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From Deficit to Diversity

How Teachers of Recently Arrived Emergent Bilinguals Negotiate Ideological and Pedagogical Change

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Introduction

Despite being referred to in the literature as the English-language learner (ELL) subgroup of students, emergent bilinguals are an integral and sizable population of children attending public schools in the United States (Pandya et al. 2011). In fact, the linguistic diversity of the country's school-aged student population is the highest it has ever been (Hopkins 2016). Two complementary forces—rising numbers of emergent bilinguals nationwide and geographical shifts in where they live—have continually reshaped and reconfigured the face of public schools in metropolitan areas (Batalova and McHugh 2010; Frey 2011; US Census 2011). Both cities and "inner-ring suburbs" are home to diverse populations of emergent bilingual students. In large cities, emergent bilinguals make up about 14.1 percent of public school students (National Center for Educational Statistics 2016). In extended metropolitan areas, such as inner-ring suburbs, the growth of emergent bilinguals is exponential (Gill et al. 2016). Thus, linguistic diversity in urban areas can be seen as commonplace and normative rather than an aberration.

Regardless of being merged into the same category, the makeup of the emergent bilingual population is in constant flux. These students vary in country of birth, educational history, race, and social class, among other factors. Because of this diversity within the population and because this vari-

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ance is not static, schools must devise responsive and flexible approaches to the changing educational needs of emergent bilinguals. One of the most pressing concerns facing urban educators, how to effectively fashion instruction for the diverse groups of emergent bilinguals, remains a puzzle to many (Menken and Solorza 2015). This is especially the case for subgroups of the population, such as those who are recently arrived (Salerno and Kibler 2015).[1] A promising practice for the development of contextualized teacher knowledge about emergent bilinguals is the use of teacher study groups (Allard 2017; Dobbs et al. 2016).

In this paper, I describe a case study of a collaborative study group of secondary teachers of English as a new language (ENL) and university faculty members as they consider the role of translanguaging pedagogy in writing for their "recently arrived emergent bilinguals."[2] "Translanguaging pedagogy" refers to practices in which teachers intentionally design opportunities for emergent bilinguals to leverage their entire linguistic and social repertoires in a learning event (García et al. 2017; García and Wei 2014). The work that ensued from this study group not only revealed pedagogical insights about the role of translanguaging in supporting recently arrived emergent bilinguals as writers (Ascenzi-Moreno and Espinosa 2017) but also exposed the ways the ENL teachers revised their knowledge and practices based on nuanced understanding of the students they worked with.

Because few studies have examined how teachers view and respond to the diversity of their recently arrived emergent bilinguals, this research takes on a twin focus, documenting shifts in beliefs and practices. The following research questions guided this study: (1) How do teachers conceive of the recently arrived emergent bilinguals they work with? (2) How do these conceptions shift as teachers engage in translanguaging practices with students? (3) In what ways do teachers adapt and expand their teaching of recently arrived emergent bilinguals as they adopt nuanced views of them?

To provide background for this study, I bring into focus theoretical work and research that lay the foundation for understanding how emergent bilinguals are envisioned and introduce translanguaging pedagogy. I also discuss

1. Following Salerno and Kibler (2015), I opt to refer to these students as "recently arrived emergent bilinguals" rather than newcomers. This choice is grounded in the belief that the label commonly used to name these students, "newcomer," only contributes to highlighting this population as an outsider to school communities.

2. Although two researchers were part of this collaborative study group, there is only one author of this paper.

the role of teachers as change agents in supporting educational innovation for these students.

Contesting Partiality: Asserting the Resources of Emergent Bilinguals

Discussions about students who speak two or more languages, commonly referred to as ELLs, often begin with painting a landscape of underperformance marked by a lack of resources, language, or other factors (Gutiérrez and Orellana 2006; Koyama and Menken 2013; Téllez and Manthey 2015). Using this perspective as a starting point for pedagogical change, although common, only perpetuates views of these students as a uniformly needy population. These deficit-based notions lead to change efforts that do not tackle crucial conceptual shifts that must undergird instructional change for emergent bilinguals (Gutiérrez and Orellana 2006; Molle 2013). Rather, a focus on the resources that these students bring to schools has the potential to unlock ways that teachers can view them and better attune teaching to address students' needs.

The term "emergent bilingual" is a critical departure from labels such as ELL or "limited English proficient" (LEP) because it emphasizes that students know two or more languages, even though some of their languages may not be used or supported in schools (García et al. 2008). The word "emergent" in the term refers to the idea that students are continually learning language, thus challenging the concept of a static linguistic identity (García et al. 2008; Valdés et al. 2015). Alternatively, the terms "ELL," "LEP," and other variants of these labels are regarded as deficit-laden because they define students solely in relation to English and provide a partial view of students' language capabilities.

Because terms such as "ELLs" are often tied to policies set by school districts, they still abound in schools, despite the widespread recognition among scholars and practitioners that they are based on a deficit perspective. Brooks (2016) brings into focus the pedagogical reasons why fixed policy classifications of emergent bilinguals must be actively contested. She argues that when teachers view students through the lens of a policy classification such as a label, they miss vital opportunities to develop instruction tied to their diverse linguistic experiences (Brooks 2016).

This danger is especially true for students such as recently arrived emergent bilinguals, who—along with long-term English learners (LTELs) and students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs)—have been viewed through the lens of "partiality" and carry with them further layers of deficit

(Flores et al. 2015). These students are viewed as remarkable not only for needing to learn English but also for not being able to test out of the ELL categorical label, for not having the adequate educational background, or for arriving in the United States without knowledge of how to operate within the school system. Through the lens of partiality, their resources remain undetected. What is emerging in the literature is that these subgroups exhibit great variance and bring important, although unconventional, resources to school (Flores et al. 2015; Helfrich and Bosh 2011).

