Translanguaging and Responsive Assessment Adaptations: Emergent Bilingual Readers through the Lens of Possibility

This study examines how teachers adapt formative reading assessments for emergent bilinguals by making space for their students’ multilingual language practices.

On a crisp October morning, Ella (all names are pseudonyms), an English as a New Language teacher (ENL) sits with Santiago, one of her fifth-grade students, and listens to him read. She notes information about his reading behaviors, miscues, and comprehension. Like other teachers across the country, Ella uses formative reading assessments to gain insight into her students’ reading processes. For all teachers, piecing together information from these assessments to make sense of and support a child’s reading development is a complex task. Yet, for teachers who work with emergent bilinguals, understanding how their rich language resources play into their reading development adds another layer of challenge that warrants educators’ critical consideration.

While Ella assesses Santiago in English, she provides carefully thought-out opportunities for him to use his home language resources, such as encouraging him to explain his miscues in Spanish. During the assessment, she documents ways in which the breadth of his language skills may impact his reading. By making space for students’ home language practices within assessment, Ella, along with the other teachers in this article, engage in an important departure from the widespread monolingual practices that mark how formative reading assessments are currently administered and analyzed (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2016; García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). These teachers’ practices demonstrate an increased awareness of the crucial role that emergent bilinguals’ home languages play in their literacy development (Souto-Manning, 2016). Namely, these teachers have adjusted the reading assessment process to include opportunities for translanguaging, allowing students to draw upon the full span of their language and social resources to make meaning of their literacy experiences (García & Wei, 2014).

Emergent bilinguals have the gift of speaking two or more languages (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Being bilingual offers a variety of benefits, such as the capacity to interact with a range of people, the ability to connect to different cultures through language, as well as an understanding and appreciation of how different languages are structured and relate to each other (Bialystok, 2007; Proctor, August, Snow, & Barr, 2010). Bilingualism is an integral part of students’ identities and should be respected and valued in the classroom (Souto-Manning, 2016; Zapata & Laman, 2016). When I refer to emergent bilingual readers, the
Bilingualism is an integral part of students’ identities and should be respected and valued in the classroom.

First, I present an overview of translanguaging and its intersection with accommodations and reading assessment research. Next, I introduce the teachers in the study and their school contexts. I then describe the types of responsive adaptations that teachers implemented and highlight how these provide an important message to students about the value of their home language as they learn to read English even as they simultaneously offer teachers a better means to understand and support their students as readers. Finally, I outline implications to support teachers as they seek out ways to infuse the formative reading assessment process with opportunities for translanguaging. It is my hope that this article assists teachers across a variety of programs (English as a New Language, Dual Language Bilingual, English mainstream) to envision equitable reading assessment practices that incorporate adaptations to align with emergent bilinguals’ needs.

The Intersection of Translanguaging, Formative Reading Assessments, and Accommodations

To set the stage for this study, I place three distinct fields of education research alongside each other: translanguaging and reading, formative reading assessments, and accommodations.

Translanguaging and Reading

The concept of translanguaging has highlighted the essential role that emergent bilinguals’ linguistic and social resources have in their learning and meaning-making in classrooms (García & Kleyn, 2016). A translanguaging lens provides teachers with a novel way to understand students’ language practices as dynamic and as socially constructed (Palmer & Martínez, 2016). Translanguaging is defined as “the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically (and usually national and state) defined boundaries of named languages” (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015, p. 283). In other words, as emergent bilinguals read, write, learn, and communicate, they draw on diverse linguistic features and resources from a singular linguistic repertoire. For example, an emergent bilingual may listen to a teacher read a book aloud, but engage in a turn-and-talk about that text in Spanish. Or she may write a piece mostly in English, but include dialogue from her mom’s voice in her home language. These examples demonstrate that when emergent bilinguals access their entire pool of resources and are not limited to using language features from socially constructed language categories such as “English” or “Spanish,” they fluidly and creatively participate in learning.

It is important to note that translanguaging is a different way of viewing and interpreting bilingual language performances than another prevalent theory, code-switching. The concept of code-switching is based on the premise that emergent
Laura Ascenzi-Moreno | TRANSLANGUAGING AND RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT ADAPTATIONS

bilinguals “switch” between languages that exist independently from each other (García et al., 2017). In contrast, translanguaging emphasizes that from the emergent bilinguals’ internal perspective, they are flexibly selecting features from their own unique and singular linguistic repertoire. There are multiple dimensions of translanguaging pedagogy for students; when emergent bilinguals use their varied features from their linguistic repertoire, they are able to access and participate in learning events. Likewise, opening up opportunities for translanguaging in the classroom sends an important message to emergent bilinguals that their multilingual practices and their experiences are essential to their development as meaning makers (Zapata & Laman, 2016).

