form of language, as better or correct.

An Engaged Methodology

We framed this study as an ethnographic case study (Dyson and Genishi 1) that used a discourse analytical framework (Bloome et al. 1) and engaged methods (Kinloch 88) to document and analyze language and literacy events within this translanguaging space. With IRB approval, in April 2015, we began collecting data at Autores Fuertes through participant observations during the afternoon academy time, typically visiting weekly on Thursdays between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Beginning as participant observers, we sought to answer a generic question of what was happening in regards to the language and literacy practices of the teachers and children at the center. However, as this project progressed, and as previously described in our theoretical framework, we departed from this ethnographic stance of *collecting* data about the participants at the site and moved toward a view of *generating* data with our participants. For instance, as we began crafting and teaching Saturday workshops, we needed to account for and acknowledge how we were intentionally disrupting and changing the reality of the center. We embraced the notion that we were, and still are, co-creating the reality with the children and other actors at the center, even now as we write about it.

So far, the data corpus includes approximately twenty hours of participant observations of various aspects of the center, transcripts of approximately forty hours of audio and video recordings of Saturday workshops, and numerous writing samples from the children who participated in these workshops. We also have individual reflective field notes and our communication notes in the form of texts and emails throughout our planning and execution of the project. For the purpose of this article, we focus the findings around the data collected during four writing workshops: Writing Bilingual Family Stories, Writing Bilingual Poetry, Creating Graphica, and Community Language Mapping.

To analyze the data, we uploaded the field notes, transcripts, and writing samples into a shared Google Drive. We focused on identifying what Alvarez termed the “translanguaging event” (326). Building off previous constructs, such as the literacy event, Alvarez proposed the translanguaging event as a way to capture and bound the data around an instance where the translanguaging nature of language and literacy was highlighted. Then, using our theoretical framework as a guide, we developed analytical questions to ask of each of those translanguaging events:

- Where, when, and how did the children deploy an expanded linguistic repertoire?
- Where, when, and how did we prompt for this linguistic repertoire?
- Where, when, and how was space integral to this deployment?

Making a Translanguaging Space

When we first observed the center, we noted three pedagogical practices that we interpreted as limiting the inclusion of the children's entire linguistic repertoires in lessons and activities. First, although the center was designated as a bilingual space, there were clear demarcations as to when, where, and with whom Spanish was used, and thus English was the default language. For example, there were many bilingual and Spanish language books on the bookshelves; however, the books that the teachers and volunteers used with the children during the afternoon academy time were all in English, and children were encouraged to read books in English. As previously mentioned, the site's director spoke Spanish to parents, grandparents, and adult community members, but used English to speak with the children, and taught in English during the afternoon academy time.

Second, we noted the appropriation and recontextualization of "schooled" literacy practices in this space (McTavish 324), albeit not in a more agentive way. For instance, during the afternoon academy time at the center, the center director engaged the children in the reading of teacher-selected novels using the common "round-robin" styles of reading, where children read aloud one by one, taking turns, through the text. The literacy pedagogy, and specifically the writing pedagogy, was formed around "schooled" notions of informative, narrative, and persuasive writing genres. Although the children were bilingual, speaking and using both Spanish and English fluently inside and outside of the center, the language and literacy lessons required written responses only in English.

Third, other language and literacy spatial flows or translanguaging corrientes (García, Johnson, and Seltzer 21) were present and observed, especially when the children were considered "off-task" relevant to what the adults had asked them to do. However, their moments of being off-task were not capitalized on by the center's teachers, and were generally redirected or ignored. For instance, in one session during a round-robin reading of *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, Guadalupe sat at the table with a graphic novel in her lap, hidden from the view of Madison, silently reading and engaging with a text on her own, refusing to engage in the round-robin group reading. During a break from academy time, a group of four boys gathered around a laptop and searched for videos of Pokémon, listening to their video selections in Japanese, reading the subtitles in English, and chatting amongst each other in Spanish about the inner workings and nuances of the world of Pokémon.

