Translanguaging Practices for Educational Equity: Moments in a Bilingual Middle School Classroom

Luz Y. Herrera

The Graduate Center, City University of New York

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TRANSLANGUAGING PRACTICES FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY:
MOMENTS IN A BILINGUAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM

by

LUZ YADIRA HERRERA

Dissertation
PhD program in Urban Education
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by

Luz Yadira Herrera

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Urban 
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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Translanguaging Practices for Educational Equity: 
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Luz Yadira Herrera

Advisor: Professor Ofelia García

Dual language bilingual education (DLBE) programs in New York City largely follow a 50-50 model: half of the instruction is in English while the other half is in another target language. In NYC, as well as the rest of the country, these programs are typically English-Spanish due to the large Spanish-speaking population in the U.S. Bilingual programs also tend to strictly separate languages and often insist that teachers and students only use the designated language according to the school or district’s particular language allocation policy.

This qualitative case study challenges the strict separatist language model of some dual language bilingual education classrooms. It examines an instructional unit of study designed to raise students’ socio-political consciousness by highlighting immigration policies and using multimodal texts. At the same time, the unit provides spaces for students to engage in translanguaging practices regardless of the designated target language of the week. It analyses how students take up translanguaging practices in the various lessons described, and engages in an examination of students’ views about bilingualism and translanguaging. The central argument is that without the flexible languaging spaces that translanguaging pedagogy affords, we cannot attain educational equity for all emergent bilingual students. Additionally, because students’ language proficiencies lie on various points of the bilingual spectrum, a language flexible environment is critical in order to make learning accessible to all students.
DEDICACIÓN

Le dedico este trabajo a mis padres, Luz María y Victor Herrera, quienes emigraron a este país con sus niños pequeñitos con muy poco, pero llenos de valor y esperanzas para el futuro de sus hijos. Gracias por todo su amor, sacrificio, y sobre todo su apoyo incondicional.

Y a mi Remi, quien es la luz de mi vida.
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Chapter One:
Introduction

My pursuit of scholarly work and teaching in the field of bilingualism in education is rooted in my experience growing up as an emergent bilingual learner. My mother, siblings and I joined our father in Los Angeles in 1991 when I was seven years old. We moved from a small pueblo in the central west coast of Mexico to Los Angeles, where I started third grade at my neighborhood elementary. Most of the families living in the apartment building came from our same town; it felt familiar. School, however, felt like an entirely different world. Still, my English-speaking monolingual teacher was a kind and intuitive educator who knew to sit me next to a bilingual classmate whom at his young age was extremely helpful during this transition. I was also enrolled in my school’s version of a bilingual program, which meant that I was pulled out of my class a couple of times per week for home language instruction, where I continued to build on my home language literacy – this was several years before California’s Proposition 227 virtually eliminated bilingual education in California in 1998. However, it was my family’s teachings and our annual trips back home to Mexico that grounded me and sustained my cultural and linguistic identity, which influences every aspect of my work.

My passion was solidified during my undergraduate years as a volunteer English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for day laborers in Los Angeles through a student-initiated and student-run project. We used Freire’s (1970) popular education approach in working with this largely disenfranchised group of people. This was transformative experience that led to my journey as a New York City public school teacher in a multilingual community in Central Harlem where I taught emergent bilingual learners (EBLs) in grades K-6 in a pullout ESL setting, now referred to as English as a New Language (ENL) in New York City. This means
that I worked with small groups of students that I took out from their classes for language support during their regular instruction time—an often poorly designed system. My students’ bilingualism fell all across the bilingual spectrum; they ranged from newly arrived students to students that have been educated in an English-medium school system for over six years, designated “Long term ELLs” (LTELLs) by the NYC Department of Education. What more precisely captured my interest were the injustices I witnessed in classrooms and the limited programmatic structures available to students whose home language was not English. ENL is an English-medium instructional model, which can be self-contained, push in or pull out, and often functions as a one-size fits all solution for educating emergent bilinguals (EBLs). The majority of students identified as “English Language Learners” (ELLs), whom I call here emergent bilingual learners (EBLs) as per García (2009), are predominantly enrolled in ENL programs, which are designed to provide the scaffolds necessary for English language development that they likely do not receive in their monolingual classes. This is problematic because, despite individual language needs, students are grouped together in an English language immersion program usually by English proficiency levels as determined by a standardized assessment.

As an ENL teacher, I was able to support the learning of my Spanish-speaking students by offering home language support, but I undoubtedly fell short in providing a similarly supportive learning environment for those students whose languages I did not share. Upon their arrival to our school coming from different parts of the world, particularly West Africa and the Middle East, I sensed my students’ anxiety of being in a strange land, surrounded by adults and peers with whom they often could not communicate. At times, I felt overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy as I attempted to communicate using gestures and other body language and often being received by blank stares or indiscriminate head nods. Moreover, my colleagues teaching
in the general education classrooms repeatedly placed these same students in the back of the classroom on a computer or at a table with puzzles to pass the time, or simply treated them exactly as they would an English proficient student, not knowing how else to reach those students.

The injustices I witnessed, and to an extent also participated in, prompted me to transform my practices and pedagogy. I studied different ways I could not only support my students, but also offer support to my colleagues, in whose classrooms my students would spend the vast majority of their instructional time. This eventually led to my pursuit of a doctoral degree with the goal of conducting research in schools that would lead to creating a system of support for educators that struggle with a similar dilemma, for all EBLs. Although at the beginning of my academic pursuit, I wanted to focus on those students who, in my experience, received the least support (non Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals), I have come to the realization that even for those students whose home languages may be more widely shared by their teachers, there is still a lot of work to be done. Spanish-speaking students are still at a disadvantage because many teachers, even though they may share their students’ language, often do not know how to utilize the home language effectively, or do not know that they can use it at all, in order to make instruction more meaningful for their students.