For teachers to tap into the resources emergent bilinguals bring, they must move from seeing their students as a category to recognizing them as complex and diverse beings (Brooks 2016). Brooks (2015) is successful in disentangling the terms that describe students who are learning two or more languages, such as "LTELs," from their use as a category within schools and as a description of students' varied literacy competencies. When referring to students in her study as "LTELs, she makes clear that this label is a policy-driven term that is very different from their "literate abilities" as a group (Brooks 2015, 385). The awareness of the diversity of emergent bilinguals and its implication for classroom practice is important because it tackles monolithic conceptualizations of this large group, which intertwine language, literacy abilities, race, and economic status (Brooks 2016).

Recently arrived emergent bilingual students, the population of students that the teachers in the study group worked with, are a particularly vulnerable population. They pose multifaceted challenges and opportunities to secondary school educators (Salerno and Kibler 2015). These students bring diverse educational histories and competencies to secondary settings and must be supported to learn English, acquire content-area knowledge, and understand the culture of the United States and its schooling (Short and Boyson 2012). The development of programs and courses for this population requires a deep understanding of its unique features. Salerno and Kibler (2015) advocate becoming familiar with the holistic needs of this population to effectively structure programs to support students' growth. Meeting the needs of recently arrived emergent bilinguals extends beyond the academic realm. The politics surrounding these students is laced with issues of immigration (Varghese 2008), sealing their image in the popular imagination as outsiders and "illegal," although their realities may be complicated. It is crucial that teachers have opportunities to refine their conceptualizations of these students and actively replace discourses laced with deficit with ones of possibility and promise.

A starting point is to move from conventional discussions of emergent bilinguals, which center on their lack of achievement, to the resources that they possess. In doing so, instruction can be targeted to the actual students in the classroom rather than to imagined categories of students. In separating out students' literacy abilities from their prescribed labels, it is easier to view the emergent bilingual population in terms of important differences among them, which, in turn, opens up possibilities for teaching practices that address their needs. The lens of translanguaging provides an important way in which to view emergent bilingual students' resources in school.

Translanguaging Pedagogy

Different from cognitive models of language learning that pose language acquisition as a linear process composed of grammatical rules, a translanguaging framework describes language learning as dynamic and shaped by social interaction (Faltis 2013; García and Wei 2014). First used by Williams (1994), translanguaging refers to the practices of bilingual people as they employ a wide range of linguistic and semiotic resources to make meaning. Williams (2002) argued that the alternation of language facilitated students' bilingual capabilities. In line with Grosjean's (1982) view of holistic bilingualism, a translanguaging framework stresses that a bilingual person is not "two monolinguals in one" but rather a unified whole who uses language flexibly and creatively within diverse social contexts.

Adopted and extended by García (2009), translanguaging has brought into focus the pedagogical importance of valuing and encouraging students to use their entire linguistic repertoire to make meaning in school. Through the lens of translanguaging, scholars have demonstrated that bilingual students naturally use their entire linguistic repertoire as they interact with peers and navigate the learning process (Palmer et al. 2014). Most recently, it has been used to shape a pedagogical approach in which the full span of students' language and social resources are invited into and valued in classroom instruction (Celic and Seltzer 2012; Creese and Blackledge 2010; García et al. 2017; Kleyn 2016).

Translanguaging pedagogy aims to ensure that emergent bilingual students' myriad language and social practices are not separate from the educational context students are in, but rather are fluid and unified with school practices. García (2013) writes, "Translanguaging affords the opportunity to use home language practices, different as they may be from those of school,

to practice the language of school, and thus to eventually also use the appropriate form of language" (2). In a classroom where translanguaging pedagogy is practiced, students are encouraged to think, respond, participate, collaborate, and create using all of their language resources, whether in English or their home language.

Translanguaging, like asset-based pedagogy, recognizes that students' language practices are rich and important to learning, however different they may be from the ones recognized in school (Smith and Murillo 2015). When students' home languages are both valued and used productively in school, students have opportunities to access content, engage in critical thinking, and receive the vital message that their language practices and lived worlds are essential to their academic and social development in schools (García et al. 2017; Paris 2012). MacSwan (2017) has contested views that students' code-switching (or mixing of languages) is a reflection of a language deficit. Rather, he cites a long trajectory of code-switching literature that highlights the complex linguistic processes that students possess to engage in these practices, thus normalizing and recognizing the value of code switching for teaching and learning (MacSwan 2017).

A growing body of research documents how translanguaging supports student meaning making. Daniel and Pacheco (2016) trace how multilingual adolescents craft understanding by actively using their home language, regardless of whether it is a school-sponsored process. Kibler (2010) demonstrates that secondary students productively used home language during the writing process. Fu's (2009) study of Chinese students indicated that translanguaging in writing facilitated students' engagement, thinking, and literacy development. Moreover, robust literature supports the use of home language, a central tenet of translanguaging pedagogy, across programs (bilingual, ENL, general education; August and Shanahan 2006; Rolstad et al. 2005; Umansky and Reardon 2014). This position is novel to teachers who work in ENL settings because the field has long been dominated by an English-only framework (García 2014).

Despite the growing literature that translanguaging pedagogy holds potential for supporting emergent bilinguals both academically and socially, recent research cautions that its effectiveness across a range of contexts may not be assured (Allard 2017). Allard's work demonstrates that when translanguaging practices are embedded in an unsupportive school ecology, the positive effects of translanguaging may be muted. She advocates that to take up translanguaging meaningfully and intentionally, teachers need to engage in conversations to negotiate and set clear language policies within a cohesive ecology (Allard 2017; Hopkins 2016).