We knew that schooled pedagogical practices, such as round-robin reading, are difficult to disrupt and change in classroom spaces, as they are practices that are deeply ingrained in the culture of schooling and education. However, we believed that because this space was not "school," there was more freedom to shape the pedagogical practices and to be informed by a translanguaging framework of language and literacy. Thus, our intentions were twofold: first, that our deliberate use of a translanguaging pedagogy would disrupt some of the "schooled" language and literacy practices, such as round-robin reading and homework that the children were typically engaged in at the center. Specifically, we wanted to redirect literacy flows to and from home and community, among other lived experiences. Second, we hoped that by actively

challenging monolingualism and modeling translanguaging in this space, we could contribute to a ripple effect across the center. This, we hoped, would create a space where more of the children's linguistic repertoire would be engaged and deployed. In the following sections, we describe each workshop, including an example of a translanguaging event within each workshop, and follow it with a collective analysis.

Escribiendo Historias Bilingües Familiares/Writing Bilingual Family Stories

We have long used the collecting and writing of family stories as a way for children to draw upon their familial and linguistic funds of knowledge. Previous research has shown that writing family stories is a way to pedagogically leverage the familial and linguistic funds of knowledge of young children, especially those of emergent bilingual children (Abraham 410; Dworin 518; Flores 62). We intended for the writing of family stories to be a departure from some of the traditional and "schooled" writing pedagogies that we had documented at the center, such as assigning the children a specified and narrow writing prompt or genre. Instead, we encouraged the children to inquire into their lives and bring forth a story that they would like to tell us and others.

For this project, we defined family stories as those stories that are told, over and over again, within a family. We prompted family stories by asking the children: Do you have any stories in your family that you tell over and over again? These types of stories usually start with "Oh, do you remember when so and so did . . . ?" During the first session of this Saturday workshop, we posed these questions to the five children who attended. We also read them an example of a bilingual family story from children's literature, Juan Felipe Herrera's *Calling the Doves/El Canto de las Palomas*, and we shared an example of our own family's stories. At the end of the session, we sent the children home with a bilingual family story questionnaire that prompted the children to ask their family members questions about their lives such as:

- ¿Quién fue importante para ti cuando eras un niño o una niña?
- Who was important to you when you were a kid?
- What type of stories did they tell you when you were a kid?
- ¿Qué tipo de cuentas te contaron cuando eras una niña o un niño?

We hoped these prompts would help the children collect stories that captured their family's lived experiences, along with the translanguaging reality embedded in those experiences.

The following excerpt illustrates a translanguaging event during the first session of this workshop. In this event, we, the authors, are reviewing the family story questionnaire.

- 1 Stephanie:** Alright, in Spanish. Okay, look where it says memory questions.
- 2** Put your finger on two there, where it says memory questions. Alright,
- 3** let's read them all in

4 Spanish. Can we do it?

6 Children: (Whining)

7 Stephanie: I know we can! Okay, memorias. So, we are going to read the

8 first one that starts with “que.” Alright, you all have to read along with me.

9 All: ¿Qué es algo gracioso, qué te ha pasado?

10 Stephanie: Okay, the next one.

11 All: ¿Qué es algo aterrador que te ha pasado?

12 Damian: So, something scary?

13 Stephanie: Something scary.

14 Damian: Ooo! I think I know!

15 Stephanie: Okay. But, you have to ask your mom or your dad or your grandma.

16 Remember? Thirteen. Okay, la próxima. La tercera.

17 All: ¿Qué es algo triste, qué te ha pasado?

18 Daniel: I know this.

19 Stephanie: You do! Did you ask your mom or dad? You gotta ask them. Maybe

20 they’ll tell you more. Okay, la ultima. Juanito, ready? ¿La ultima?