Providing a quality bilingual program for all EBLs would be the ideal since it would be the most effective way to teach this student population (Umansky & Reardon, 2014; Goldenberg, 2013; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 1999). They would not only get a chance to strengthen their home language literacies, but could also rely on that strengthened foundation to develop the majority language, as that is usually the goal in U.S. schools. Since, however, this is less likely to occur for every student who speaks a home language other than English because of the
incredibly diverse student population not only in NYC but across the United States, using the students’ entire language repertoire in instruction is a viable option. This is what has been termed “translanguaging” (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009), and can be seen as a way of leveraging the students’ unitary language system in an ENL, bilingual or a general education classroom. To be clear, I am not suggesting that using translanguaging pedagogy is a substitute for a bilingual education program, but it can enrich the instruction in both ENL and bilingual education classrooms alike.

EBLs often have the highest risk of failing standardized exams that are designed for monolingual students. The 2013 New York State ELA Exam results reveal the poor performance of these students in this exam. Although it was widely anticipated that all students would perform poorly in the 2013 state exams due to the introduction of the ambitious Common Core State Standards, the scores are deeply telling of the disparity between different groups of students. In NYC, only 3.2% of students designated as ELLs in grades 3-8 scored at levels 3 and 4, compared to 33% of their English proficient peers (NYC DOE, 2013). Although the latter did not achieve stellar scores either, these results demonstrate the vast disparity between EBLs and English-proficient students, as reflected on state exams. Even though it has been widely established that standardized exams are an unfair method to measure learning, all students are held to the same standards and unfortunately judged accordingly.

The NYC DOE reported that the graduation rate in 2016 for students designated as “ELLs” was 30.8%, compared to the 72.6% overall 4-year (August) graduation rate (NYC DOE, 2016a). Mexican youth, for instance, account for the highest number of recent immigrants to NYC, and also account for the highest number of drop outs: 25% compared to 17% for other

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1 The 2016 graduation rate is based on the cohort of students that started the 9th grade in 2012.
foreign-born Latinos, and 14% for U.S.-born Latinos (Treschan & Mehrotra, 2013). What is more, EBLs often reside in the poorest neighborhoods in NYC and as a result attend the most under-resourced schools in the city—in itself a strong predictor of low high school completion rates, as well as educational achievement in general (Fruchter, Hester, Mokhtar, & Shahn, 2012).

Jim Cummins (2009) has said that EBLs are constantly striving to catch up to a “moving target.” Collier and Thomas (1997, 1999) corroborate Cummins’ argument in their findings that English-speaking students in the US must make 10 months progress in a 10-month school year to be on grade level, whereas EBLs must make 15 months progress in every 10-month academic year in order to catch up within 6 years. The abysmal 2013 New York State exam results and soaring high school drop out rates in NYC are strong indicators that how we are teaching and what we are teaching is simply not working, especially when it comes to minoritized students such as EBLs. Though there are many factors that contribute to achievement, one thing that schools can improve is the quality of their instruction by engaging their EBLs in learning through the use of their entire language repertoire that includes their home language practices. Translanguaging is a transformative pedagogy that can provide much needed academic support for emergent bilingual learners because it allows students to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire in order to make sense of the content they are learning (García & Kleyn, 2016; García, 2009).

Access to quality bilingual programs of all types is limited. Quality dual language bilingual programs are often limited to elementary school-aged Spanish-speaking EBLs. By default, most EBLs are enrolled in ENL programs, which typically offers little to no home language support. In her analysis of EBL program enrollment trends, Menken (2012) notes the decline in bilingual programs across NYC, and reports that, as a result, the number of enrollment
into ENL programs has increased dramatically in the past several years. The latest report from the NYC DOE’s Department of English Language Learners and Student Support revealed that 79.2% of students eligible for “ELL” services were enrolled in an ENL program in the 2013-2014 school year, in contrast to 4.5% and 15.4% in dual language bilingual education and transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs, respectively (NYC DOE, 2015). This is a steep increase in ENL from 54.3% during the 2002-2003 school year (Menken, 2012). The decline in the availability of programmatic structures that offer instruction in the students’ home languages has come about despite language policies in place such as the New York State’s Commissioner’s Regulation Part 154, which supports the establishment of bilingual programs as long as there is a demand (Menken, 2012). Even though many schools without bilingual programs do have the number of students required for the formation of these programs, the stark increase of ENL programs between the 2002-2003 and 2013-2014 school years, speaks volumes about the perception of bilingual education in schools.

The Lau vs. Nichols (1974) Supreme Court ruling set precedent for arguing that students do not receive an equal education if they receive instruction in a language they cannot understand. By this measure, students who do not receive instruction or instructional support in their home language(s) are not receiving an equal education. Although Spanish-speaking students still make up the vast majority of EBLs, students from West Africa, the Middle East, Asia and other parts of the world are enrolling in NYC schools in increasingly large numbers. The continuing shift in the EBL student population has created a unique set of challenges for teachers who are in need of a dynamic pedagogy to reach their EBLs. Not only must teachers adopt a linguistically sustaining approach in their pedagogy, but the curriculum also has to be more inclusive and work towards raising students’ critical consciousness. This is especially true
since EBLs and their families are often on the receiving end of racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies threatening their right to exist in the U.S. This has an historical precedence, but has been magnified more recently with the new Trump presidency and administration. Our instruction must address the socio-political context that affects our students in order to resist any attempts to normalize the academic failure of language-minoritized students.

**Purpose**

The purpose of my study is to examine the ways in which bilingualism and translanguaging practices in a Spanish-English bilingual classroom work when students engage in a curriculum designed to awaken their critical consciousness through lessons and a pedagogical approach that are culturally and linguistically sustaining. I explore how translanguaging is taken up by students to learn how students perceive these practices. This study also explores the connections between translanguaging and equity in the classroom. Thus, my research questions are:

1. How do students take up translanguaging in bilingual classrooms and what are its effects in the classroom?
   - What are the opportunities and challenges that a translanguaging pedagogy creates for students?
   - How do students negotiate translanguaging to learn?
   - Does translanguaging advance educational equity in the classroom, and if so, in which ways?

