During Sophia’s (all names are pseudonyms) third-grade writing workshop in her predominantly Latino, English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) classroom, Elian walks around the room with his Mother’s Day card. He stops by his classmates’ desks and holds his card in front of their eyes. The card is covered in intricate flowers and colorful rainbows; Elian points to where he has written, *I love you mama* in Arabic, explaining to his fellow writers, “That’s Arabic; that’s my language.”

On the other side of town, Alexandra invites her linguistically diverse fourth-grade ESL classroom to self-select mentor texts from a collection of multilingual children’s picturebooks. During an interview with Angie, Isaac points to his writing and explains his decisions about his use of multiple languages. He nods his head, smiles, and says, “Yeah, Arthur Dorros, he’s my writing mentor, how he writes in English and Spanish.”

More than 1,100 miles away, Susan’s second graders, who are in an English-dominant classroom, are starting writing workshop. Standing and sitting around four desks, David asks Noor, a student from India, “What’s that?” Noor says, “That’s Hindi. Watch me write my name.” Next to David and Noor is Akira, a new student from Japan, who is writing an *All about Japan* book entirely in Japanese just below her detailed illustrations of cherry blossoms and a Buddhist temple. Eduardo and Leon are both speaking Spanish while they write in their notebooks. David turns to Tasha, and says, “Sheesh, I gotta learn another language” (Laman, 2013, p. 1).

These three classrooms, like all classrooms, are different from one another—one a predominantly Latino, school-designated ESL classroom with a teacher identifying as bilingual, one linguistically and culturally diverse school-designated ESL classroom with a teacher identifying as an emerging bilingual, and another classroom with a monolingual English-speaking teacher in an English-dominant school responsible for teaching students with eight different languages. And yet, as we studied these three classroom spaces and their writing practices, we found they had more in common than not when creating what we deem *translingual* (Canagarajah, 2015; Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011) contexts for writing—spaces where teachers and their students redefine understandings, norms, and practices of monolingual writing. Across these three distinct classrooms, we found that teachers and students drew on their “full linguistic toolkits in order to process information, make meaning, and convey it to others” (Orellana & Garcia, 2014, p. 386).

This study contributes to and expands upon a developing and democratic vision for teaching writing that strives to value, leverage, and teach into students’ everyday languaging practices. In this cross-case analysis, we present three principles of instruction we identified to support translingual approaches to writing in the elementary classroom.

**Informing Theory and Relevant Literature**

This is a generative time in the study of language, literacy, and education as scholars theorize and examine the possibilities of leveraging students’ linguistic repertoires as pedagogical resources (i.e., Gort & Pontier, 2013; Soltero-González & Reyes, 2011). In a review of the literature, a vibrant
discussion among interested scholars recognizes the fluid, emergent, and integrated landscape of national languages, linguistic varieties, registers, dialects, vernaculars, regionalisms, and other sign systems (Canagarajah, 2015; García & Wei, 2014; Young & Martínez, 2011). Some scholars use the term *translingual* as a pedagogical orientation to writing and literacy (Canagarajah, 2013b; Horner et al., 2011; Lu & Horner, 2013). A translingual orientation emphasizes the attitudes and perspectives that need to be cultivated toward cross-language relations in literacy. For teachers, it encourages a way of looking at the implications for writing and teaching from an awareness that languages are always in contact and complement each other in communication. (Canagarajah, 2013a, p. 4)

From this perspective, translingual literacies are not only texts, but also an approach to everyday texts widely practiced in multilingual communities and classrooms. A translingual orientation envisions languages and sign systems as always coming into contact during actual use and shaping each other to form new meanings (Canagarajah, 2013a). For example, as we (the authors) collaborated on this paper over the last year, we spontaneously produced and exchanged writing that integrated, or code-meshed, Spanish, emojis, Southern American regionalisms, images, and American slang with Standard English. A translingual orientation makes us sensitive to the creative, performative, emergent, and situatedness of this and similar acts of everyday communication and positions each of us (despite any designations as ESL, bilingual, multilingual, or monolingual) as translingual. This orientation also allows us to recognize the agency and voice of all writers’ compositions (despite their designations as ESL, bilingual, multilingual, or monolingual) that deviate from “standard written English” and the ways teachers and students work to cultivate writing contexts that support them.