21 All: ¿Cuáles fueron tus sueños cuando era una niña o niño?

22 Children: (chatting about possible answers)

During this session, there was some notable discomfort on the part of the children when asked to read aloud in Spanish, indicated in line 4 of this transcript with their “whining.” As well, in this excerpt, in line 7, Stephanie and Kate began to choral read the questionnaire with the children to relieve some pressure on the individual child to “read” aloud in Spanish, but also offering a way to scaffold the children’s decoding of Spanish print. The children’s responses to the questions, albeit in English, indicated that they fully understood the questions as posed in Spanish. For example, in response to the question posed in line 9, “what is something scary that happened to you?” Damian responded in English, in line 10 asking a clarifying question, “So, something scary?” and states that he already has an example for this in line 12.

In the subsequent session, the children returned with the completed questionnaires containing answers to many of these questions, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of offering flexible translanguaging approaches to creating the questionnaire, reviewing it, and allowing answers in any language. Building on the collected answers, during the rest of the workshop sessions, the children chose one story to more fully develop, draft, revise, and illustrate into one complete “published” family story. And

many types of family stories were generated— they were sad, funny, and everything in-between. The children wrote stories of emigration from El Salvador and Mexico to the United States, una mama being attacked by a gallina in Mexico, and a papi's bicycle, which had two lights and a bell, that he rode to and from work every day at a restaurant in Philadelphia's Center City. Figure 1 contains Marco's entire family story, whose storytelling and translanguaging inspired the title for this article.



Figure 1: Marco's Family Story

In his family story, Marco described how he immigrated to the United States. He came in an airplane, he ate Popeye's in the airport, and he missed everything about El Salvador, including las pupusas. Flores, referencing Eve Tuck, claimed that these kinds of stories disrupt "stories of damage" about minoritized families, and instead Marco's story highlighted how his family "thrive[d] and sobrevivi[ó]" (68). Marco did this by disrupting one-dimensional stories about El Salvador, specifically that it is a violent place, full of gangs, where no one wants to live. In Marco's story, he construed El Salvador as his home, a place of family, warm weather, and great food.

Cruzando Fronteras con la Poesía Bilingüe/Crossing Borders with Bilingual Poetry

In the spring of 2018, we offered a workshop focused on writing bilingual poetry. We turned to bilingual poetry because we knew the condensed wording, flexible structure, and malleable grammatical rules could scaffold the children's biliteracy development, as well as their translanguaging writing (Cahnmann-Taylor and Preston 235). Pre-

Real Madrid

go, go, go
Saul, Ronaldo
goal, goal,
gooooool!

Real Madrid
it feel like
Cristiano Ronaldo
will make a gol, and
gol, gol, goooool,

Real Madrid
Hechale!
Saul, Ronaldo
gol, gol,
gooooool!

Real Madrid
que sienten
va a hacer

The children were prolific poets, producing dozens of poems in this eight-week workshop. They wrote poetry about everything from pizza to fútbol, as seen in the above poem. In this poem, in Figure 2, Raul wrote about his favorite fútbol team, Real Madrid, and favorite player, Cristiano Ronaldo. Raul's translanguaging skills were advanced, as he captured many words that *trans* English and Spanish, such as Real Madrid, Saul, and Ronaldo which are spelled the same across English and Spanish, with differences in pronunciation. As well, in lines 5, 9, 10, 14 and 15, his spelling of gol conforms to Spanish orthography and by not using the letter "a" he captured the subtle differences between the English and Spanish pronunciations. Notably, his spelling of goal, with multiple "o's" in lines 5, 10, and 14 was meant to index the iconic elongated "gooooool" that is yelled out by the announcer just after a goal is scored. In this manner, his poem captured his translanguaging aural reality perfectly, demonstrating his transnational knowledge of Spanish, English, and the intricacies of fútbol.