2. What are students’ views on translanguaging and how are those views related to student characteristics?
   - How do students view translanguaging?
• Do students view translanguaging as their right?
• Do students view translanguaging as advancing educational equity?
Chapter Two:

Bilingualism, Translanguaging and Educational Equity

In this chapter, I examine some of the major scholarly contributions as they pertain to important areas of my study—bilingualism, translanguaging and educational equity. The literature reviewed here is organized into seven sections (1) History of bilingual education; (2) Research on bilingual education; (3) Bilingualism in education; (4) Translanguaging and its other forms; (5) Linguistic human rights and translanguaging; (6) Dynamic bilingualism; and (7) Educational equity through translanguaging. The first section is an overview of the history of bilingual education in the United States. The second section provides an examination of prominent research on bilingual education, with respect to its effectiveness in addressing language-minoritized students’ needs. The third section describes bilingualism in education, specifically how it is addressed by TESOL and bilingual education. The fourth section summarizes translanguaging as it has been theorized by García (2009) and others, and how scholars across the globe have developed similar notions to translanguaging to address language use in the current globalized context. The fifth section explores the area of linguistic human rights as they have been traditionally conceptualized, and how translanguaging challenges those conventional conceptualizations. I then examine dynamic bilingualism and the sustainability of fluid language practices. Lastly, the seventh section addresses how translanguaging as a pedagogical tool can bring about educational equity.

History of Bilingual Education

Education has seen a number of long-fought battles, ranging from teacher certification routes, assessments, and educating the neediest students, amongst many other issues. Bilingual education, in particular, has been the subject of much education debate. It has encountered
substantial opposition in the United States, which is evident from the legislation that has been enacted at the state and federal levels and the attempts in establishing English-only laws. In this section, I will discuss the history of bilingual education at the federal, state and local levels, with particular attention to New York State and New York City. I will also address the current state of bilingual education policy in the NYC Department of Education (DOE) during the present era of accountability under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTTT).

**Bilingual education in the U.S.**

Wiley and Lee (2009) point out that although there has been a tendency to perpetually promote English-only in U.S. schools, the U.S. has never been a monolingual nation. Even before the founding of the nation, linguistic diversity, immigration and education were controversial topics (Wiley & Lee, 2009). Bilingual education has a deeply rooted history in the United States. The general consensus places the emergence of bilingual education in the 19th century with German settlers in Ohio; however, Goldenberg and Wagner (2015) point to evidence indicating that bilingual education began as early as the 17th century amongst Polish settlers. The Civil Rights movement in the 20th century, however, can be credited for the rise of bilingual education as we know it today. A major victory was the passage of the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) in 1968, which was an attempt to provide equal educational opportunity to language minority children, especially Mexican-Americans in the Southwest and West, Puerto Ricans in the Northeast, and Indigenous peoples (Crawford, 2004; García, 2009; García, 2011a). The law did not specify any programmatic changes, including mandating bilingual education, though it did allocate federal funding to support programs that targeted low-income linguistic minority students (Crawford, 2004; Del Valle, 1998; García, 2009). In 1974, however, the BEA
was reauthorized for the first time, redefining bilingual education as transitional, able to use the home language "to the extent necessary to allow a child to progress effectively through the education system" (cited in García, 2011a, p. 136). Also, federal funding was expanded to include any linguistic minority student, regardless of socio-economic status (Crawford, 2004; García, 2009).

Another milestone for bilingual education was the *Lau vs. Nichols* Supreme Court decision of 1974, which ruled that under the Equal Education Opportunity Act, non-English speaking children did not receive equal access to education if placed in an all-English setting. Although this ruling did not mandate bilingual education either, it did require schools to provide some accommodation in educating language minority students (Baker, 2001; Crawford, 1989; García, 2009; Wiley & Lee, 2009). Baker (2001) notes, however, that even though specific program recommendations were not defined, there was still some growth during this period in developmental maintenance bilingual education programs as well as in “ethnic community mother tongue schools” (p. 187). Developmental maintenance bilingual programs, as well as ethnic mother tongue schools which are usually supplementary after-school or weekend programs, included language minority students who were at different points of the bilingual continuum. Almost a decade later, *Castañeda vs. Pickard* (1981) ruled that schools take action on behalf of emergent bilinguals based on proven education research; still, it did not result in requiring schools to provide the appropriate programmatic structures for their EBLs (Crawford, 1989, 2004; García, 2009).

**The “B” word**

As opposition towards bilingual education mounted, “bilingual” became the "B-Word" (Crawford, 2004) as the term was eliminated from education departments at different levels
across the country (García, 2011a). Additionally, legislation eliminating bilingual education programs passed in California in 1998\(^2\), Arizona in 2000, and Massachusetts in 2002. Also, English Only laws were passed at the state level. Today there is a total of 31 states with English only laws (ProEnglish, 2013).

In 2001, the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) was repealed and replaced by Title III of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which according to Menken (2008), accomplished three major things: it removed the term “bilingual” from education legislation, as mentioned above; it promoted English-only language education policy due to its demanding testing policies; and it repealed the Bilingual Education Act. NCLB required states to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on state exams, with particular attention given to monitoring the progress of subgroups of students deemed to be at risk, including “Limited English Proficient” students. Diane Ravitch (2011) explains what she views as George W. Bush’s logic behind NCLB: “there was a simple way to reduce the gaps: Just test every child every year, he said; reward the teachers and schools where the scores went up; and humiliate the teachers and schools where the scores went down” (Ravitch, 2011, para. 5). The same schools that were at the bottom, remained at the bottom a decade later.

**Bilingual education in the age of accountability**

In 2009, during the Obama administration, Race to the Top (RTTT) was instituted. This was a competitive grant for which states competed in order to receive funding, with one of the key elements being that states had to adopt common learning standards, giving rise to the

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\(^2\) California lifted its restrictions on bilingual education with the passage of Proposition 58 in November 2016.
The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were released in 2010 in English Language Arts and Mathematics, and were adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia (CCSSI, 2013). The CCSS was a state-led initiative with the objective of creating academic rigor and consistency across the country (CCSSI, 2013). In addition, RTTT required states to modify their standardized assessments to reflect the new standards. Menken (2008) cautions that most standardized tests have been designed to assess English proficient students and not EBLs. Instead of assessing content knowledge, standardized assessments actually, and ultimately, assess EBLs’ English proficiency (García & Baetens Beardsmore, 2009; García & Menken, 2006, as cited in Menken, 2008). It is no surprise, as noted earlier, that less than 4% of “ELLs” in NYC were on grade level according to the 2013 NYS 3-8 ELA Exam report.