Although MacSwan (2017) lauds the importance of recent research and theorizing about translanguaging as a powerful way to affect how teachers think about students' language use in the classroom, he challenges the view that students do not have distinct mental grammars, thus posing a challenge to the linguistic definition of translanguaging. He forwards a multilingual view of translanguaging, which maintains that students have a single linguistic repertoire that is punctuated by language-specific distinctions. MacSwan's work illustrates that although translanguaging has been widely accepted as a positive development in the pedagogy of emergent bilinguals, further refinement and reconciliation between the fields of linguistics and education are necessary and may affect how educators implement translanguaging pedagogy in classrooms.

In sum, translanguaging pedagogy brings to attention the flexible, fluid, and creative ways that students use their language and social resources and the potential that teachers can harness if they allow students to engage in these practices in their classrooms (Kleyn 2016; MacSwan 2017). I now turn to the role that teachers can play in how translanguaging pedagogies can take root in classroom instruction.

Educators as Change Agents

It is well documented that teachers are as arbitrators of pedagogy within their classrooms and hold and shape ideologies about students (Coburn 2016; Gándara and Hopkins 2010; Menken and García 2010; Varghese 2008). As Barrett-Tatum and Dooley (2015) note, "teachers still have control of the 'who, when, where, and how' of student learning" (280). For teachers who work with emergent bilingual students, decisions about language use can be considered language policy (Varghese 2008). The language policy making that teachers engage in is powerful, as it is one of the most important loci of pedagogical change for emergent bilingual students. As Flores and Schissel (2014) argue, school leaders and teachers play a critical role in supporting, implementing, and advocating for pedagogical and programmatic change in favor of multilingual practices.

However, the role of teachers in shaping pedagogies can be contentious and challenging. Bryk and colleagues (2015) write, "Teachers have far less input than do other professionals into the factors that affect their work. Far too many efforts at improvement are designs delivered to educators rather than developed with them" (24). Teachers often straddle multiple layers of personal, classroom, school, and district priorities, which are, at

times, in conflict with each other (Hopkins 2016). As Hopkins explains in her study, the process by which teachers steer between all these different demands is an "active process" (597) that requires their engagement.

Martínez et al. (2015), for example, illustrate how teachers in dual-language bilingual programs negotiate between different ideologies that both encourage and oppose students' translanguaging within school. Gleeson and Davison's (2016) work with secondary teachers in Australia suggests that teachers' attitudes and practices about teaching emergent bilinguals is shaped primarily through their classroom-based experiences. Kibler and Roman (2013) studied attitudinal changes of nonbilingual teachers who work with emergent bilingual programs about home language use. They found that overarching ideologies about home language use (that it stunts English growth) and immigrants (that they should learn English without the use of their home language) stood in the way of some participants' acceptance of the role home language plays in emergent bilinguals' academic growth. Goulah and Soltero's (2015) research indicates that teachers who were both immersed in the field and in a bilingual education program were able to develop a holistic response to the needs of their emergent bilinguals. Their study demonstrates that as teachers learned about their emergent bilinguals, they also became advocates for their needs.

Taken together, this body of research highlights that teachers hold a powerful role in negotiating and filtering ideologies about students and language use in the classroom. I now describe the work of a collaborative study group in exploring the role of translanguaging pedagogy in writing. Using case study methodology, this research focused on how teachers conceive of the recently arrived emergent bilinguals they work with and how these conceptualizations change alongside the adoption of translanguaging pedagogy in writing.

Setting, Participants, and Methods

Rock Mountain High School

Rock Mountain High School (all names are pseudonyms) is a large high school located in one of the inner-ring suburbs of a large city. It has the largest concentration of African American and Caribbean populations in Stone County. Of the approximately 1,100 students during the 2014–15 academic year, 46 percent of students received free and reduced-price lunch. About 24 percent of the students were classified as emergent bilinguals during that time. The school has been experiencing a huge influx of recently arrived emergent bilinguals. In September 2014, for example, the school

started with one class of newly arrived emergent bilinguals, and by December of the same year, three more classes with these students opened up. As previously noted, these changes reflect emergent bilingual demographics across metropolitan areas (Gill et al. 2016).

The school administration moved back and forth between the implementation of state expectations and teacher professional decision making, creating an environment in which teachers were expected to follow a set curriculum while being encouraged to adapt and test new pedagogical approaches. The author provided professional development to a cross-section of teachers from different disciplines during the 2013–14 school year. This professional development, offered primarily through workshops, was focused on supporting teachers in their efforts to recognize and build on student bilingualism as a resource in the classroom through translanguaging pedagogy (Celic and Seltzer 2012).

One year after this professional development work was completed, two ENL teachers volunteered to participate in a study group. The goal of the study group was to explore how translanguaging pedagogy could be implemented in writing instruction with their newly arrived emergent bilinguals. The study group comprised two ENL teachers and two bilingual university faculty. The study group met six times for fifty minutes each between December 2014 and May 2015. During the group's meetings, we had time for reflection, discussion about readings, and examination of student work. Between study group sessions, teachers implemented translanguaging practices in their ENL classrooms of either ninth- or tenth-grade recently arrived emergent bilinguals.

Because the focus of the study group was on writing pedagogy, the study group's work included recollections about our writing histories, professional reading about writing instruction with emergent bilinguals, and examination of student work. A typical study group session would include a discussion of professional reading, such as one chapter from Fu's (2009) *Writing between Languages*, and then an examination of student work. The agenda for each meeting evolved from the previous session and was developed in consultation with the teachers by the bilingual education faculty members.