A translingual approach to writing instruction can also develop ways of “doing and being” bilingual and biliterate (Gort, 2015). Similar to current languaging theories that conceptualize language as an activity (something language users do) rather than a structure to adhere to, a translingual orientation does not envision language users as separating languages cognitively or in use, but rather communicating from one “linguistic repertoire” (García & Wei, 2014, p. 387). A translingual pedagogical approach can support young bilingual writers as they uncover how their own day-to-day languaging practices can function as composing resources; with such a perspective, they may ultimately perceive their languages as complementary rather than interfering (Velasco & García, 2014).

Unlike a recursive approach to language learning, where the languages in one’s repertoire are treated as enabling the learning of each other, a translingual orientation recognizes the multidirectional influences of the language resources in one’s linguistic repertoire and how those resources are, thus, always in contact. The dynamic, often spontaneous, and situatedness of the movements *between* languages (e.g., performing a text in one language and writing a summary in another) and *across* languages (e.g., hybrid language use) that constitute translingual literacies can be generative for emergent bilingual writers. A translingual approach to writing instruction, therefore, affords young bilingual writers opportunities to develop composing processes and texts that require creative and thoughtful movement between, across, and within their linguistic repertoire to communicate and transcend traditional monolingual writing processes.

Given its emphasis on teachers’ favorable dispositions towards bilingualism, biliteracy, and broader linguistic diversity and its growing scholarship in composition studies, we employ a translingual orientation to frame our analysis of teachers’ approaches to young children’s writing instruction. In particular, we look to specific dispositions that Canagarajah (2013a) proposes as necessary to enact a translingual orientation; these include an awareness of language as constituting diverse norms; a willingness to negotiate with diversity in social interactions; attitudes such as openness to difference, patience to co-construct meaning, and an acceptance of negotiated outcomes in interactions;
and the ability to learn through practice and critical self-reflection (p. 5).

As more research is conducted studying translingual approaches to writing among early childhood and elementary writers (Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2008) and calls are made to broaden students’ communicative repertoires (Dyson & Genishi, 2009), questions still remain about how English-dominant classrooms can support these efforts. With these demands in mind, we asked how elementary classroom teachers with different linguistic repertoires and linguistically diverse student populations create contexts that support translingual pedagogical approaches to writing.

**Methods**

As researchers, we pursued similar lines of inquiry in the Southwestern and the Southeastern United States—states with high populations of children who speak languages other than English (Krogstad & Fry, 2014). Individually, we studied children’s language and literacy practices within writing workshop to understand how teachers created linguistically diverse contexts for young learners and their attendant instructional practices. As a cross-case analysis (Stake, 1995), we brought our collective data sets together with the scholarship on translingual literacies as a theoretical lens to analyze how teachers supported students’ fluid language use in their classrooms and cultivated translingual approaches to writing.

Angie (the first author), Sophia, and Alexandra worked for two years as part of a teacher and researcher design-based investigation (Reinking & Bradley, 2008) to develop and refine curriculum and instruction for teaching children to read and write culturally and linguistically diverse texts (Zapata, 2014; Zapata, Valdez-Gainer, & Haworth, 2015). They identified literary examples of writing that included varieties of Spanish and English. Their criteria for the literature collection were shaped by a commitment to stories, illustrations, and writing that honor communities and language varieties in authentic ways. During the 2011–2012 school year,