Novelas Graficas and Cómicas/Graphic Novels and Comics

We imagined graphic novels and comics as a way for the children to engage in multi-modal acts of reading and writing, and coupling translanguaging and graphica would allow the children to engage more freely with their linguistic, or communicative, repertoires. We did not intend for graphica to be simply a bridge to "more literary" or "difficult" texts; rather these texts were meant to help the children to engage with the dynamics of language, disrupting the idea that language is print alone (Dallacqua 365;

Schwartz 262). In one way, *graphica* already challenges notions of literacy as restricted to only print, by showing how print, image, and space can better construct a narrative than print alone. Finally, reading comic books or graphic novels allows children to engage with words and drawings, the use of speech and thought bubbles, shifts in perspective or point of view, and unique arrangements on each page of the text (Kedley, McCloud).

Thus, in this workshop, the children evaluated these elements in *El Deafo* (Bell), *American Born Chinese* (Luen Yang), and *Lowriders in Space* (Camper and Raul the Third). They also participated in activities where language, gestures, and visuals were used to share ideas, including looking at art, watching videos, or acting out charades that led to brainstorming for *graphica* writing activities and stories.

The following excerpt comes from the fourth session of this eight-week workshop.

In this transcript, Kelly, an adult volunteer and researcher, and twelve-year-old Dina act out a short improvisational skit they wrote together. Their only prompt was that the skit should involve two people using all their languages, and that it should show the opportunities or challenges that might come with people whose linguistic repertoires differ.

1 Dina: [talking very fast] OK, vamos hacer galletas.

2 Kelly: What's a kai-etta?

3 Dina: [pronouncing the word carefully and slowly] Ga-llet-a

4 Kelly: [repeating slowly] Ga-llet-a... is that like... cake?

5 Dina: Kind of...

6 Kelly: Like a big cake?

7 Dina: It's a cookie...

8 Kelly: A cookie! Ok, what are we going to do?

9 Dina: First we are going to start with flour.

10 Kelly: [to the other children] Como se dice flour...?

11 Children: Flor...? Flower???

12 Kate: [laughing] It's harina... [The children groan and laugh]

Dina, who frequently talked about baking cakes, pies, and cookies at home and one day owning a bakery, started the skit by speaking in Spanish very quickly to Kelly. Dina intended for Kelly to not understand the quick pacing of the Spanish. Outside of the skit, Kelly speaks Spanish, but because they were acting, Kelly pretended not to understand Dina's quick and fluent comment in Spanish. In line 9, Dina switched to English, and said they would start with baking flour. In line 10, Kelly "broke the fourth wall," so to speak, and spoke directly with the rest of the children, asking them

how to say flour in Spanish. Because these words are homophones, the children responded with flor, the Spanish translation for the English flower, but not for flour. The children all laughed when they realized that Kelly was asking how to translate flour, and not flower.

After the skit ended, the children were to draw, in the style of comics, what they thought would happen next if the skit were to continue (See Figure 3).



Figure 3: Comic Panels of Dina, Julio, Edwin, and Marx

Dina, as shown in the upper left panel of Figure 3, drew the two characters of Kelly and Dina continuing to confuse ingredients. Julio, in the upper right panel, omitted captions, thought bubbles, and talk bubbles entirely, and drew only a smoking kitchen with one of the characters calling on a phone for help. Presumably, the inability to communicate well between the two characters led to the burning cookies and smoke-filled kitchen. Edwin, in the bottom left panel, noted that the character Kelly played didn't seem to understand Spanish or English. This was an astute observation; in line 2 of the previous transcript, Kelly acted as if she didn't know "galleta" in Spanish, but in line 10, Kelly acted as if she didn't know "flour" in English. Finally, Marx, in the bottom right panel, also thought miscommunication would lead to di-

saster, as he drew a mess, with Kelly not understanding in English what the meaning of mess was. The children's skilled acting, appropriate laughter at a translation "error," and their panel drawings all index their acute senses surrounding communication across languages, the acknowledgement of "mis"communication, and the subtlety of linguistic negotiation.

Mapeando los Idiomas de la Comunidad/Community Language Mapping

We chose to design a workshop around community language mapping (Dunsmore, Ordoñez-Jasis, & Herrer 327) as a way for the children to explore, document, and build upon the language practices in their communities. Just as a translanguaging theory of language eschews top-down policies and practices of language, we also wanted to do this pedagogically by actively asking and encouraging the children to think deeply about their language practices, as well as to document those practices in their community. To help the children do this, we purchased eight iPods for the children to use to film and document the language and literacy practices in the neighborhood surrounding the community writing center.