In late 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which had bipartisan support and replaced NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The law has a focus on assessment and accountability, a familiar feature from previous education policies, as well as strong support for evidence-based practices, and the expansion of preschool. A statement from the Working Group on ELL Policy (2016) criticized ESSA for remaining “silent on addressing the value of bilingualism and biliteracy not only for ELs but also for language-majority students” (p. 4). The group vowed to keep advocating for research-based practices for EBLs and to keep pushing for biliteracy and bilingualism for every student (Working Group of ELL Policy, 2016).

**Bilingual education in New York**

In 1972, ASPIRA and various other organizations collaboratively filed a suit against the NYC Board of Education (now NYC Department of Education) due to the inadequate and

---

3 It is unclear how the Trump administration will affect the Common Core State Standards. However, these are state-led; as such, the role of the federal government could be minimal.
unequal implementation of bilingual education in NYC schools, and in August 1974, the New York City Board of Education signed a Consent Decree with ASPIRA (Crawford, 1989; Reyes, 2006; Santiago, 1986). The Aspira Consent Decree outlined a plan to provide more adequate bilingual education to more children, but it was a similarly transitional language model (Del Valle, 1998; García, 2011a; Reyes, 2006). Del Valle (1998) viewed the outcome of the Aspira Consent Decree as:

[A] fatal gap between two visions of bilingual education – the vision of the grassroots Puerto Rican community that saw bilingual education as educational enrichment, and the remedial model that was ultimately adopted and advanced by lawyers and other professionals in the courts. (p. 195)

The goal of bilingual education shifted from developmental to transitional—a model of bilingual education that is still largely commonplace today.

In response to rapid waves of immigration from non-Spanish speaking countries, the NYC BOE developed the Lau Plan in 1977 (García, 2011a). As part of this plan, this population was also offered ENL services. In 2006, 47.6%, nearly half of the population of NYC spoke a language other than English; however, Spanish remained, and still remains today, the largest "minority" language in NYC schools (García, 2011a).

According to a 2015 NYC student demographic report, 43.3% of students speak a language other than English at home, though only 14.3% students in NYC are officially designated “ELLs” (NYC DOE, 2015). Among those identified as ELLs, Spanish is spoken by 61.8%, followed by Chinese (14.2%), Bengali (4.2%), Arabic (4.2%) and Haitian Creole (2.3%) (NYC DOE, 2015). The city's sociolinguistic context continues to change with the different communicative practices that immigrants from all over the world bring with them. This greater
linguistic variation is also found among Latinos, now speaking various Indigenous Latin American languages, and different varieties of Spanish (García, 2011a).

New York State has a large population of emergent bilingual students, but unlike California and Arizona and other states with a significant immigrant population, it has historically been more tolerant of bilingual education. New York State’s Commissioner’s Regulation Part 154 (CR Part 154) delineates the services that local education agencies (LEAs) must provide to students identified as “Limited English Proficient” (LEP); all education agencies receiving any state funding must comply with this regulation. In order to conform to the CR Part 154, the NYC DOE has established the Language Allocation Policy (LAP), which specifically requires schools to outline a plan to educate students that are identified by the DOE as “ELLs.”

**Programs for emergent bilinguals in NYC**

There are three options for emergent bilingual students in NYC public schools: Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), Dual Language (DL), or a Freestanding ENL Program, all of which have very distinct goals (NYC DOE, 2013). The TBE program is a transitional program, which follows a “subtractive” model because its main objective is to wean students out of their home language, moving them towards monolingualism in English. The Dual Language program (here referred to as DLBE program, to clarify that it is a type of bilingual education) follows more of an “additive” model, since it is designed to develop two languages simultaneously. They do so by often following a pedagogical model that advocates the separation of language (Baker, 2001). DLBE can be of two types — either a one-way or two-way program, with the latter being more prevalent in NYC public schools. The one-way DBLE program, also known previously as developmental maintenance program, serves one language group. This model promotes home language literacy maintenance and development while also developing
proficiency in English, and includes students who are at all points of the bilingual continuum. The two-way DLBE program serves equal numbers of language minority and majority students, with the goal of developing biliterate and bicultural students that can utilize each other as a linguistic resource.

The Dual Language and Transitional Bilingual Education Programs list released by the NYC DOE revealed that there were 182 dual language bilingual programs and 286\(^4\) transitional programs in NYC schools in 2015-2016 (NYC DOE, 2015). More recently there has been a move to phase out some transitional programs, and replace them with dual language bilingual programs. NYC DOE School Chancellor Carmen Fariña, a vocal supporter of bilingual education, announced the opening of 38 new bilingual programs in NYC schools for Fall 2016: 29 bilingual dual language programs and 9 transitional bilingual programs (NYC DOE, 2016b). But transitional bilingual programs still greatly outnumber dual language bilingual programs. It is important to note, however, that an increase in the availability of dual language bilingual programs has also been attributed to the increasing demand by middle and upper class English-speaking monolingual families looking for enrichment opportunities for their children (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). Nevertheless, most emergent bilingual students in NYC schools are enrolled in ENL programs, which are English immersion programs.

Lastly, the ENL model is an English-medium instructional program that uses a teaching methodology especially designed for teaching language minoritized students, which as mentioned before, can be a self-contained, pull out or push in model. ENL typically offers very little, if any, home language support; it is the most subtractive of all programs.