Through a translanguaging lens, reading has been reenvisioned as a “unified process” (Kabuto, 2017). As a unified process, students draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire as they learn to read rather than solely calling forth resources in one language (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2016; Kabuto, 2017). In describing reading as a unified process, Kabuto (2017) writes, “Regardless of syntactic and semantic features and graphic forms that make up written language systems, bilingual readers draw upon a range of linguistic features within a language or across languages to demonstrate their understandings of written text” (p. 28). In other words, from a translanguaging perspective, reading “transcends language borders” (Kabuto, 2017, p. 39) as students make meaning of written texts through the use of the full span of their language and social resources.

For instance, while a student reads Spanish, she may think about the characters in English and then compare her thoughts about this text to an experience she had in Spanish with her family. In this example, the student participates in the reading process by accessing memories, skills, and abilities using her entire linguistic and social repertoire. If the teacher only allowed the student to think and participate in reading in one language, such as English, then her ability to comprehend the text, connect to it, and express her understanding would be curtailed. Ideas, strategies, and skills that help students comprehend text can be used dynamically across languages. Thus, when reading is viewed as a unified process, teachers can support emergent bilinguals’ reading development by acknowledging and encouraging them to use their entire linguistic repertoire as they read. Therefore, a translanguaging lens on reading as a unified process has ramifications for how we assess the emergent bilingual readers in our classroom.

Formative Reading Assessments

In this article, I focus on both informal reading inventories (IRIs) and running records and refer to them as formative reading assessments. Both of these assessments aim to capture students’ contextual reading behaviors and habits. It is well known that the documentation and observation of students’ efforts and responses during reading offers teachers essential information to shape instruction (Clay, 2000; Fountas & Pinnell, 2000). These assessments are generally considered powerful, particularly for emergent bilinguals, because through observation and documentation, teachers can capture the language students use (Gandy, 2013).

Yet, the formative reading assessment process has most often been a monolingual endeavor across different programs types (ENL, Dual Language Bilingual, English mainstream) (Sánchez et al., 2013; Shohamy, 2011). Even within Dual Language Bilingual (DLB) programs, where students are instructed in two languages, teachers adhere to administering and analyzing their emergent bilingual readers in English and Spanish, without understanding how students fluidly use features from both to read (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2016). The belief that the fastest pathway to language acquisition is through English-only methods (Menken & Solorza, 2015) seeps into the assessment process. Teachers express that to be “faithful” to the assessment, they feel obliged to conduct them monolingually. However, when teachers limit emergent bilinguals’ reading performance to one language, they are not able to detect and respond to the full span of their students’ reading abilities, leading to a partial and inaccurate assessment of students. In this study, I focus on the reading passage portions of formative reading assessments, which include various components...
Laura Ascenzi-Moreno | TRANSLANGUAGING AND RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT ADAPTATIONS

Table 1. Components of formative reading assessments, general format, and responsive adaptations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to text</td>
<td>Teachers provide an introduction to the text monolingually.</td>
<td>Teachers can make culturally relevant connections, using English and the home language, to the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers ask the students about their prior knowledge monolingually.</td>
<td>Teachers can elicit prior knowledge through English and the home language, or both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to and documenting student reading</td>
<td>Teachers listen to and document student reading for miscues and fluency monolingually.</td>
<td>Teachers create columns for language and pronunciation in addition to traditional miscues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retell</td>
<td>Teachers ask students to retell the text monolingually.</td>
<td>Teachers invite students to retell the text in English and the home language, or both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Teachers relate to students their impressions of their reading and pinpoint their reading level.</td>
<td>Teachers provide feedback to target both students’ reading abilities across languages and emerging language features.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the fact that teachers most often administer these assessments monolingually, without making adjustments for emergent bilinguals, the research body on accommodations has addressed ways to make assessment practices for emergent bilinguals more accurate and equitable.

**Accommodations**

Even if emergent bilinguals are expected to perform monolingually, they bring their linguistic repertoire comprised of features from multiple languages to assessment contexts (Bedore, Pena, García, & Cortez, 2005). In the following case, an emergent bilingual counts from one to ten: “one, two, three, cuatro, cinco, seis, etc.” Through his language practices, he demonstrates that he knows how to sequence numbers, yet draws from features of English and Spanish to do so. Bedore et al. (2005) caution that within the context of assessment, “single language measures ignore the fact that bilingual children may choose to use different words depending on the setting, interlocutor, and context” (p. 190). There is agreement among scholars that when emergent bilinguals are required to answer in only one language during an assessment, they are placed at a disadvantage because they use only a portion of their language abilities (Sánchez et al., 2013; Shohamy, 2011). Teachers may not obtain a true “reading” of their emergent bilinguals’ abilities if a space for students’ language practices within assessments does not exist (González, 2012).