We began our first session of the workshop by having the children draw a personalized language map. Language maps are meant to help children document their language practices, as well as associate those practices to specific places and contexts. This kind of pedagogical practice was a way to push back against traditional vocabulary activities, such as assigning a list of specific, decontextualized vocabulary words that the children *must* learn. Instead, the language map was meant to build up from the children's everyday experiences of language, actively encouraging them to share their words with us and their peers.

To begin, we asked the children to think about how they used languages in their everyday lives, and what words and phrases they used with their family. In subsequent sessions, we shifted the focus to how spaces dictated different kinds of talk. We prompted the children to discuss how they talked on the playground as opposed to how they talked in the classroom. The children noted how they used specific phrases when playing video games, such as Fortnite, that they probably wouldn't use with a grandparent or a teacher. Figure 4 is a photograph of Marco's language map.

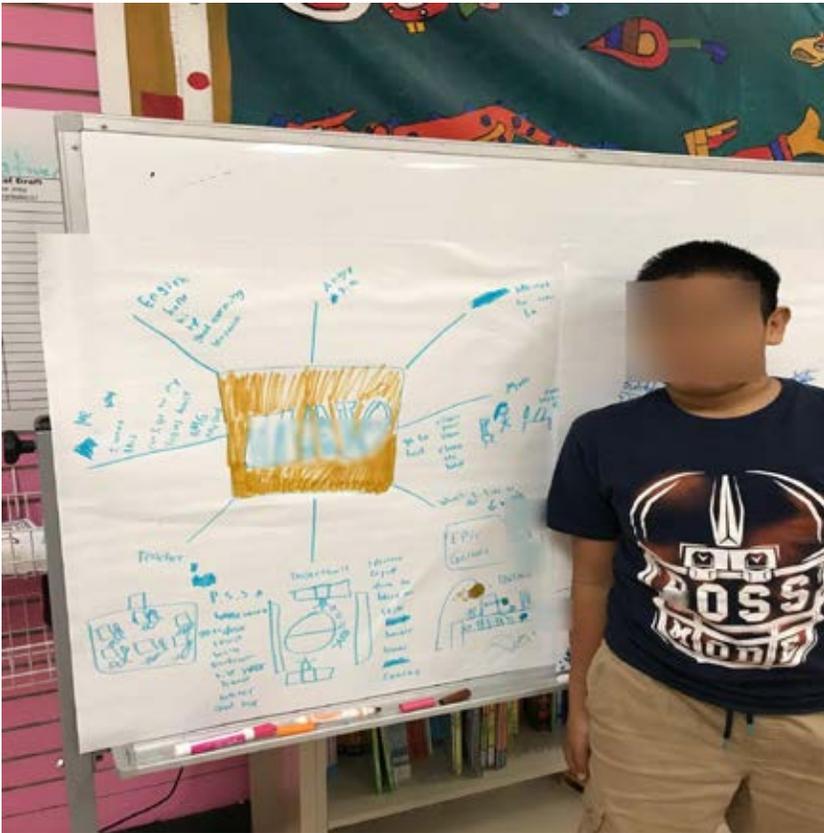


Figure 4: Marco's Language Map

In Marco's map, he identified eight different contexts for his language use, showing examples of the language he would use in each one. In his context of "angry," he humorously wrote, "*?:+?" to represent the expletives he uses when angry, yet his orthographic choices on his language map indicate his understanding of his current context and audience at the community writing center, a place where writing curse words might not be appropriate.

Near the end of the workshop, the children used the iPods to document and film a walk around the community surrounding the writing center with the entire group. The children focused on capturing evidence of language in use such as signs in store windows or transactions in stores. Afterward, using the video and images they captured on their walk through the community, the children created a short film using the iMovie application to represent this language experience.