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**NOW ACT!**

**Taking Advantage of Community-wide Resources**

- Grow your home, school, and classroom libraries to include culturally and linguistically diverse literature. Follow #weneeddiversebooks on social media for high-quality titles, authors, and illustrators.
- Engage families by using social media like Twitter. Many teachers we know use Twitter so that family members in other countries can virtually connect with their children’s learning.
- Intentionally teach meta-linguistic awareness by drawing students’ attention to languaging moments in the classroom. Encourage students to do the same.
- Collaborate with colleagues to unpack your linguistic histories through reflective journaling, reading, and book club discussions.
- Invite family and community members to talk with children about their language histories and practices.
- Support families’ commitments to speak to their children in their home language.
- Become a language ethnographer: Complete a neighborhood walk and document the multiple languages in your school community. Conduct a survey with colleagues and/or your students about the languages that are spoken in your community.
- Enjoy and closely study linguistically diverse literature for the artful ways authors write across their languages for multiple purposes, including as activists.
Angie worked in their classrooms as a participant-collaborator during specific units of study, resulting in almost 90 hours of observable data. Tasha (the second author) conducted research at a neighborhood school, Market Elementary, located in the southeastern United States. Tasha visited Susan’s classroom two to three days per week during writing workshop in order to study children’s bilingual writing development and culturally responsive writing instruction. Tasha and Susan collaborated over seven years as co-researchers, planning curriculum and participating in study groups together.

Sophia and Alexandra’s classrooms reflected the sociocultural diversity of students designated as ESL by their schools in the same Southwest city. Sophia’s classroom, although predominantly Latino, welcomed families from Mexico, Honduras, and Ecuador, as well as one student from Lebanon and one African American student. Sophia identifies as Chicana and an English/Spanish bilingual speaker. Alexandra’s classroom reflected families and languages from Mexico, Thailand, the Dominican Republic, Cambodia, Nepal, Ethiopia, China, and Japan. Alexandra identifies as an English-dominant speaker with growing conversational Spanish. During this research, Sophia had seven years of teaching experience and Alexandra had five. Susan had 15 years of teaching experience and considers herself a monolingual who speaks with a regional southern dialect and knows some Spanish and French. Her students reflected a range of sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds. During the 2011–2012 school year, Susan had 10 students considered emergent bilinguals whose languages included Japanese, Spanish, Hindi, and Arabic.

The teachers in this study implemented writing workshop as a curricular structure wherein writing is a recursive process and writers engage in study over a period of time learning the habits of mind of people who write (Calkins, 1994). Each day began with a mini-lesson about some aspect of writing, such as living a writerly life, revision strategies, etc. Independent writing time lasted 30–45 minutes during which children engaged in their individual writing projects and teachers conferred with children; workshop ended with a share time when children talked about their writing processes.

Using ethnographic methods such as prolonged observation, formal and informal interviews, and artifact collection, we recorded field notes during our respective inquiries as well as video- and audio-taped mini-lessons, writing conferences, and children’s talk during writing time. We copied writing samples and interviewed teachers in order to understand not only their theoretical orientations toward language learning but also their pedagogical decision making.

To study the norms and facets of classroom cultures that support translingual writing, we compiled our respective data sets and conducted a cross-case analysis of the three classrooms. We coded data to note how teachers referenced, taught, or highlighted translingual approaches to writing. We collapsed codes and created categories related to the translingual strategies the teachers enacted as well as the norms of language use that were established in order to create an appreciation for linguistic resources and students’ lives as translingual composers. Across all three classrooms, three principles of translingual writing instruction were enacted—community, teacher, and literature engagements. Though we identified these approaches across classrooms (see Table 1) as overlapping practices, in the following sections we focus on illustrative examples in order to provide more detail into how these pedagogical moves unfolded and shaped students’ writing.