\(^4\) The numbers 182 and 286 reflect the overall number of programs and not the number of schools offering these programs. Some schools were counted multiple times given that they offered both dual language bilingual and transitional bilingual programs, in addition to programs only for students with disabilities.
ENL is the most popular option in NYC public schools for emergent bilinguals because, as I have said, it is often the only option most families have. The programmatic options are more severely restricted for those students whose home language is not Spanish, though the number of quality Spanish-English bilingual programs are also limited. Since bilingual education is only an option for very few language minority groups, many students are by default enrolled in an ENL program. The NYC DOE’s “Parent Survey and Program Selection form,” a form that every parent must complete for his or her emergent bilingual child, contains the following disclaimer:

I understand that if I do not make a program selection, or if I do not return this form by the date indicated below, my child may be placed in a Transitional Bilingual Education program, if there are sufficient numbers of students to do so. Otherwise, my child will be placed in a Freestanding English as a Second Language program. I also understand that some of these choices may not be available at this school, and where they are not, my child will be placed in a Freestanding English as a Second Language program. (NYC DOE, ND)

The inequalities in education are evident in this disclaimer alone. Even though many schools have the sufficient number of same-language groups of students to form bilingual education programs and comply with regulations, they have not for a variety of reasons.

Research on Bilingual Education

Bilingual education in the US has been the subject of a lot of criticism. Noteworthy critics of bilingual education have been Christine Rossell and Keith Baker, who in a 1996 study reviewed hundreds of program evaluations to determine the effectiveness of bilingual education programs and concluded that there was “no consistent research support for transitional bilingual education as a superior instructional practice for improving the English language achievements of limited English proficient children” (p. 19). However, Greene (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of the studies that Rossell and Baker used for their 1996 study and concluded that too few of the studies were methodologically sound to support the reliability of their conclusions.
Also, Cummins (1998) noted that when looked at more diligently, 90% of the studies that Rossell and Baker examined actually showed that bilingual education is effective. Other arguments against bilingual education have been that it delays English acquisition by virtue of allowing students to spend less time learning in English, but this claim has also been debunked. Cummins (2013) summarizes the findings from leading research on bilingual education, which has concluded: “spending instructional time through two languages entails no long-term negative effects on students’ academic development in the majority language” (p. 7). Many of these critics’ claims have ultimately been unfounded and the educational research community overwhelmingly favors a bilingual approach to the education of EBLs.

**Positive effects of bilingual education**

Researchers have demonstrated the positive effects that bilingual education has on learning and on developing a majority language, as well as the consequences of denying home language instruction. Cummins’ (2000) Common Underlying Proficiency model posits that any knowledge gained in one language will transfer to the other; furthermore, the language in which students receive instruction must be developed enough in order for students to be able to understand the concepts being taught. In terms of the consequences of failing to provide a bilingual education, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 2013) has shown that linguistic minority children across the globe, including indigenous children, fail academically when taught exclusively in a majority language. Not only does she argue that denying home language-medium instruction diminishes children’s cognitive capacities, but that it can also eventually lead to “linguistic genocide,” the eradication of those minority languages altogether (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, 2013).

Other critical research studies in the US have shown that a quality bilingual education
program can be more effective for language minority students in teaching them English, than an English monolingual curriculum (Umansky & Reardon, 2014; August & Shanahan, 2006; Krashen & McField 2005; Thomas & Collier 1997, 2002; August & Hakuta, 1997; see Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, 2008, for similar findings in various international contexts). Thomas and Collier (2002) conducted a longitudinal study documenting emergent bilingual student achievement in various contexts (i.e. rural, inner-city) as well as in diverse geographical locations throughout the US. Trends across the diverse research contexts revealed that the greatest long-term academic achievements, as well as least dropout rates, were found amongst those students who participated in developmental maintenance bilingual education programs, including those students that participated in the 90-10 bilingual enrichment model where 90% of instruction is through the home language. Furthermore, EBLs in bilingual programs outperformed those students educated monolingually in all content areas; however, this was after being in bilingual programs for 4 to 7 years, revealing the importance of program consistency. These findings support other prominent research results that have shown that the longer students remained in bilingual programs, the greater the academic gains of students (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006). What is more, students whose home languages were more academically developed exhibited greater and faster progress in their development of academic English (Goldenberg, 2008; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002). Still, there is a consistently large gap between pedagogical research and actual classroom practices, as is evident from the relatively small number of bilingual programs across the country as opposed to English immersion programs (what some might call “submersion” programs; see, for example, Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

**Cognitive advantages of bilingualism**
Besides a great deal of research showing the superiority of quality bilingual programs to monolingual education for educating linguistic minorities, the advantages of bilingualism, in itself, have also been thoroughly documented. An overwhelming body of research has shown that bilinguals have cognitive advantages over monolinguals (Bialystok, 2007, 2011; Marian & Shook, 2012; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Hakuta & Bialystok, 1994; Peal & Lambert, 1962; Portes & Hao, 1998). Some of these include metalinguistic awareness, divergent thinking, communicative awareness as well as the enhanced capacity to learn languages (García, 2009, p. 94-97). For instance, in her research designed to evaluate the executive control of bilingual and monolingual 8-year-old children, Bialystok (2011) found that the bilingual children had a heightened capacity over their monolingual peers in coordinating their executive functions (the function in our brain that guides our behavior) when performing a complex task.

**Societal advantages of bilingualism**

Scholars have also argued that bilinguals are more prepared to navigate a more globalized world through their ability to communicate with a broader range of people (Bhattacharjee, 2012; García, 2009). Additionally, a higher level of bilingualism has been correlated to higher self-esteem as well as more positive attitudes towards others from diverse cultures (García, 2009; Crawford, 2004, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991).

The research examined overwhelmingly supports bilingual education as the most effective programming for EBLs, but since it is largely unrealistic that schools can provide a bilingual program for all their students given that many have incredibly diverse and multilingual student bodies, teachers can aim to provide quality and meaningful instruction for all EBLs by adopting translanguaging practices in ENL and monolingual classrooms that can support students’ home language literacies. We note, however, that even these cannot replace a quality
bilingual education; and even within bilingual education programs, the use of translinguaging pedagogy can significantly enhance student learning, as my study intends to demonstrate. In the next section, I discuss bilingualism in education and the traditional and contemporary views of bilingualism by the various entities that have a stake in it, namely ENL and Bilingual Education.