Discussion

In these Saturday workshops, we set out to disrupt some “schooled” pedagogies by intentionally using a translanguaging pedagogy, in turn redirecting pedagogical practices to follow the spatial and temporal flows of language in the lives of the children. We found that across all of the workshops, by eliciting writing that stemmed from the lived experiences of the children, we could leverage the children’s transnational funds of knowledge, along with the translanguaging practices that were embedded in such experiences. More specifically, translanguaging pedagogical strategies, such as the bilingual family story questionnaires and the language map, helped shift the space from “standardized” English dominance to a flexible practice of both English and Spanish during all the speech and writing acts in the workshop. As well, intentionally forefronting and sharing children’s literature, written by Latinx, bilingual authors who visibly translanguaged in their publications, modeled for the children how to deploy more of their linguistic repertoires in their own writing. Another vital practice was the visible and active use of all of our languages, specifically noting aloud when we didn’t know a word in English or Spanish and using other resources such as peers and Google Translate to help us locate, discuss, and decide on terms.

Our first analytical question pertained to where, when, and how the children deployed an expanded linguistic repertoire during these translanguaging workshops. As an answer to this question, we noted that in the final “published” family stories, the children used complex and specific language to construct their narratives. For instance, they used words related to specific places, formatted in both English and Spanish orthographies, written about places such as El Salvador, Mexico, the United States, and Filadelfia. In the language maps, the children demonstrated a wide linguistic range of words coming from English and Spanish, including words associated with videogames, that even we, Stephanie and Kate, did not know their meaning.

Our second analytical question led us to look for times when we prompted the use of an expanded linguistic repertoire. This happened specifically through the creation and distribution of the bilingual family story questionnaire given at the beginning of the workshop, which helped shape the translanguaging nature of subsequent workshop sessions. Also, using bilingual parallel poems as mentor texts for the children appeared to target the use of an expanded linguistic repertoire, when composing poetry. The language map activity was a way to capture English and Spanish across a variety of contexts, from schools to videogames. The charades activities during the graphica workshops prompted children to think of times where language could be confusing or offer opportunities, depending on each individual’s language repertoire. Finally, during writing conference times that focused on the children’s drafting and revising of the family stories, we intentionally prompted the children to think about how the dialogue should be captured. For example, if something had been spoken in Spanish as it happened, we discussed whether or not it should be written in Spanish within the story. Importantly, translanguaging pedagogies and related bilingual education have been critiqued when only used as a scaffold for learning English (de los Rios et al.; Palmer), yet we found that translanguaging, rather than a scaffold for English, was a way to scaffold Spanish language and literacy development.

Our final analytical question asked how space influenced our work and the subsequent translanguaging opportunities within the space. In terms of prompting translanguaging shifts across the center, we offered these workshops in an open physical space, where families, teachers, and volunteers could observe and even participate, which prompted even more inclusion of translanguaging practices. We also intentionally expanded the space we used, for instance, by engaging with and walking around the neighborhood around the community writing center, documenting signs in the street and in storefronts, and video recording the street scenes. As well, at the end of each workshop, we set aside time to invite the community, the children's families, and other actors at the center to view the child-created literacy products. This intentional probing into the spaces that the children visited or even knew about was vital to creating this translanguaging space.

Implications

In terms of implications for other community-based writing sites, there are many to extract from this current project and we continue analyzing the data and looking for new ways to translanguage with the children. Here, we offer four implications to think about as we move forward which may be of interest to other researchers and teachers.

First, it is imperative to examine these sites for the reinforcement of "schooled" pedagogies. These traditional pedagogies, stemming from school culture, are often restrictive and not culturally responsive. This can lead to the exclusion of community and family language and literacy practices. To disrupt these, a researcher or teacher might intentionally examine the site, asking: Are all the languages of the attendees being included? How can more languages be included? What language and literacy ideologies appear to be reinforced or disrupted in this space?