As noted, the author of this paper provided professional development about general translanguaging theory and strategies to a group of teachers at the school a year before starting the study group. As the group explored writing instruction, it became clear that changes beyond ones directly related to writing instruction were also occurring and were important; these ideological and pedagogical changes are the focus of this paper. Although my participation in providing professional development on translanguaging

is a potential limitation, it also enabled me the privileged space of being in a collaborative study group and the opportunity to witness the organic change process for teachers.

Participants

The two ENL teachers who self-selected to be part of the study group were Karla and Diana. Karla, a European American woman, has more than fifteen years of experience teaching emergent bilingual students. She grew up speaking primarily Italian and learned English in school. She has receptive knowledge of Spanish and French and some expressive language in both.

Diana was in her second year of teaching at the time of the study. She is Puerto Rican and although born in the mainland United States, she moved back and forth between Puerto Rico and the mainland as a child. She noted that she learned to read and write in Spanish and had to learn English and literacy skills in English on returning to the mainland in high school. She used Spanish sparingly when teaching her ENL class but related to her students in Spanish outside of class. Both teachers attended the same Teaching English as a Second Language program at a public state university, although about fifteen years apart.

Methods, Data Collection, and Analysis

To examine the work of the study group, I employed a phenomenological approach through a case study methodology (Dyson and Genishi 2005; Van Manen 1997). Phenomenology is the study of an experience or issue as it is lived (Van Manen 1997). Case studies are context bound and focused on a single unique entity (Saldaña and Omasta 2017); their purpose is to make visible "what some phenomenon means as it is socially enacted within a particular case" (Dyson and Genishi 2005, 10).

The data shared in this article are primarily based on recordings and field notes of study group meetings. Each session was recorded and transcribed. In addition, observations of teachers working with students were made. Interviews with teachers were conducted in May 2015 and January 2016. The latter interview was considered a follow-up and included questions that aimed to glean teachers' perceptions of their experience, following a phenomenological approach (Saldaña and Omasta 2017). These interviews differed from study group recordings in that they were semistructured. The data from the study group were conversational and based specifically on discussions of readings and student work.

As a first step in the data analysis, the transcribed interviews and field notes went through multiple re-readings. This was done to get a general sense of the data (Creswell 2012). Then, initial codes were generated through open coding (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000; Charmaz 2010; Creswell 2012). I also employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) as an additional overlay of analysis. CDA is an analytical method suited to analyze the discourses that undergird decisions about language policy within classrooms and how they are connected to "various layers of context" (Johnson 2009, 151).

The codes generated through both analytical lenses were collapsed to generate themes through axial coding (Creswell 2012). For example, "translanguaging in authentic writing spaces" and "writing as a task" were two codes that emerged from the interview data. Once analyzed and coded, the data were examined alongside the research questions to develop the findings. For instance, two of the codes, "use of labels for students" and "use of scripted curriculum," were joined together in forming one of the findings of this study: "shifting conceptualizations of students." Findings were triangulated by analyzing data from meetings, field notes, observations, and interviews.

Findings and Discussion

Two interconnected themes emerged from the data analysis: shifting conceptualizations of students and teacher agency in pedagogy. The first theme describes how, at the outset of the study, teachers framed students primarily through labels and categories determined by outside expectations and discourses. During the span of the collaborative work, teachers experienced a shift in how they viewed students; this change was characterized by increased attention to students' resources. The adjustments in teacher perspective were intertwined with the implementation of new instructional practices. The second theme, teacher agency in pedagogy, outlines the types of instructional changes that occurred as teachers participated in the study group. In this section, I use examples, including quotes and observations, to contour the findings.

Shifting Conceptualizations of Students

During the first sessions of the study group, it was evident that the broader social, political, and educational context framed how teachers viewed their students. One manifestation of this was through the ENL teachers' use of

labels for students. When we started our study group, teachers exclusively referred to their students by labels assigned by testing. In New York State, where this research took place, all students classified as ELLs must take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test examination, which determines their language proficiency across four modalities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). These levels at the time of the study were "beginning," "low intermediate," "intermediate," "advanced," and "proficient." The practice at the school was to group students into classes based on their individual outcomes on this language proficiency exam. Although this practice is common and one that has a distinct pedagogical purpose, on examination of the data, teachers did not refer to students individually or in ways that indicated that alternative ways of knowing students during initial sessions of the study group. Furthermore, the use of these labels existed within a constellation of conditions, as both Allard (2017) and Hopkins (2016) found in their studies. Teachers' use of labels was intertwined with practices that also did not encourage teachers to recognize the uniqueness of students' lives and literacy abilities.

During our first study group sessions, teachers regularly referred to their classes by the labels, such as beginners or intermediate, mirroring the language of the state language proficiency exam. These labels in themselves are not a problem, as they have practical meaning and refer to homogeneous groups of students with similar language needs and thus shape class groupings. However, when coupled with a scripted curriculum, they leave teachers with few entry points to understand the complexity of their students' literacy experiences and little guidance in adopting generic instructional practices.

In the following exchange at one of our initial meetings (December 8, 2014), for example, I asked Karla to describe her students: "Who are these students? And what are your dreams for them?" She replied, "To pass the Regents Exam. I don't care if they get a 65. I tell them next year the Regents is not going to be the same. It's going to be the English Common Core. It's going to be harder. I keep saying that you have to try as hard as you can." The desire for teachers to support their students to pass an exam is appropriate and commendable. However, at the beginning of the study, teachers' discourse about these students was dominated by the labels "beginners" or "intermediate." When they talked about students, all they talked about was their goal for students to pass an exam or to move up in their language proficiency designation. Again, these goals are laudable, but as singular objectives, they obscure the broader importance of developing strong literacy skills along with a robust literate identity for these students.