One way the issue of proper assessment of emergent bilinguals has been addressed is through studies on accommodations. Accommodations for emergent bilinguals should be designed to lessen the linguistic demand of the assessment (Abedi, 2009). Extended time, translations, and bilingual dictionaries are some of the most common accommodations for emergent bilinguals, despite the lack of evidence that they lessen the linguistic demands of an assessment (Abedi, Hofstetter, & Lord, 2004). For accommodations to be effective, Abedi (2009) maintains that they need to target students’ unique linguistic profiles. For instance, a student may be offered extra time on a test, but this accommodation will not decrease the difficulty the student may have in comprehending the language of the test questions. Acosta, Rivera, and Willner (2008) also report that test accommodations are often too generalized to provide the required support students need to accurately manifest their skills. The static and generic nature of accommodations reduces their effectiveness. Accommodations research, therefore, provides an incomplete response to the question of how to ensure that assessments truly measure emergent bilinguals’ skills and knowledge and not simply their language competencies.

Assessment practices that are flexible, malleable, and specifically designed with an eye toward language of the individual hold the potential
Ella’s school participated in two years of professional development on translanguaging pedagogy, which I provided. Ella was a teacher-leader during this initiative, sitting on a schoolwide committee of teachers that consulted on the focus of professional development. Ella is in her 15th year of teaching ENL. Her day is divided into co-teaching with general classroom teachers and “pull-out” instruction with emergent bilinguals. Ella knows some Spanish and uses it intentionally with her students.

Responsive adaptations to formative reading assessments make room for students’ language practices through opportunities for translanguaging (see Table 1 for examples of responsive adaptations). These adaptations need not be thought of as a new set of procedures, but rather as flexible ways of responding to students. Through these adaptations, the relationship that teachers have with their students via the assessment is paramount; teachers can respond and be attuned to what they learn about the child’s reading, including the language features they draw upon while they read and respond to text. In this study, the assessment practices of three teachers who work with emergent bilinguals are explored and provide a means to understand how translanguaging within the formative reading assessment process leads to both a more accurate picture of students’ reading abilities and a deeper understanding of the journey of an emergent bilingual reader.

Context and Methods

This research took place with three teachers at two public elementary schools. Ella works at the Willow School, which is located in a suburb of a large city. A banner with the school’s motto: “Dream and Believe, Learn and Achieve” in four languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, and Italian) hangs at the entrance. The school has undergone a demographic change in the past 10 years. From primarily having English-speaking students, the school now has a sizable population of Spanish-speaking students across all grade levels. The majority of students in the early childhood grades (K–2) are now emergent bilinguals hailing from Central and South America. Because of this demographic shift, for accurately assessing emergent bilinguals. A translanguaging lens on assessment can provide further assistance in directing teachers on how to adapt formative assessments for accuracy. According to García et al. (2017), assessments of emergent bilinguals should be designed to capture students’ general linguistic and language-specific abilities; that is, teachers can note if students are “using all the features of his or her language repertoire and/or using language-specific features” (p. 86).

Responsive adaptations to formative reading assessments make room for students’ language practices through opportunities for translanguaging (see Table 1 for examples of responsive adaptations). These adaptations need not be thought of as a new set of procedures, but rather as flexible ways of responding to students. Through these adaptations, the relationship that teachers have with their students via the assessment is paramount; teachers can respond and be attuned to what they learn about the child’s reading, including the language features they draw upon while they read and respond to text. In this study, the assessment practices of three teachers who work with emergent bilinguals are explored and provide a means to understand how translanguaging within the formative reading assessment process leads to both a more accurate picture of students’ reading abilities and a deeper understanding of the journey of an emergent bilingual reader.

Anaïs is a second-grade teacher and Fabienne is a fifth-grade teacher in the French-English DLB program at the Channel School, which is in an urban community. Anaïs has been a teacher at the school for 8 years and Fabienne is in her second year of teaching. Both are French-English speakers who learned French as their new language. The French-English DLB program is a small one, with two classes per grade level. Its goals are to support students to be bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural through the teaching of two languages. It is a highly desired program and has attracted French expatriates to this neighborhood. Both teachers self-selected to be part of the research. Although these teachers were not part of sustained professional development on translanguaging, they were familiar with the concept.