Second, if it is determined that traditional and schooled pedagogies are present, teachers and researchers must act to intentionally disrupt them. This can be done in a number of ways and methods, but ultimately, a focus should be on redirecting writing pedagogies to build off the spatial and temporal flows that the children live in. Based on what we've found, we suggest creating workshops or sessions that have translanguaging as a focal goal, meaning that while the objective of a workshop may be to write a family story, the main goal must be to highlight the translanguaging practices of the children.

Third, translanguaging is a normal and authentic practice of multilinguals. To include translanguaging in pedagogical practice, teachers, directors, and volunteers must recognize those practices as correct and brilliant, and not as deficit or problematic. Then, they should work to build off the authentic language practices of these multilinguals who attend community-based writing centers. If the center's actors are not multilingual, then they must learn about translanguaging practices; reading about translanguaging is one way to do this, but the best way is to participate with community members doing language every day, from shopping at stores to attending local religious services, tuning in their ears to the language practices happening there. If the

center's actors are multilingual, specifically in the languages of the local community, still they must rethink the standardized language ideologies that translanguaging tries to disrupt, which often exist across and within all language groups.

Fourth, and finally, community-based writing centers have great potential to be sites of pedagogical resistance and validation for many communities that have been minoritized and marginalized in US society and “formal” schools. However, to do so, centers must intentionally establish and develop relationships with each community, and not simply exist as a space. The relationship building must be intentional and based on community values and norms. Developing *confianza* with families and the community can be done in a variety of ways. For example, a center may create an open-door policy that allows families to attend workshops with their children. As well, the center's teachers must know the needs of the community and respond to them. For instance, at this center, many parents have lamented the lack of formal bilingual education and worry about their children's Spanish proficiency; thus, a response may be to specifically develop workshops and activities that foster Spanish learning in authentic ways.

Concluding Thoughts

Overwhelmingly, all of our workshops have received praise from the center and families, and we are often called on by the center to host more workshops or be a teaching assistant in a current workshop. Although we cannot credit this entirely to the implementation of the workshops we designed and led, a translanguaging shift has become evident in the center's overall approach, including bilingual advertisements of workshop offerings for the community, the hiring of a new bilingual and bicultural director and assistant teacher, and the more prominent use of bilingual or Spanish language materials in the afternoon academy, as well as workshops that are offered in “Spanish” to directly support the children's Spanish language development.

Our work is ongoing. Reviewers of this article asked us to think about and detail what we would do differently as we move forward with the project and research. Notably, we are focused on the translanguaging nature and prioritizing the translanguaging pedagogies of this center. Sometimes, it seems, the center has prioritized homework completion during after-school time and “accurate” writing in either English or Spanish during writing workshops. As well, we have a clear goal of encouraging the children at the center to become bilingual and biliterate, while the center doesn't clearly articulate this goal in any official way, although their actions appear to support this.

Moving forward, we plan to continue each of these workshops just as they are because they were successful in accomplishing their intended goal of bringing the translanguaging reality into the children's writing at the center. However, our pedagogical practices are intentionally flexible and responsive to the children who enroll, and we react in the moment to the children's needs, wants, and interests. Thus, if the children decide that they do not want to make a language map or write poetry, then we will find something else that leverages more of their linguistic repertoire.

On the other hand, there are ways our plan does differ and change moving forward. As we noted above about differing goals, we want to more explicitly engage translanguaging pedagogies with the center's directors and teachers, so that this process isn't so dependent on us. This has been an ongoing and difficult task due to the high turnover of paid staff and volunteers. For instance, since the first author began a partnership with the center, she has seen three different center directors and five different assistant directors/teachers, along with numerous volunteers changing and dropping in every week and into various workshops across the center. One way we plan to do that is partnering with the organization's curriculum director, who doesn't work directly at our site, but can initiate more systemic changes in the curriculum. In turn, we also plan to develop a series of collaborative inquiry discussions with the current director, teachers, and volunteers around the topic of translanguaging and translanguaging pedagogies.

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