As a case in point, during an observation of Diana's class in December 2014, newly arrived emergent bilinguals were asked to complete a paragraph by filling in the blanks with new vocabulary. There was only one possible answer for each blank. Students were not asked to make connections to their lives, to explain their thinking, or to question. The students struggled through the task and disengaged easily. As Diana moved from desk to desk, she encouraged students to stay on task; however, after working on one or two sentences, they became distracted again. Although Spanish was used in side conversations, it was not used as a resource to engage learners. When approached and questioned about what they were working on, students vaguely repeated the instructions (field notes, December 2, 2014). In this observation and instances like these, the scripted curriculum did not provide opportunities for students to express themselves and it did not provide ways for teachers to know their students beyond the objectives set by a given lesson.

Teachers recognized that the scripted curriculum did not offer them a holistic view of what their students could do. Karla noted, "Programs give you, you know, step-by-step instructions, but not the big picture" (December 8, 2014). Because teachers primarily focused on what students could do in English through standardized curricula, they held an incomplete view of their students' capabilities.

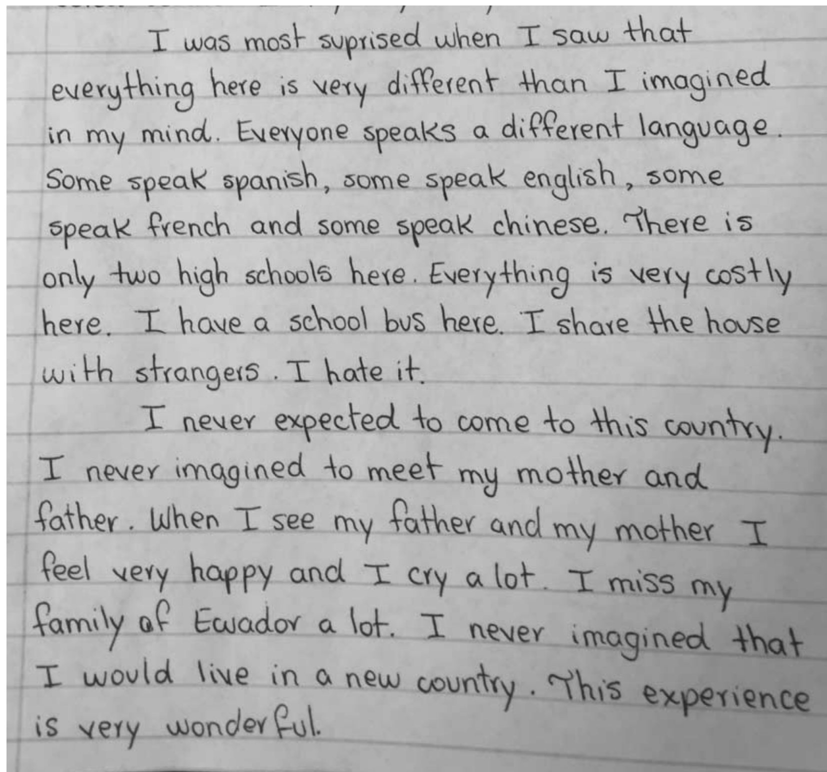
These examples reflect the discourse that surrounded teachers and shaped not only how they talked about their students but also what they envisioned as instructional responses to the needs of their students. Teachers viewed their recently arrived emergent bilinguals filtered through labels and a scripted curriculum, which provided a partial view of their students. Consequently, teachers did not note the resources, language or otherwise, that students came to school with and thus did not actively or fully fashion literacy instruction tied to their students' lives.

During the first sessions of the study group, we thought about the ways teachers could implement translanguaging pedagogy within their writing instruction in the ENL classes. We did this through discussions of readings and by trying out practical strategies in our study group, such as free writes and double-entry journals (Wang and Zheng 2014). As a result of the introduction and discussion of these techniques, teachers began to invite students to translanguage within the bounds of their scripted curriculum. For example, if students had to write a short response to a reading passage, then they offered students the opportunity to do it in their home language first. In the following quotation, Diana shares her surprise when she views the outcome of one of her student's first tries at translanguaging during writing:

"I wanted them to develop paragraphs just to see if they could do this. I said to write in any language—free write. I gave them prompts and they were meaningful, and this is what my SIFE student produced. He produced it in Spanish. I was just so impressed that he was able to write that much" (meeting, February 23, 2015). After also inviting her students to translanguage, Karla concurred with Diana. She appreciated that "it [translanguaging] is very inviting for students because they can enter wherever they are in their home language or English" (transcript, February 23, 2015). Through students' new translanguaging practices, teachers gained an appreciation of their students' writing habits, abilities, and learning styles.

The following anecdote demonstrates how, through translanguaging, Karla supported a student to access ideas and thinking and thus actively participate in the writing process. This experience helped Karla gain insight into her student's habits and attitudes as a writer. Karla noted that one of her students from Haiti had some literacy in Haitian Creole but low confidence in producing text in English. Karla thought that translanguaging could provide a productive outlet for this student's literacy work. Although Karla does not know Haitian Creole, she has a good knowledge of French, and she asked her student to write the autobiography in her home language. Once her student wrote it, Karla could then use it as a platform from which to elicit writing in English (interview, January 6, 2016). Karla did this by asking her student to read her writing in Haitian Creole aloud to her. The student then, using the English she knew, explained what she could. Karla also provided help in translating the Haitian-Creole text to English to the best of her ability. After this experience, she asked her student to write the autobiography in English. Karla relates that this experience allowed her to see how the student, who alternatively would have written nothing, could make meaning through engagements in writing, speaking, and translanguaging when given the opportunity to use home language (interview, January 6, 2016). In the process, Karla was also able to see her student in a new way. Karla could discern that the student could write in Haitian Creole, had the ability to do some translation, and was able to use translanguaging as a platform to move into English.