I used a case study approach to focus on teachers’ responsive adaptations of formative assessments over the course of one academic year. Administrators at both schools requested that teachers implement formative, periodic reading assessments with their students. Ella used the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and also conducted running records using ENL-designated guided reading books, while the teachers at the Channel School used the Teachers College Reading and
Assessing Emergent Bilingual Readers: Striving for Accuracy and Equity

Essential to teachers’ implementation of responsive adaptations was their view that emergent bilinguals are capable and full of resources. In her reflective memo, Ella writes, “I believe we can assess students from a strengths-based perspective, valuing their emerging bilingualism, instead of a deficit perspective where we only consider what they don’t know and can’t yet do” (reflective memo, 2017).

In the findings, I highlight the three themes identified in the data analysis: the documentation of student miscues, student retells that incorporate home language, and the provision of feedback to students. In doing so, I showcase how responsive adaptations can infuse the entire formative reading assessment process (see Table 1). All three teachers are featured in the findings, but more emphasis is placed on Ella’s work to offer readers an in-depth description of one teacher’s practice.

Documenting Emergent Bilinguals’ Miscues: Ella’s Practice in an ENL Setting

Santiago, a fifth grader and one of Ella’s students, walked confidently into her room for ENL support. He smiled and sat down next to her waiting for instructions. Ella pulled A Giant in the Forest, a text from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Santiago is from Guatemala and has been in the US for three years. It is his second year at Willow. While Santiago was learning English quickly, his reading continued to demonstrate miscues (students’ deviations from the text they are reading) that are characteristic of an emergent bilingual who is learning the intricacies of English grammar and pronunciation along with the breadth of vocabulary required of readers in general.

Ella’s principal asked her to write a reflective memo about her formative reading assessment work, which she shared with me; this memo was incorporated into the body of data collected. I used open-coding of all the data to identify patterns within the responsive adaptations teachers implemented (Charmaz, 2010; Creswell, 2012). All observational notes, fieldnotes, and transcribed interviews were coded to capture 1) trends in the type of responsive adaptations teachers used; 2) the reasoning behind teachers’ responsively adapted reading assessments; 3) teachers’ perceptions and attitudes about the pedagogical importance of the adaptations. Once the data was coded, I identified themes. These themes include: the documentation of student miscues, student retells that incorporate home language, and the provision of feedback to students. I then reread the data to identify examples that would offer readers a window into how responsive adaptations can be enacted in classrooms along with the possibilities they offer teachers for understanding students’ reading development. Through the examples, I hope to highlight the complexities in conducting this work. An earlier draft of this article was sent to the teachers for comments, and their feedback was incorporated into this article.
**Figure 1.** Ella’s documentation of Santiago’s miscues

**Differentiated Miscue Analysis Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Santiago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text:</td>
<td>A Giant in the Forest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text/Teacher Documentation of Student Reading:</th>
<th>S/C</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every week the little boy’s mother gave him a big bar of soap. Then she sent him to the lake to take a bath.</td>
<td><strong>S/C</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You’ll be safe in the lake because the giant can’t swim,” she always said. “But don’t forget to be home before dark.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One day when the little boy was going to take his bath, he saw a baby bird on the ground. It had fallen out of its nest.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The boy put the bird back in its nest.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of Miscues:
- S/C = Self Correction
- M = Meaning
- V = Visual
- S = Syntactical
- L = Language
- P = Pronunciation

*Language Arts*, Volume 95, Number 6, July 2018
to the three cueing systems—meaning, visual, and syntactical—that teachers typically use to analyze miscues (Goodman, 1969), she included one column for miscues related to pronunciation and one related to language, such as new vocabulary. This adaptation allowed her to compile a differentiated list of miscues that served as a placeholder for further exploration and analysis.

By the end of his reading, Ella had documented some of his miscues, such as “beard” for “bird” and “failen” for “fallen,” that she wanted to follow-up on. She asked Santiago to clarify his understanding of these words. When she asked him about the word he pronounced as “beard,” Santiago pointed to the picture in the text and said, “pájaro,” which means bird in English. By checking in with Santiago about his miscue and welcoming his response in Spanish, Ella, who has a working knowledge of Spanish, decided his miscue was the result of pronunciation rather than unfamiliar vocabulary or a visual miscue (attending to the visual information in the word). Thus, she said to him, “When we say the name of this creature, we call it a bird” (observation 1/24/2017). She continued to investigate what Santiago meant when he said “failen” for “fallen,” and once again it was a matter of pronunciation.