**Bilingualism in Education**

ENL programs function predominantly as English immersion programs, as already discussed above. Scholars in the Teaching English to Speakers of Language (TESOL) field, however, are challenging the notion that this is so. They point out that bilingualism/multilingualism is an inherent part of TESOL/ENL education, that without it, it ceases to exist (Taylor, 2009; Fishman, 2009; García, 2009; Silver, 2009). Silver (2009) challenges educators to think about the level of competence we wish for our students, and questions whether we would choose to attain English competence or a multilingual competence; she asks us to consider which would be more useful in a globalized society (p. 334). Additionally, Flores (2013) points out TESOL’s recent “dynamic turn,” in describing the field’s increasing rejection of the monolingualism standard, and its shift towards a model of plurilingualism (for more on this, see also Lin, 2013; Piccardo, 2013). The Council of Europe’s (2001) plurilingual model,

> emphasises the fact that as an individual person’s experience of language in this cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples[...], he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact. (p. 4)
The plurilingualism model is thus a positive move for TESOL since it recognizes the natural communicative practices of bilinguals, nevertheless, Flores (2013) urges us to be critical of this shift in TESOL so that we do not fall prey to the neoliberal agenda that demands to capitalize on the dynamism and fluidity of language while maintaining language hegemony intact.

More locally, there has been another shift, this time in NYC DOE’s 2013 Language Allocation Policy, which has heightened its recognition of the importance of using home language support in ENL settings; it lists as its program’s goals to “provide academic content-area instruction in English… using native language support to make content comprehensible” (NYC DOE, 2013, p. 28, our italics). Its stance on other programs for EBLs such as transitional bilingual education and the “dual language” program is less clear. It delineates time allotment for the languages; however, it does not explicitly state that language should be used flexibly to support instruction, as it does with its ENL program goals.

Traditionally, bilingualism has been seen through a monoglossic perspective. This has led to a variety of problematic results, most notably, the practice of language separation in bilingual education classrooms. Baker (1998) noted a couple of decades ago that the isolation and the purity of language was commonplace and went unchallenged (as cited in Piccardo, 2013). What is more, bilingualism and bilingual education was seen as a threat if it stemmed from minority communities, as we have learned in prior sections of this paper, however, for the more socio-economically advantaged, it was seen as an asset (Piccardo, 2013). Many examples of these claims can be found in schools today. Bilingual education programs in NYC public schools (both TBE and DLBE) have a strict policy of producing all print (posters, charts, bulletin boards) in English in black or blue ink and the “other” language in red ink, showing that there are still many of the purist ideals in place. Additionally, many DLBE programs in NYC are taught by
two different teachers, each specializing in a target language, in two separate classrooms. What is more, language is still subject to social stratification, and often bilingualism from language minority populations often conveys a deficit perspective, whereas language majority populations learning a minority language are praised. Piccardo (2013) asserts that mounting pressure from the research community in bilingualism has, in effect, enacted a paradigm shift toward plurilingualism, as has been the case with TESOL. It is critical to take advantage of this shift and advocate for bilingual/multilingual pedagogy to become the standard classroom practice in all EBL classrooms.

**Translanguaging and its Other Forms**

Translanguaging is a budding scholarship, most of which has developed within the last two decades. The term *translanguaging* was originally coined by Welch Scholar Cen Williams in 1994, but has been extended by a number of scholars, most notably by Colin Baker (2001, 2011) and Ofelia García (2009). Baker (2011) defines translanguaging as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages (p. 288, quoted in Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012a, p. 1); whereas García’s (2009) conceptualization of translanguaging refers to the “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (p.45). Furthermore, for Li Wei (2011), the notion of translanguaging is “going between different linguistic systems [...] and going beyond them” (p. 1223). He believes that this pedagogical approach creates a “translanguaging space,” and he writes:

> [Translanguaging] creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated
and meaningful performance, and making it into a lived experience. (Li Wei, 2011, p. 1223)

Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012a, 2012b) follow the evolution of translanguaging, noting its increased complexity as it has extended beyond its pedagogical origin to currently having political and social implications, as we will see below. Other notable academics have conceived of a similar notion but have called it by different names. This includes, transidiomatic practices (Jacquemmet, 2005), polylingual languaging (Jørgensen, 2008), codemeshing and translingual practices (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013), hybrid language practices (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999a; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999b), among others. In my research, I will refer to the dynamic use of language as “translanguaging,” as it has been reconceptualized by Ofelia García (2009) because it has been most applied to instruction and pedagogy.

Transidiomatic practices

Jacquemet’s (2005) approach to translanguaging, which he refers to as transidiomatic practices, takes a more transnational outlook on languaging. The author defines transidiomatic practices as “the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant” (Jacquemet, 2005, p. 264-65). He points to the widespread interconnectedness through the internet and other media, which have helped erase political geographical boundaries between people, making it necessary to also find ways to communicate with each other and, thus, creating a transnational community where linguistic hybridization and creolization—the product of the dynamic use of different features of a language repertoire, including the combination of characteristics from features of language—is rampant. For instance,
Jacquemet (2005) explains that during the Hoxta dictatorship in Albania, people were culturally insulated from outside influences through media censorship, travel bans, and other mediums, and after the fall of the dictatorship, one of the first things people sought was the learning of foreign languages, which had been previously prohibited (p. 267). The infiltration of Western culture, including the desire to learn western languages, gave rise to everyday transidiomatic expressions such as “don uorri, be heppi” (don’t worry, be happy), a creolized phrase stemming from English and Albanian (Jacquemet, 2005, p. 271). This shows how people were able to adopt ways of speaking that came from other language groups while shifting it into something familiar and relevant in their everyday contexts.

**Polylingual languaging**

Jørgensen (2008) conceptualizes the dynamic use of language as *polylingual languaging*. He states that what our society conceives as “languages” are actually features of *language* and challenges the notion that using two or more features of language to communicate is in any way inadequate or deficient; instead he argues that it demonstrates advanced languaging skills. Jørgensen also points out that language is fluid and constantly shifting in form, and therefore, any meaning attached to language is also endlessly fluctuating, a view similar to what García (2009) has described as *transglossia*, which I will expand upon later.