Creating Translingual Classroom Contexts and Cultures of Writing

Teachers Value and Leverage Community Resources for Writing

A translingual pedagogical orientation to teaching assumes writers are continually traversing and negotiating emergent meanings in a variety of contexts and that a disposition of openness to unfamiliar language norms is necessary to navigate the circulating new grammars and texts (Canagarajah, 2015). Essential to these teachers’ translingual approaches to writing were the ways that they positioned their community’s varied languages as everyday practices and resources for communicating and writing.
### Table 1. Principles of translingual approaches to writing across classroom contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers Value Classroom Communities as Linguistic Resources and Models for Translingual Practices</th>
<th>Teachers Serve as Linguistic Resources and Models for Translingual Writing</th>
<th>Teachers Share Linguistically Diverse Literature as Models of Translingual Approaches to Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Susan’s 2nd-Grade General Education Classroom with Students Identified as ESL</em></td>
<td><em>Sophia’s 3rd-Grade, Predominantly Latino, School-Designated ESL Classroom</em></td>
<td><em>Alexandra’s 4th-Grade, Ethnically and Linguistically Diverse School-Designated ESL Classroom</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community members told stories from their lives.</td>
<td>- Teacher modeled regionalisms in her own writing.</td>
<td>- Teacher valued linguistic diversity and shared her appreciation of translingual writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community members taught students how to write in languages other than English.</td>
<td>- Teacher shared experiences as a speaker with a deep southern drawl.</td>
<td>- Teacher modeled a desire to learn new languages and varieties and demonstrated working through a new language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community members talked about their linguistic identities.</td>
<td>- Teacher saw herself as multilingual and thus talked about herself in that way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Family members listened to children read across languages during author celebrations.</td>
<td>- Teacher talked through her linguistic histories and ideologies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class members engaged in a photo study with their families.</td>
<td>- Teacher spoke and wrote across her languages and their varieties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher collaborated with children to write in two languages.</td>
<td>- Teacher built a collection of linguistically diverse literature to share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher invited students to self-select mentor authors from the collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher was interested in how and why students use languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher welcomed students’ linguistically diverse writing.</td>
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</table>

In this section, we feature how Susan developed a translingual orientation and metalinguistic awareness in her second-grade classroom by featuring her classroom community’s language practices in her literacy instruction. Susan did not speak the languages that her emerging bilingual students spoke, yet she sought ways to bring translingual practices to life for her second graders by inviting family and community members into the literacy curriculum. Susan

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launched a photo-poetry project early in the school year in order to welcome children’s stories, families, and languages into the classroom and into students’ writing (Laman & Boggs, 2011). She sent a note home (translated by district personnel) letting families know that children would bring disposable cameras home and take photos of the people, places, and things that mattered to them and then write poems based on the photos.

Though Susan had an open-door policy and felt she had strong relationships with her students’ families, the photo and poetry project opened new doors to the community and their languages. For example, when Jesse’s mother, Juanita, learned about the photo and poetry project, she walked Jesse into the classroom and asked Susan if she could borrow some of the bilingual poetry books. Susan eagerly agreed and asked Juanita if she would like to come in and talk about her experiences growing up in Mexico and to read some poetry in Spanish.

The day that Jesse’s mother came to the class, Juanita spoke exclusively in Spanish to the children. She used a map of Mexico to show the children where her family was from. She demonstrated how tamales are made with masa and cornhusk, and mentioned other typical dishes, including Mexican hot chocolate. She showed photos of celebrations and candy skeletons from Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) and read poetry. Seven of Susan’s students spoke Spanish and could understand the presentation in its entirety, but all 22 children were engaged throughout. Students tuned into language and pointed out cognates (i.e., “celebración sounds and looks like celebration”), and asked questions about the photos (“Is this you?”). Students asked Jesse a variety of questions including, “Do you write in Spanish?” and “What did your mom just say?” This experience engaged Jesse’s peers and deeply influenced their writing. Jesse and her Spanish-speaking peers shared their experiences living outside the United States, as well as composed texts that intentionally integrated Spanish into their writing. For example, during a writing conference, Susan encouraged Esmeralda to incorporate Spanish into her poem about playing violin (see Fig. 1). What resulted was Esmeralda’s first bilingual poem.