Her curiosity about his miscues led to clarification that has important implications for Ella as a teacher and Santiago as a reader. Ella’s guiding principle of viewing Santiago through what he could do allowed her to gain insight into how his emerging facility with English impacted his reading, and she used this knowledge to support him. This is different from a monolingual administration of a formative reading assessment, in which these miscues may be marked as errors.

Ella also created a space for dialogue in which Santiago could use his home language to clarify his miscues. In asking Santiago questions about his reading, he learned, albeit implicitly, that his teacher was interested in him as a reader and not acting solely as an assessor. In my personal experience as a teacher and now as a teacher educator, I have repeatedly heard teachers and students talk about formative reading assessments as “tests” and then take up a formal, non-interactive stance during the assessment. Ella’s informal conversation with Santiago is a departure from assessment practices in which the teacher and the student do not engage in constructive and informative dialogue that can directly impact practice. By noting Santiago’s language-specific miscues, Ella is taking up a translanguaging lens in this assessment, which allows her to isolate the features he needs to develop in English alongside his capabilities as a reader, capabilities that transcend language boundaries. Furthermore, Santiago’s multilingual capabilities are positioned as a strength, which aids in clarifying his miscues to his teacher.

**Students Retell in their Home Language: Examples from Ella’s and Anaïs’s Classrooms**

Ella and Anaïs made spaces for students’ language practices during the retell portion of the assessment so that students could fully and fluidly demonstrate their comprehension. I place vignettes from Ella’s and Anaïs’ classrooms alongside each other to demonstrate how responsive adaptations are flexible according to different students and different programmatic goals.

Yadira is a recently arrived fifth grader to the Willow School. Originally from Guatemala, she came to the US in December 2015 and has been at Willow since. As Yadira’s mother related to Ella, she did not attend Pre-K in Guatemala, but did have some schooling experiences. To assess Yadira, Ella pulled a book called *In the Rain* to begin a running record. The text is about two cousins, one from Vietnam and the other from the United States.

Once Yadira finished reading the text, Ella said to her, “Quiero que contestes algunas preguntas—en inglés o en español o en una combinación [I want you to answer some questions—in English or in Spanish or in a combination]” (observation 10/20/2016). Ella then gave her a sheet with comprehension questions in two languages (Figure 2). Yadira answered the questions in Spanish.

Ella responsively adapted this assessment in two ways. First, she provided Yadira with a choice of language(s) in which she could answer, thus allowing her to use the entirety of her language...
Laura Ascenzi-Moreno | TRANSLANGLUAGING AND RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT ADAPTATIONS

Figure 2. Yadira’s written response to a text [Here is a translation of her responses:

1. The problem was that it was raining.
2. The resolution is that Hai and his cousin put on an umbrella, boots, a hat, a sweater for the rain.
3. The story ends with Hai and his cousin going out to get wet and playing in the rain.]

Name __________________________ Date ______

I can show I understand the book In the Rain!

1. What was the problem in the story?
   ¿Cuál fue el problema en la historia?
   ______

2. What did the characters do to solve the problem?
   ¿Qué es lo que hacen los personajes para resolver el problema?
   ______

3. How did the story end?
   ¿Cómo terminó la historia?
   ______

Yadira’s responses provided Ella with multiple levels of meaning that otherwise would have been obscured if Yadira was asked to perform exclusively in English. First, her responses demonstrated her comprehension. Additionally, the teacher that can read Spanish or is able to seek assistance from a Spanish speaker to analyze the responses would flag certain aspects of Yadira’s response. In the second question, Yadira writes “i” for the Spanish word “y” (and) and writes “lo resolver” (it solve) instead of “la resolución” (the resolution). While these errors will not be discussed at length, they do signal that Yadira’s Spanish language writing skills are not commensurate to what is considered fifth-grade writing in Spanish. These noticings are important in compiling a profile of Yadira’s holistic literacy skills and what supports she may need.

When Ella opened the opportunity for Yadira to communicate what she understood about the text using the entirety of her language practices, she focused on the student’s comprehension, regardless of the language it was expressed in, thus positioning Yadira’s reading as a unified process as conceptualized through a translanguaging perspective. Yet, it is clear from the writing sample that Yadira has some struggles in writing in her home language. This information is important to the teacher in contemplating how to support her overall development as a reader. The Willow School serves emergent bilinguals through an ENL program and does not have a bilingual program. Despite not having a bilingual program, teachers have acquired home language resources consisting of bilingual and Spanish language books (Palmer & Martínez, 2016).