**Translingual practices**

Other prominent sociolinguists support Jørgensen’s claim and argue that our current conceptualization of “a” language was a European invention (Makoni & Pennycook, 2006; Heller, 2007; Auer & Wei, 2007; Canagarajah, 2013). In his account of South Asian *translingual* practices, another name for a notion similar to translanguaging, Canagarajah (2013) reminds us that colonization imposed Western monoglossic ideologies on local communities; he
points out that translingual practices were the norm within south Asian indigenous communities prior to the colonization period. This is also true for many indigenous communities throughout the world, including Africa, Polynesia, South America and Mexico (Canagarajah, 2013; See Makoni & Pennycook, 2006, for a discussion of the African translingual context).

García and Lin (2017) have similarly questioned the idea that we are speakers of languages. They theorize that there are two versions of translanguaging: “strong” translanguaging and “weak” translanguaging. In the strong version of translanguaging, rather than seeing bilinguals as speakers of “languageS”, they argue that bilinguals “use their repertoire of linguistic features selectively” (García & Lin, 2017, p. 124, capitalization of letter “s” in original). Contrastingly, the weak version of translanguaging is described as maintaining traditional language boundaries, while calling for the weakening of said boundaries (García & Lin, 2017).

**Codemeshing**

Canagarajah (2011a) has also used the term *codemeshing* to describe the specific ways dynamic bilingualism is manifested through writing. Codemeshing allowed the amateur writers in Canagarajah’s study the freedom to reach a level of depth and add complexity to their writing that could have otherwise been impossible to do monolingually. He found that writers who *codemeshed* always did so thoughtfully and with logical reasoning. In his analysis of codemeshing in a personal narrative writing assignment, Canagarajah (2011a) considers how his focal student, Buthainah, uses her identity as a resource in her writing. She incorporates Arabic quotes and poems into her English writing, yet she is aware of her audience and approaches her writing accordingly. For instance, she includes a meaningful Arabic poem and decides not to translate it because it would take away from its beauty and meaning, which she defended by
saying that she wanted to not only humble her readers who did not read Arabic, but also make them uncomfortable, citing that multilinguals are often too accommodating to the “dominant” monolinguals (Canagarajah, 2011a, p. 409-410). Her non-Arabic speaking classmates responded positively to the codemeshing in her narrative; as Canagarajah points out, the readers were intrigued, challenged to interact with the text, and inspired to become active readers, participating in co-constructing meaning in Buthainah’s writing (Canagarajah, 2011a, p. 408-410). Codemeshing then can allow EBLs to more articulately and profoundly express themselves through their writing; clearly, however, this type of writing must also be positively encouraged and accepted as a legitimate form of expression in order to encourage its development.

**Hybrid language practices**

Similarly, the concept of *hybrid language practices* is used in naming bilingual communicative practices within the classroom context (Gutiérrez et al., 1999a; Gutiérrez et al., 1999b). Gutiérrez and colleagues (1999b) define hybrid language practices as,

> [T]he ways that teachers and children consciously and strategically utilized their own linguistic repertoires and created new contexts of development; these hybrid language practices fostered language and literacy […] and] intimately connected texts, strategically used, and were the outcome of a hybrid activity system in which home and school were consciously bridged. (p. 291)

These language practices in turn give rise to a “third space,” a space in a classroom (or related learning environment) context where constructive learning takes place (Gutiérrez et al., 1999a). In this space, collaboration and learning is enhanced through students’ use of their entire linguistic repertoires to make meaning (Gutiérrez et al., 1999a; see Moje et al., 2004, for broader
conceptualizations of the *third space*). The concept of third space, is related to Vygotsky’s (1978) “Zone of Proximal Development,” which is also used to describe the moment or “zone” where heightened learning occurs (Gutiérrez et al., 1999a).

**Codeswitching**

Codeswitching is a term that is often confused with translanguaging, and although scholars have conceived of codeswitching as a pedagogical practice (Gort, 2006; Macaro, 2005; Moore, 2010), it is far from the fluid language practices that the scholars mentioned above propose. In his conceptualization of codeswitching, for instance, Macaro (2005) views languages as being autonomous entities that a language user can “switch” back and forth from, a view that rests in opposition to Jørgensen’s conceptualization of language, as discussed earlier. In his research, Macaro consistently refers to learners’ “L1” and “L2,” and while this view presents a neat portrayal of language, it oversimplifies and negates its dynamism. As García (2009) has said, thinking about language in this way rests on a monoglossic ideology, since it compartmentalizes language into categories that have been socially constructed by nation-states and social groups. Furthermore, Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015) remind us that, “under translanguaging, the mental grammars of bilinguals are structured but unitary collections of features, and the practices of bilinguals are acts of feature selection, not of grammar switch,” which describes the stark difference between codeswitching and translanguaging.

**Translanguaging as practice**

Translanguaging is not only a linguistic practice of bilinguals and a pedagogical practice, but it is also a philosophical approach, which can be utilized not only to maximize the learning of emergent bilingual students, but to also empower learners by validating and celebrating their
identities and cultures (García, 2009). Pedagogically, it allows teachers and students to capitalize upon existing linguistic resources in order to make sense of teaching and learning (García, 2009). It does away with notions of language separation (i.e. English only, or 50-50 model) and allows flexible use of language in order to educate and develop bilingualism.

Canagarajah (2011b) argues, however, that the practical applications of translanguaging have been largely absent from research; additionally, he states that although the existing research shows translanguaging as a practice that occurs naturally amongst multilinguals, it hasn’t shown how translanguaging teaching strategies can be developed (p. 8). Nevertheless, in his own analysis of his students’ writing, he supports the use of translanguaging in students’ writing, as mentioned earlier, because it allows writers to enhance the complexity and depth of writing and increases the engagement of the (monolingual) reader (Canagarajah, 2011b).

In a 5-year study, Lewis, Jones and Baker (2014) sought to find out how Welsh and English were used in classroom practices across Wales. They found that 32 out of a 100 lessons observed included the predominant use of translanguaging strategies, which they identify as the concurrent use of Welsh and English in the classroom. Although they identified some key ways that teachers and students used this strategy (for instance, students used it to extend their understanding of a certain topic), the authors recognize the existing gaps in the research in the more specific ways translanguaging is manifested in the classroom context, as well as the absence of assessments that can establish its effectiveness. Indeed, there is a lot of work still to be done in the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool, but this work is well on its way.