Susan also had students who recently moved to the United States and were newcomers to English. One such student, Akira, arrived from Japan in January—five months into the school year and three months after Jesse’s mother visited the classroom. Susan learned key phrases in Japanese and shared picturebooks written in Japanese and English. Susan’s students regularly spoke languages other than English in the classroom, but there were no other Japanese-speaking students in the school. Akira could write in Japanese and Susan encouraged Akira to do so during workshop, but Akira was reticent. Susan asked Akira’s mother to visit during writing workshop and encourage Akira to write and share her writing in Japanese. When Akira’s mother visited, she spoke Japanese with Akira and also wrote alongside her. The other children at Akira’s table asked Akira’s mother about Japan and about writing Japanese characters. Like Jesse’s mother, Akira’s mother presented information to the children about her country’s customs and language. She read a picturebook in Japanese and showed the children how to write some Japanese characters and explained their meanings to the children. She taught the students key phrases such as, “Good morning.” Susan reported, “My students were so excited, they asked when her mom could return and teach them more.” Writing in Japanese alongside her mother and her peers taught Akira to access her...
full linguistic repertoire as a resource for writing in her classroom (see Fig. 2) and simultaneously developed students’ curiosity for and awareness of languages that constitute diverse norms.

Both Jesse’s and Akira’s mothers introduced new worlds and languages to every student in Susan’s classroom. Susan’s willingness to negotiate with diversity in social interactions mediated a classroom space where community members step in as experts to teach and invite inquiry into various cultural and linguistic practices. Such a pedagogical approach has tremendous implications for students like Akira who have no other language peers or contexts to claim their full linguistic repertoire. In addition to growing students’ cultural and metalinguistic awareness, repeatedly inviting community members into the classroom as writing teachers helped students to claim their bilingualism and identities as bilingual writers alongside their peers in ways that do not exoticize their heritage or their linguistic repertoires but rather recognize and leverage them. When Susan invited family members to read aloud and present to her second graders in their heritage languages, she positioned students to renegotiate how languages other than English can fold into one another and into their writing.

In each of the classroom presentations, a translingual context was intentionally created where children and participants collaboratively engaged new language practices in order to create meaning. Listening for cognates, asking others to translate, and making meaning from photos, illustrations, and gestures are inherent in and integral to traversing translingual contexts and contribute to students’ developing meta-awareness of how languages and literacies work in people’s lives. In addition, Susan made teaching moves that highlighted and invited children to create bilingual texts, to write in languages other than English, and to continually expand linguistic repertoires. Susan’s intentional and repeated invitations to families to share their language practices introduced a new norm of language awareness and established an essential foundation and expectation for language and writing in the classroom—one that decidedly challenged a standard “monolingual” norm.

**Teachers Live and Model Translingual Approaches to Writing**

In addition to developing students’ metalinguistic awareness, we found teachers were also explicit about how they negotiated their own linguistic repertoires (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003) to write through practice and critical self-reflection. Sophia shared her language negotiations as she composed and designed alongside students in her third-grade ESL classroom. She intentionally shared her linguistic history as a daughter of migrant farm workers and growing up bilingual so that her students might similarly embrace their own bicultural and linguistic knowledge. In this section, we feature the way Sophia wove her language beliefs and histories into her writing instruction as a model for students to consider.

As Sophia gathered her students on the carpet for a read-aloud of *Diego Rivera: His World and Ours* (2011) by Duncan Tonatiuh, she began by asking, “Ok, y’all, where did we end last? Efrain, donde te vas a sentar? Oh, yes, let’s start here on this spread.” It was typical for Sophia to draw from her full linguistic repertoire in this way. English, Spanish,
In addition to advocating language integration, Sophia articulated how a dual language format (text available in English and Spanish) functioned in her writing. As she illustrated a double-page spread in her picturebook as part of a small-group writing conference, Sophia explained that she chose to craft Amita’s poem only in Spanish for Amita’s Spanish-speaking friend and that she includes “a little extra for Spanish readers as a kind of an insider dialogue between me, the author, and them, the readers.” Pointing to the opposite side of the spread, she showed the same group of students how she wrote in a dual language format, “so that my readers who do not know Spanish can have a translation and still understand the meaning of the text.” On the following page, she deliberately placed the Spanish text first and then its English version (see Fig. 3), a departure from the traditional model of placing written English first on the page and then Spanish.