In another classroom, Anaïs read with Clover, a student of American and French heritage who speaks English at home. It was a “French day” for the second-grade students at the Channel School—meaning all instruction was provided in French and students were expected to do their work in that language. Clover has been a student in the French DLB program since Kindergarten. The text Anaïs chose...
for the French running record is called *En Retard a l’Ecole* (*Late to School*), a selection from the formative reading assessment kit in French that the school uses.

Once Clover completed the reading, Anaïs asked her in French, “Now can you tell me the story?” Clover quickly asked if she could do her retell in English. Anaïs suggested that she would like Clover to try it in French, but if she didn’t know a word in French, she could say it in English. Clover then recounted the story of a brother and a sister, Anne and Felix, who can’t find their clothes as they get ready for school. In the end, the father takes them to school by car (and they are not late!). While Clover told her story mostly in French, there were some words sprinkled in English such as “drive” (*conduire* in French).

After the reading assessment, Anaïs communicated to me her rationale for encouraging Clover to retell the story in French. She explained that Clover, though hailing from a predominantly English-speaking home, speaks some French with her mother. Anaïs encouraged her to speak French during the retell to reach expressive goals set forth by the DLB program (interview, 11/14/2016). While Anaïs makes this decision, she leaves space for the student to use features from her linguistic repertoire during the retell. As Clover inserted some English words into her French retell, it allowed her to fluidly relate her understanding of the book. It also provided Anaïs with information about the type of vocabulary that Clover may need support in acquiring.

Anaïs’s example highlights that teachers can open up active spaces for students’ home language while ensuring that they meet specific language goals related to the program they are in (Allard, 2017). Through Clover’s retelling, Anaïs was able to determine that she could recount the story, but needed more support with unfamiliar vocabulary. Clover also received the message that her teacher wanted to hear her summary of the book, even if it contained English words. From this, Clover learned that her thinking about the book (using her entire linguistic repertoire) and her language development in French are both important. If Anaïs conducted this assessment monolingually, then Clover would be allowed to express her understanding of the reading exclusively in French. As a result, Anaïs would have a partial view of what Clover could do, and Clover would receive the message that her French language abilities trump the importance of communicating her understanding of the text.

The contrast between how Ella and Anaïs worked with Yadira and Clover exemplifies that translanguaging during retell may look different for each student, depending upon their unique language history and the goals that teachers shape for students—goals that are determined by what the teacher knows about the student as well as each program’s language objectives (Brooks, 2017). When teachers made the space for the students’ entire linguistic repertoire within the students’ retelling of text, they gleaned information about their students’ reading that would not have been possible if they stuck to a monolingual implementation of the assessment. More than merely permitting their students to alternate features from their languages, teachers reframed students’ expression of their comprehension as part of a unified process in which students’ entire linguistic repertoire could be drawn upon, rather than restricting students to only a portion of their linguistic resources. As a result, students are encouraged to forge their identities as multilingual readers.

**The Provision of Feedback to Students**

In this final section, I use two anecdotes to explore how teachers responsively adapted feedback they provided to students, thus linking what teachers learned about their students from the reading assessments to their students’ future reading practices. Communicating what teachers learn about the student through the assessment to him/her is critical to ensure that students use information from formative reading assessments to direct their own learning (Mahoney, 2017). As Afflerbach (2016) writes, “We want to use assessment that helps shift students from an outward orientation, where the dependence is on the teacher for assessment feedback, to one that looks inward” (p. 417).
In the first example, I return to Ella and Yadira. After Yadira finished her written responses to *In the Rain*, as described in the section above, Ella debriefed with her. Ella decided to provide this feedback in Spanish to ensure that Yadira understood her. She asked Yadira, “¿Sabes que corregiste a ti mismo lo que leíste? Hablamos de algunas palabras que eran difíciles. Vamos a trabajar más en algunas palabras. (You know that you corrected yourself as you read? We are going to talk about some of the words that were difficult. We are going to work more on some words.) (observation, 10/20/2016).

Through this feedback, Ella did two things: 1) she affirmed Yadira’s use of self-corrections, typically considered an important reading skill; 2) she identified some of the new English vocabulary in the text for Yadira to pay attention to. Ella’s feedback demonstrates the intentional ways in which she targets Yadira’s reading behaviors as well as specific goals for her language development in English. Through this move, Ella avoids an unbalanced focus on emergent bilinguals’ language-based errors (Brown, 2013). Rather, she has a twin focus on reading as a unified process and language-specific vocabulary.