Students' translanguaging work also provided teachers with an indispensable window into students' lives. In the following excerpt of a student's response to prompts, a student in Diana's class provides important details about how she experiences life in the United States (fig. 1). The excerpt is taken from a longer writing piece in which the student first wrote an autobiographical story in Spanish and then wrote a different story in English, yet in the same genre.


I was most suprised when I saw that everything here is very different than I imagined in my mind. Everyone speaks a different language. Some speak spanish, some speak english, some speak french and some speak chinese. There is only two high schools here. Everything is very costly here. I have a school bus here. I share the house with strangers. I hate it.

I never expected to come to this country. I never imagined to meet my mother and father. When I see my father and my mother I feel very happy and I cry a lot. I miss my family of Ecuador a lot. I never imagined that I would live in a new country. This experience is very wonderful.

Fig. 1. Excerpt of Student Autobiography

In reading this excerpt, it is evident that the student has confronted a myriad of changes in coming to the United States. She demonstrates conflicted feelings about these experiences. From reading each of her students' responses about how they experience life as an immigrant, Diana learned about students' individual experiences, feelings, and attitudes about their lives.

In reflecting about what they learned about their students, Karla and Diana talked about how important it was to learn about their students' experiences as immigrants. Both teachers spoke about how some students needed to find work and stood along the main roads waiting to be picked up for day jobs in the spring. They talked about the additional challenges facing undocumented students. They learned through student writing about how these students fear being snatched up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and how it affects these students' sense of hope and motivation in class. They clearly noted how different it is to teach students who have

a legal status from those who do not (field notes, January 6, 2016). Knowing about students' experiences was fundamental to how the teachers related to and supported students. For example, Diana hosted her emergent bilinguals daily during their shared lunch period in her classroom to eat and talk. Both teachers encouraged their students to write about their home lives, work, and issues surrounding their adjustment to life in a new country (field notes, January 6, 2016). Knowledge about students' lives holistically strengthened teachers' resolve to enact pedagogy that was authentic, as described in the next section.

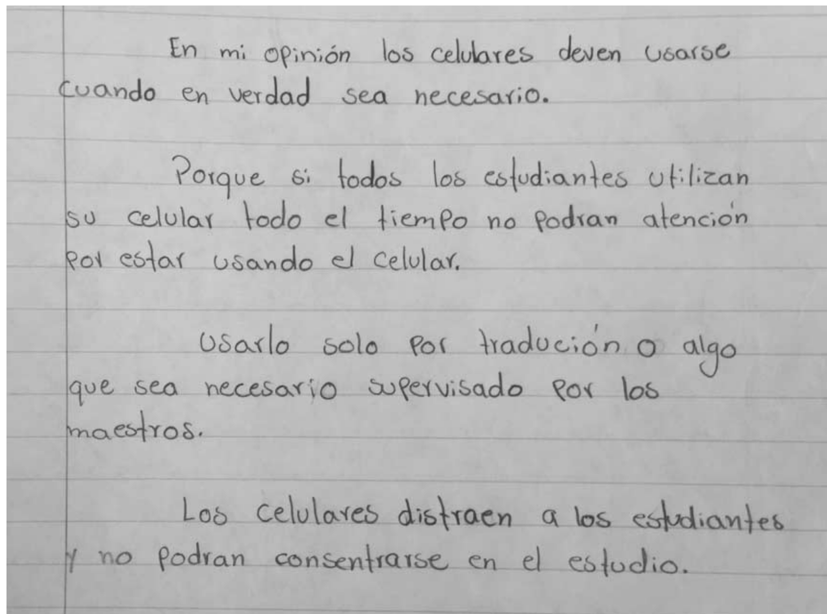
As teachers asked students to draw on both their linguistic and social resources with more frequency, they began to learn about them in ways that were crucial to instruction. For example, Diana's assumptions about her students were challenged and expanded as she inquired about details of their linguistic lives: "We are getting more and more kids from Ecuador. I never knew they spoke Quechua. I just thought that they knew Spanish. You speak to them in Spanish thinking that they understand, and they are totally blank. Spanish is a second language for them. So in order to learn the simple present tense, I had to look up what the grammatical structure of the simple present tense was in Quechua, and I taught it in three languages: English, Spanish, and Quechua" (interview, January 6, 2016). This quote demonstrates the mutually shaping nature of teachers' shifting conceptualizations of their students and changes in pedagogy. When Diana realized her students' first language was Quechua, she adapted her teaching and incorporated these home language practices into instruction, even though they were foreign to her.

In this section, the contrast between the movement from viewing students as a category ("beginners") to seeing them as multidimensional people reframes how teachers viewed their role in supporting emergent bilinguals (Kleyn 2016). Teachers gave increasing value to investigating who the students were and what resources they possessed, even after the work of the study group finished. In the following quote, Diana speaks to this point in our follow-up interview: "We are teaching a population of students we know little about culturally, socially, and economically. We have very little training on that. You cannot separate somebody's culture from who they are as learners. And I find that this is the missing piece for us. We need to know more about who they are as people" (interview, January 6, 2016). As indicated in this section, changes in how students were perceived occurred in tandem with pedagogical changes. In the following section, I highlight how teachers used agency in making shifts within their writing instruction.