In demonstrating and making explicit all of her decision making, Sophia modeled two strategies for translingual writing. First, with the placement of the Spanish text before the English text, Sophia showed that she was asking her readers to reframe their expectation for dual language texts, a recontextualizing strategy (Canagarajah, 2013b) for disrupting southern regionalisms, and picturebook lexicon were all a part of her linguistic repertoire. As her students learned to read and write linguistically diverse picturebooks and as she conducted writing mini-lessons and conferences, Sophia, too, read, responded, and composed a picturebook reflecting her bilingualism and activist beliefs about linguistic diversity. Inspired by news in Arizona and Georgia where multicultural and multilingual curricula were banned, Sophia crafted a story of a bilingual character, nine-year-old Amita, who would take the lead in her community to save banned books from incineration.

As she planned her picturebook, she shared and talked through her draft and responded to students’ comments, modeling how she negotiates the integration of various language features in her writing. She explained, “I like your idea of the village starting their own secret library. That is going to be my ending. But I want to make it more descriptive so I’m going to work on my language.” Later in the same mini-lesson, she further explained, “I write in Spanish for me. But I really want to write a story that shows how beautiful my languages are when used together.” Here, Sophia strategically suggests language integration as an artful practice and a possibility that could serve her writing.

Figure 3. Sophia recontextualizes Spanish and English text placement. [Era un día lluvioso y nublado en el pueblo de Arora. Amita descansó en el piso de su cuartito escribiendo palabras en secreto en un rollo de papel. Ella miró intensamente a la página y imaginó las palabras bailando con el ritmo de su pluma. / It was another dreary dark day in the town of Arora while Amita sat on the floor of her room carefully writing the words onto a tiny scroll. She stared intensely at the words that seemed to dance off the paper, keeping beat with her pen.]

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integrated rap vernaculars, religious rhetoric, southern regionalisms, and local dialects. Together, Alexandra and her students also grew a literary lexicon around culturally and linguistically diverse picturebooks (Eeds & Peterson, 1991). Terms such as identity, language, culture, picturebook spreads, dedications, and endpapers were taken up by students as they read and found themselves, their languages, and each other in the literature.

Alexandra intentionally shared diverse literature that reflected her students’ lives, languages, and literacies and, in particular, opened conversations about their identities. Having already established a thoughtful context for sharing culturally diverse literature (Zapata, 2013; May, Bingham, & Pendergast 2014), she introduced linguistically diverse picturebooks as part of a book flood experience where children self-selected literature for independent reading. Students gravitated toward books that captured their personal interests, not just their languages. Alexandra invited students to identify writing, authors, designs, and illustrators they admired. As students selected their personal writing mentors (Bomer, 1995), Alexandra encouraged students to collect samples of crafted language they admired in their writer’s notebooks.

Jennifer and Manuel collected and appropriated the ways many authors code-meshed to craft their narrative. For their final publications, Jennifer chose to emulate the fluid written language of Carmen Tafolla in What Can You Do with a Paleta?/¿Qué puedes hacer con una paleta? (2009); Manuel innovated on the writing of Rene Colato Laínez in My Shoes and I (2010). Both Tafolla and Laínez mesh the languages that are part of their literate and communicative life, English and Spanish, in artful ways and for diverse purposes. Manuel explained that he preferred Laínez as a mentor for his writing: “I like how he does a combination Spanish and English together and because he wanted to show readers that he speaks more than one language.” In Manuel’s picturebook, titled El Bautismo, Manuel appropriates Laínez’s style as he recounts the events that unfolded when he was baptized with his friends.