In making the choice to provide feedback in Spanish, Ella sends the powerful message to Yadira that talking about reading can happen in any language. By providing feedback to Yadira about both her reading and language development, Ella supports her as a reader and as an emergent bilingual. In contrast, if she only focused on Yadira’s language-based miscues or lack of vocabulary, the implicit message to Yadira would be that only her language development in English was important, thus leaving her growth as a reader by the wayside.

The second example features Robert in Fabienne’s fifth-grade DLB classroom. Robert speaks English at home and is learning French. He’s been in the program since Kindergarten. As Robert read *La Leçon de Planche à Neige (The Snowboard Lesson)*, Fabienne took notes. His reading of the French text was slow and steady. When she asked him to retell the story, he was able to express his understanding of the book orally using mostly French. Like Clover in the previous section, it was apparent that he still needed to build specific vocabulary to retell entirely in French. In Robert’s case, when talking about the character’s emotions, he used words in English: “annoyed” and “surprised.” Thus, Fabienne knows that he may be missing this type of vocabulary as he reads, and this gap may impact his independent reading.

His retelling using some English provided Fabienne with important information about his language development that impacts his choices as a reader. Fabienne’s feedback to Robert takes into account that as someone learning French, he should evaluate the language in French books to find the right fit. Therefore, Fabienne suggested that he select books within bands of levels rather than books pegged to one level. Fabienne noted, “As opposed to directing students to one level . . . I usually tell them to read a little above and a little bit below” (interview, 12/09/2016). Her decision to advise her emergent bilinguals to choose books within bands stems from her belief that students will have “flexibility and it gives them more balance” as emergent bilingual readers (interview, 12/09/2016).

By seeing Robert through his language practices, Fabienne was able to provide feedback that supports him as a reader while acknowledging that he is still acquiring features of French. Like Afflerbach (2016), she views students as having an active role within the assessment process, and as such, they need to be given opportunities to select books based on their identities as emergent bilingual readers. Both Ella and Fabienne created opportunities for students to use home language practices throughout the reading assessment. Because they learned about their students as emergent bilingual readers, they gained a deeper understanding of how to provide feedback that simultaneously supports their reading as a unified process and the acquisition of features of the language they are learning.

**Discussion and Implications**

For Ella, Anaïs, and Fabienne, the purpose of the formative reading assessment was not solely a technical one (i.e., following a script to obtain a reading level or gather data), but was primarily a pedagogical one.
students to express their comprehension of text using their entire linguistic repertoire during various parts of the assessment, as the teachers did in this study. Teachers may decide to open up translanguaging spaces when they ask students about their prior knowledge, during retells, or while providing feedback to students about their reading. Encouraging student translanguaging is seamless when the teacher knows the language the child speaks. However, as Ella demonstrated, teachers can also ask students to write during the retell and then analyze the language with the assistance of a person who knows the language or through translation software such as Google Translate.

The findings also highlight the importance of identifying areas of strength and growth for both students’ language-specific skills and reading skills. As Ella demonstrated, once she analyzed her students’ reading performances, she could tease out, through analysis of miscues and retelling, which student errors were the result of needing to acquire language-specific knowledge (vocabulary, grammar, and language structures in a particular language) versus which areas indicated areas of need related to reading (making inferences, activating prior knowledge, expressing comprehension).

In addition to the implications above, the following questions may provide teachers with entry points for reflection about their reading assessment practices and beliefs: “What are my students’ language resources? How do my students use these while reading? Which responsive adaptations from the article can I incorporate into my formative reading assessments and why? What do I learn about my students’ reading and language practices through these adaptations? What can I do to support my students’ reading and/or language development as a result of what I learn about them?”

Collaborative Discussions about Formative Reading Practices

Emergent bilingual reading development happens over time and requires a sustained and cohesive approach across classrooms. Although the role of the individual teacher is vital, the process of teachers coming together to explore these issues and to
agree on common understandings is fundamen-
tal to the development of a purposeful language
policy as it affects formative assessment practices
(Allard, 2017). Thus, collaborative discussion about
how educators think of and implement formative
reading assessments for emergent bilinguals is key
to the creation of shared values and practices that
impact students over the span of their development
as emergent bilingual readers.

School faculty can collaboratively discuss the
following questions with the goal of impacting
assessment policy schoolwide: “What are the stu-
dents’ language resources at the school? What are
some responsive adaptations that can be adopted
across a grade or schoolwide? What reading and
language-based supports can we (or do we want to)
offer our emergent bilinguals schoolwide?”