Teacher Agency in Pedagogy

Inviting students to engage in translanguaging opened up a route for teachers to learn more about their students. It also provided teachers with the motivation to expand their teaching practices so that students would have opportunities to draw on their linguistic and social resources. Early on during our study group sessions, teachers asked students to respond to curricular-based prompts in their home language. In the following example (see fig. 2), a student answers questions to prompts about cellular phone use in schools in her home language. Here is the translation:

> In my opinion, you should use cell phone only when it's really necessary.
> Because if all students used their cell phone all the time, they couldn't pay attention because they were using the cell phone.
> Using it only for translation or something which is necessary and supervised by teachers.
> Cell phones distract students and they can't concentrate on their studies.



En mi opinión los celulares deven usarse cuando en verdad sea necesario.

Porque si todos los estudiantes utilizan su celular todo el tiempo no podran atención por estar usando el celular.

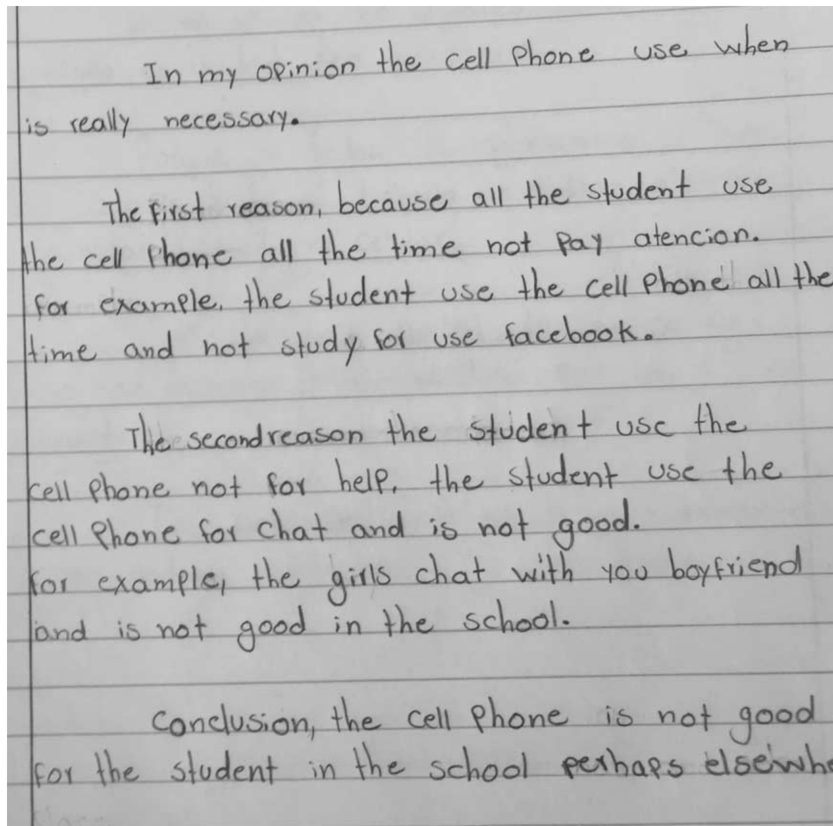
Usarlo solo por tradución o algo que sea necesario supervisado por los maestros.

Los celulares distraen a los estudiantes y no podran consentrarse en el estudio.

Fig. 2. Student Response in Spanish to Prompts

Once students responded to the prompts in Spanish, they discussed with peers and their teacher the ideas that they wanted to expand in their English version. Figure 3, the student's version in English, demonstrates that the core ideas that the student identified in Spanish were expanded in her English version through the addition of examples, and some ideas have even changed. Karla also noted that her students were motivated to translate this writing into English because they were invested in the ideas that they had put on paper (March 3, 2015).

Adopting translanguaging pedagogy to support student thinking was a departure from the practices that teachers regularly engaged in to support their students' writing in English, which was focused on vocabulary development and grammatical rules, as described earlier. It is important to note that as teachers started using translanguaging, they remained committed to



In my opinion the cell Phone use when
is really necessary.

The first reason, because all the student use
the cell Phone all the time not pay atencion.
for example. the student use the cell Phone all the
time and not study for use facebook.

The secondreason the student use the
cell Phone not for help. the student use the
cell Phone for chat and is not good.
for example, the girls chat with you boyfriend
and is not good in the school.

Conclusion, the cell Phone is not good
for the student in the school perhaps elsewhe

Fig. 3. Student Work in English after Translanguaging

meeting the goals of the ENL classrooms with their students. Yet, through students' engagement in translanguaging, they saw that students could develop their thoughts in their home language, thus affecting their work in English.

As Karla and Diana saw that translanguaging pedagogy helped students to think and connect to topics, also described by Fu (2009), teachers offered students opportunities to use translanguage practices with more frequency. The positive impact of translanguaging on student writing was the starting point for driving the teachers' pedagogical shifts.

Diana explained that her work with students now focuses more on having students think deeply about the topics they will discuss and write about. Although this point may seem obvious, within the context in which Diana was teaching, the pressure to teach students to perform in English (i.e., to demonstrate knowledge of particular vocabulary words and sentence structures) was prioritized over thinking. As Diana noted, "I always encourage them to think. I say you think better in your language. You think deeply and analyze it better. Translating is easier compared with actually thinking and writing in a different language. I have some writing samples from this class where they wrote an opinion statement, and I can just see the richness of their writing" (interview, January 6, 2017).