Jennifer looked to Tafolla’s code-meshing style to write about her grandfather through English and Spanish. In Jennifer’s picturebook, titled Mi...
styles opened students’ writing to complex and creative styles of composition and prose. Opportunities to identify and study styles of writing from linguistically diverse literature shaped a context where young writers could integrate written languages and meet the curricular demands of state and national standards—demonstrating writing proficiency with narrative story grammar elements like establishing characters, settings, and mood.

Discussion and Implications

In a recent Conversation Currents, Orellana & García (2014) ask, “What if, instead of thinking about bilingual kids or multilingual kids, we thought instead about multilingual contexts and how you work in those contexts? . . . What would it mean to help all kids deepen and broaden their linguistic toolkits?” (p. 390). As we studied these three classrooms, we too wondered what it means to grow a multilingual context for writing for all language learners, including those living and learning in communities where English is the dominant code of instruction. What if students did not have to encounter writing instruction informed only by monolingual values and language designations such as ESL? What if, instead, through the integration of

Abuelito and Me (see Fig. 4), Jennifer describes a day she spent with her grandfather in Mexico. She explained how Tafolla “was my mentor to write my identity and my languages that I use.”

Both Manuel and Jennifer selected mentor authors whose writing they admired and appropriated their code-meshing styles in ways that ultimately met demands of their own narrative writing. By selectively code-meshing, Manuel established his characters as bilingual, primarily through dialogue and in portions of the narrative as well. Jennifer integrated Spanish into her narrative in ways that established a particular place and conveyed an intimacy between a grandfather and granddaughter spending time in Mexico.

Figure 4. Jennifer’s story, Mi Abuelito and Me (“Al Mercado!” he says. We ride our bikes there. The air is crisp and cool. The mercado is full of people. I can smell a lot of different kinds of fruit there. We buy mangos, peaches, and peras. After we finish our lemonade, we go to la ciudad San Marcos. We bring cacahuetes to feed las ardillas. There are a lot of them! They coo and coo! After that we go to la tiendetita del parque to visit my aunts. There are a lot of people there, so I decide to help them. We hear las campanas de la iglesia. That means that it is 6:00 p.m., so we go home.)
families', teachers', and students' linguistic histories and the sharing of linguistically diverse experiences and literature, students composed in contexts where translanguaging approaches were alive—that is, normalized, studied, discussed, valued, and appropriated for all students' writing?

**Community and Teacher as Linguistic Resource and Model for Translingual Practices**

Because teachers do not always possess linguistic resources mirroring the languages represented within their classrooms, favorably engaging and inquiring into students' language practices becomes integral to growing translanguaging approaches to writing and developing the dispositions and openness required to do so. Our findings echo others' whose research documents the need to integrate community members, their languages, and their funds of knowledge into the classroom (Allen, 2010; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Within these classrooms, the walls between school and home were made more permeable as community members intentionally taught structures of English, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic, etc., or presented stories in languages other than English. If we desire to build classrooms where children develop metalinguistic awareness that can serve their writing, then we must welcome family and community members, lift their ways with words for children to appreciate, and elevate the dynamic and ever-changing nature of languages as resources for writing.

A translanguaging approach to writing and instruction asks educators to actively work with and learn from community members in order to deepen understandings of the languages and literacies in their lives. Susan engaged family members, positioned them as experts, and provided students with opportunities to experience languages, intentionally establishing new language norms in her classrooms. With colleagues, you might consider the following: What languages do our students and families speak? How are we building metalinguistic awareness of the languages sustaining our community? Where in our curriculum and instruction are we intentionally teaching translanguaging approaches to students?