Conclusion

The assessment community has long maintained
that evaluations developed for monolingual English
speakers but administered to emergent bilinguals
may not accurately measure what they intend
to (AERA, 2014). Likewise, the Standards for
the Assessment of Reading and Writing, issued
by the International Reading Association (IRA)
and the National Council of Teachers of English
(NCTE, 2009) argue for the use of home language
in assessments. It is clear that both the assessment
and literacy communities stand united in favor of
assessments that do not put emergent bilinguals at
a disadvantage for their multilingual abilities. Yet
formative reading assessment practices, as they
are implemented in classrooms, are often a static
and monolingual process (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2016;
Mahoney, 2017). In this study, teachers’ respon-
sive adaptations that allowed for students’ language
practices uncovered each child’s unique profile as a
reader and as a user of language.

The responsive adaptations implemented by
Ella, Anaïs, and Fabienne were rooted in a robust
conceptualization of bilingualism that recognizes
that students’ language practices are fundamental
to their reading (Palmer & Martínez, 2016). Rather
than being an undisciplined process of chang-
ing scripts or procedures for these assessments,
teachers’ use of adaptations suggest a deep under-
standing of reading as a unified process that is much
more than demonstrating features of named lan-
guages (i.e., English, Spanish, or French) (Otheguy
et al., 2015). Yet, teachers also acknowledged the
importance of specific language features required to
read in a given language.

When the teachers listened carefully to and
observed Santiago, Yadira, Clover, and Robert, they
gained insight into how these students develop read-
ing skills and express their comprehension through
their language practices. The adaptations teachers
implemented signaled a shift in teachers’ ideologies
from viewing reading development solely through
a monolingual lens to one in which reading exists
and can be supported through students’ diverse lan-
guage practices. These findings also have implica-
tions for teacher educators. As a teacher educator
who works with new and practicing teachers in hon-
ing their craft, the findings from this study spur me
to focus my efforts on:

1. aiding teachers to identify the language
   resources students bring to the classroom by
   asking students and their families about their
   home language practices;
2. forging a plan for implementing responsive
   adaptations by selecting one or two responsive
   adaptations that teachers will try out;
3. examining the data they collect about their
   students once they make a responsive adaptation
   and reflecting on what they have learned about
   students’ reading and language through it.

The work of rethinking and making adaptations
of formative reading assessments does not follow
a set formula, but can emerge from teachers’ dis-
ciplined explorations of who their students are and
how the formative assessment process could best
document the full range of emergent bilinguals’
abilities. For teachers who do not speak the lan-
guage of their students, this work is not unattain-
able, but can be facilitated with a combination of
creative solutions (such as asking students to write
or audio-record their responses) and the assistance
of colleagues, parents, and community members
who speak the languages of the students. The role
of technology (e.g., Google Translate) holds enormous potential in assisting teachers’ work with students who speak home languages they do not speak (Vogel, Ascenzi-Moreno, & García, 2018).

A translanguaging approach to assessments through responsive adaptations offers teachers an opportunity to construct an accurate portrait of emergent bilinguals’ skills and abilities in reading. When teachers value and enable translanguaging within this assessment context, students learn that their language resources are important to their reading in general, thus allowing them to construct their identities as emergent bilingual readers. Taking up the practice of responsive adaptations facilitates teacher learning about their emergent bilinguals in multifaceted ways and positions students as actors in their development as emergent bilingual readers.

Acknowledgements
Support for this project was provided by a PSC-CUNY Award, jointly funded by The Professional Staff Congress and The City University of New York as well as through the Faculty Fellowship Publication Program sponsored by the Office of the Dean for Recruitment and Diversity of The City University of New York. I would like to also thank Sara Vogel, Kate Seltzer, and members of the Faculty Fellowship Publication Program who provided invaluable feedback on earlier versions of this article.

References
Translanguaging and Responsive Assessment Adaptations: Emergent Bilingual Readers through the Lens of Possibility

This article highlights accommodations and adaptations to assessments for bilingual students. Here are some resources from ReadWriteThink.org that can be used or adapted:

Let's Read It Again: Comprehension Strategies for English-Language Learners

- Help Spanish-speaking English-language learners unlock the mysteries of their additional language by using a bilingual book to recognize unfamiliar words and construct meaning from the text.
  http://bit.ly/1QNZNep

Nature Reflections: Interactive Language Practice for English-Language Learners

- Students whose first language is not English reflect on nature through readings, a visit to a green area, and bookmaking using the writing process and peer feedback.
  http://bit.ly/1m8SXEr

Crossing Boundaries through Bilingual, Spoken Word Poetry

- Students explore the idea of “crossing boundaries” through bilingual, spoken word poetry, culminating in a poetry slam at school or in the community.
  http://bit.ly/1IaibMR