The teachers' classroom practices moved as a result of engaging in translanguaging pedagogy from those focused on discrete English competencies to engaging, thinking, and writing about ideas in tandem with English acquisition. From these successes with translanguaging pedagogy, teachers felt motivated to further adapt the scripted curriculum beyond the insertion of translanguaging opportunities. Diana describes how she adapted the curriculum by asking students to connect to a culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate text. With this assignment, students could choose to translanguage, if they thought it would assist their work. She states: "So we used a quotation, and we tried to connect it to something that we could relate to. We were doing a memoir by John Leguizamo, and he said, 'I don't want to be a loser all my life.' That one was one of those quotes that really connected with the students. The girls, the boys, they all had a reaction to that. So they were able to really capture their thoughts on paper" (interview, January 6, 2016).

This quote is representative of the developing agency that teachers employed to adapt and supplement the scripted curriculum. As teachers began to draw on students' linguistic and social resources, they began both to know them more and to integrate instructional techniques to engage students through these resources. The following quote speaks to this point. Diana

describes that she now always includes a connection to students' lives when she asks students to respond to writing: "So with every text-dependent question, there are always one or two questions that ask, How does this relate to you? How does this influence you? What do you think the meaning of this is? Have you had this experience in your life?" (interview, January 6, 2017).

Overall, the data analysis indicates that as teachers engaged with ideas about translanguaging pedagogy, they became more invested in supporting the recently arrived emergent bilingual students holistically as a way to reach outcomes rather than solely delivering the scripted curriculum. Teachers became more confident in making adjustments to the curriculum and exerted agency in doing so. These changes went hand in hand with teachers' understanding of their recently arrived emergent bilinguals' literate abilities and lives. They voiced the need to continually explore and expand what they know about their students to attune their teaching to them.

Implications and Conclusion

The case study presents the change that is possible when teachers are engaged in uncovering the complexity of the emergent bilingual students they teach. The data illustrate the dynamic relationship between teachers' shifting conceptualizations of their recently arrived emergent bilinguals and the innovative pedagogical practices they employed.

Teachers moved from definitions of their students that classified them based on their language proficiency (lack of English) to expanded views of their students, which recognized the important resources that students bring to the classroom. Based on their enhanced view of students, teachers were able to exhibit agency in shaping pedagogy. In adopting the use of students' home languages more frequently in their teaching, the teachers acknowledged and valued the importance of recognizing and building on students' entire language and social repertoire. This shift is important for the secondary academic setting, as the use of students' home language or other resources (e.g., dialects and out-of-school social practices) are rarely brought into student learning, in particular in the ENL context (García 2014). Teachers redefined the outcomes that they expected of their students to include their connection and engagement to learning, thus moving beyond the outcomes laid out by the scripted curriculum and state standards. Although challenging, teachers who do not speak the languages of their students can engage students in translanguaging to develop content, to increase their participation in classroom activities, and to provide a platform for learning English (see Vogel 2017).

The findings in this study have implications for teachers working in urban areas where the emergent bilingual population is constantly shifting and changing. It is critical that teacher candidates and practicing teachers have opportunities to learn about emergent bilinguals through specialized coursework with bilingual experts to develop deep understanding of the needs of these students (Goulah and Soltero 2015). Teachers must actively engage in understanding their recently arrived students to enhance their knowledge about them and to attune their teaching to build on students' resources and capabilities, as advocated by Kibler and Roman (2013). This is particularly important given the current political overlay that positions some recently arrived emergent bilinguals as "illegal" and as a burden and a threat to the country. These types of discourses are damaging and divisive in general but also solidify the idea that recently arrived emergent bilinguals in schools are uniformly needy, bring few resources to school, and need to learn English through English-only methods. The call for teachers to interrupt these trends is more vital today than ever.

Where then do we go from here? How can teachers be encouraged to see their recently arrived emergent bilinguals through the lens of diversity? How can teachers be supported as they develop translanguaging lenses?

The role of teachers of emergent bilinguals is clear: they must be continual learners and advocates for their students (Cochran-Smith 2011; Téllez and Varghese 2013). Opportunities for professional development, such as a collaborative study group like the one described, can be an opportunity for questioning, inquiring, testing, and developing knowledge that leverages the capabilities of students (Molle 2013). It is important that this work be context rich and place based (Ajayi 2014). As recently arrived emergent bilinguals move into metropolitan areas, it is not only their own diversity that should be investigated but also how they adjust to their new environment. This research provides evidence that positive change for emergent bilinguals must be constructed from the bottom up. Teachers should be encouraged to inquire into who their students are and to understand what resources they bring into the classroom in order to forge innovative ways of working with them rather than relying solely on a scripted curriculum and static categorizations of students.

It is also important that school administrators allow for teacher innovation and agency within the curriculum, with the recognition that home language has a unique, powerful, and transformative role in emergent bilingual student learning. Although administrators may provide resources to teachers, such as curricula, they also should provide a clear message that the ultimate goal is to provide meaningful instruction and to encourage teachers

to craft pedagogical moves to truly match students' needs. These instructional shifts include the use of home language as well as providing students with topics that are culturally relevant and age appropriate. In addition, administrators can serve as powerful role models by resisting the use of terms for emergent bilinguals (ELLs, LEP, etc.) that provide homogenous and partial views of them. This reflective use of terminology can also be taken up by teachers across the school. Although pedagogical approaches alone will not change the status and educational opportunities available to recently arrived emergent bilinguals (Flores and Rosa 2015), the value of interrupting dominant discourses about these students is a necessary step to support teachers in crafting a vision and practice that truly support them.

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