A translanguaging pedagogical approach to writing demands that shared understandings of fluency, proficiency, and even competence with language be redefined (Horner et al., 2011). In these featured contexts, teachers interrogated and made public their own linguistic histories and ideologies in ways that supported children’s translanguaging writing. As Sophia made public her negotiations with languages to write, she positioned herself as a language learner, a language user, and a language creator. This is a far cry from notions of simply teaching language and writing as a static system of English conventions to be mastered. Instead, Sophia valued and integrated proficient writing into her curriculum, thus redefining it for her students as the ability to spontaneously orchestrate language resources with creativity and flexibility.

While knowing more than one language can help teachers develop translingual literacies, it is more important that teachers recognize their own repertoires of language varieties, registers, dialects, and regionalisms and unpack why standardized written English has historically been privileged in language arts classrooms. Teachers may begin to take up these practices by asking themselves, “What role do language(s), including dialects, regionalisms, and other sign systems, play in my life? How do I share them with students? How does a translanguaging orientation inform or challenge my understandings of literacy? What language systems ‘count’ for writing in my classroom?”

**Linguistically Diverse Literature as Models of Translingual Approaches to Writing**

Selecting mentor texts is a well-established approach to support students’ development of writing (Bomer, 1995). Yet, in many elementary school classrooms, linguistically diverse literature is often not made available, either due to a lack of resources or a long-held belief that literacy instruction is only accomplished through monolingual English exemplars. Access and invitations to well-selected models of linguistically diverse writing contribute to young writers’ early understandings of a range of linguistic choices and tools for effect, communication, and circulation to larger audiences (Canagarajah,
For emerging bilinguals, linguistically diverse literature can also model how one can draw from her full linguistic toolkit to compose. Manuel and Jennifer’s writing demonstrate what is possible when young writers engage in contexts where bilingual writing models are available and translingual approaches to composition are taught.

A translingual approach to writing recognizes students’ agency to import (Ranker, 2009) and innovate on designs of written language. From this perspective, students’ self-selection of bilingual mentor texts can also signal students’ growing metalinguistic awareness and desire to do and be bilingual and biliterate. Thoughtfully selecting and integrating examples of linguistically diverse literature into writing curriculum are first steps educators can take as they consider translingual approaches in their elementary classroom. Teacher inquiry groups can study code-meshing or dual language writing in literature to better understand and develop translingual approaches to writing. These questions may guide your work: 1) What linguistically diverse literature do we share with students? 2) In what ways can we integrate this literature across the year? 3) What kinds of literature invitations invite joy and close inspection of linguistically diverse writing? 4) How do language(s) and other sign systems function in the text?

Conclusion

Within these classrooms, translingual approaches to writing focused on students’ and teachers’ favorable dispositions toward the study of language, language in use, and the construction and arrangement of languages in innovative ways. Translingual pedagogical approaches also mediated students’ development as bilingual writers. The translingual approaches to writing that Susan, Sophia, and Alexandra enacted reflect the important work of teaching our youngest writers about linguistic diversity by disrupting and challenging the privileging of standardized written English to communicate and compose. These efforts were not at the expense of learning to write in English, but instead embodied a more democratic and inclusive orientation to writing that both positioned students as agentic users and investigators of languages and mediated students’ bilingual and biliterate identities.

Confronted by pressures to quickly usher students into a standardized system of language, teachers face challenges in teaching writing in ways that honor and leverage young children’s emerging bilingualism and other language varieties. Yet, as more languages and sign systems come into contact and new language practices and texts emerge, we cannot ignore the linguistic resources every student brings to the task of writing and how translingual pedagogical approaches can serve children’s biliteracy development.

A writing community that focuses on developing habits and dispositions of translingual writing is not just for teachers in bilingual or dual-language programs. We argue that a translingual orientation to writing is beneficial and necessary for all, including those in English-dominant settings. These orientations to the world and to writing demand that we, as writers and teachers of writers, create contexts that leverage and teach into children’s linguistic repertoires and challenge “monolingual” values. As Susan, Sophia, Alexandra, and their emergent bilingual students show us, when translingual approaches to writing come to life in classrooms, so do our students, as well as their biliteracy and bilingualism.

References


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