More recently, CUNY scholars in bilingual and TESOL education have partnered with the NY State Department of Education to begin to address the existing gap between the theory and practice in translanguaging research. The CUNY New York State Initiative for Emergent
Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB)\(^5\) established in 2012 has been directly supporting school leaders and teachers across NY State in developing specific classroom-based strategies that can allow educators to utilize translanguaging as a pedagogical tool, as well as in developing programmatic structures appropriate to their students’ needs, among other critical components in the education of emergent bilingual learners (Garcia & Kley, 2016; Garcia & Menken, 2015; García & Sánchez, 2015; Pérez & Ascenzi-Moreno, 2013).

CUNY-NYSIEB has produced a variety of resources for educators and administrators to use in guiding their work with emergent bilingual learners in and outside the classroom, most notably, *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators* (Celic & Seltzer, 2011), which provides specific classroom-based strategies that use translanguaging as a pedagogical tool. Although there is still much to be done in the area of translanguaging scholarship as it applies to schools and classroom practices, there are significant efforts well underway. In the following sections, I will address how translanguaging relates to the linguistic human rights agenda and how it can be used to promote social justice in education.

**Linguistic Human Rights and Translanguaging**

Traditional conceptualizations of language rights proclaim that we must preserve and maintain individual languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Phillipson, 2009). However, in the context of the 21\(^{st}\) century, with the continuous migration and immigration as well as the current global interconnectedness, it is the bilingual communicative practices of communities that we

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\(^5\) CUNY-NYSIEB, http://www.nysieb.ws.gc.cuny.edu. CUNY-NYSIEB is funded by New York State. The Principal Investigator is Prof. Ricardo Otheguy and the co-Principal Investigators are Ofelia García and Kate Menken. At its inception Nelson Flores served as Acting Project Coordinator, a position now held by Dr. María Teresa Sánchez. The team of the Leadership component is composed of the following CUNY faculty: Professors Laura Ascenzi-Moreno, Brian Collins, Ann Ebe, Tatyana Kleyn and Vanessa Pérez; a Field Supervisor, Christina Celic; and Research Assistants: Kathryn Carpenter, Luis Guzmán, Luz Herrera, Sarah Hesson, Liza Pappas, and Heather Woodley.
must protect rather than “a” language (Garcia, 2011b). Traditional notions of language rights would perhaps not fully agree with the polylinguistic norm Jørgensen suggests, as reviewed earlier. As Jørgensen (2008), asserts, we, as social creatures, utilize our entire linguistic repertoire to communicate and make meaning as best as we can, regardless of where we are on the bilingual spectrum, and even when societal communicative norms view the different combinations of language features as not belonging together. This makes it impossible to truly separate and maintain language in a traditionally autonomous form, as traditional language rights advocates seem to conceive of language.

The work of leading scholar on linguistic human rights, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), has contended that language rights means countering the linguistic “genocide” that she believes has come about largely through monolingual education. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and Phillipson (2009) follow the traditional conceptualizations of linguistic rights for autonomous languages. Nonetheless, again, language autonomy is hardly possible when we recognize that language is constantly changing and shifting. Language, as Maturana and Varela (1973) have said, is highly contextual and based on our lives as naturally social and interactive beings; thus, language can never truly be autonomous. As García (2009) argues, we must move away from monoglossic concepts of language models of education and aim to pursue dynamic models of bilingual education in the 21st century. But not everyone agrees with this position.

Native American scholar Scott Lyons (2009) argues that translanguaging, or codemeshing, should be avoided to maintain the integrity of Native American languages (cited in Canagarajah, 2011b, p. 10). But other Native American scholars (see for example Wyman, McCarty & Nicholas, 2013) now argue that it is precisely the purist attitude toward Indigenous languages that is responsible for much language shift among Indigenous youth. Blackledge and
Creese’s (2010) study in Chinese complementary schooling in the United Kingdom corroborates the latter argument. They found that Chinese youth resisted the Chinese language because of their teachers’ strict language isolation policies insisting that only Chinese be spoken; it led to the shutting out of many students, particularly those less experienced in the language (Blackledge & Creese, 2010).

Bloomaert (2008) reminds us that the consequence of not conforming to institutionalized linguistic norms is that we may become voiceless: “institutional regimes that emphasize unfirming in communication will exclude, marginalize and silence people whose repertoires do not match the normative expectations” (p. 430). Still, Bloomaert (2008) also assures his readers that institutions, and therefore their imposed norms, can change as in the case of Apartheid South Africa. Perhaps through the acknowledgment that EBLs are largely failing in traditional classroom settings that denies instruction through a home language medium, policy-makers and educational leaders will finally enact a comprehensive transformation in their approach to EBL education.

**Dynamic Bilingualism**

Dynamic bilingualism is that which “enables us to shed the concepts of a balanced bilingualism…it extends mastery of two or more standard languages to include hybrid language practices” (García, 2009, p. 55). Although scholars like Skutnabb-Kangas and Lyons justly advocate for the preservation of minority languages, it is also important to realize that it is the fluid language practices that will be sustainable, since they reflect the actual practices of local communities (García, 2011b). The question becomes not whether we can preserve languages, but instead, how institutions, particularly educational institutions, can adopt the current language practices of ethnic minority communities to ensure that it is an accepted way of gaining
knowledge and construct a legitimate subjectivity. Communities across the globe have been engaging in language practices that combine features from different “languages” for centuries; it is therefore critical that education also support and encourage learning through the use of those language practices. Thus, protecting language rights of communities means protecting their already dynamic use of language; translanguaging is, in fact, fulfilling the linguistic human rights agenda.

**Educational Equity through Translanguaging**

While dynamic language use in the classroom should be viewed as the linguistic rights of children and youth, using students’ bilingualism as a resource should be the norm in the classroom in order to help mitigate inequalities in learning and instruction. Equity in education is typically examined through the lens of the curriculum; for instance, in making sure that a curriculum is multicultural and culturally relevant to its students. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) coined the term “culturally relevant teaching” to define “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 17-18). Similarly, Gay’s (2000) culturally responsive teaching validates students’ prior experiences and the knowledge they bring with them into the classroom. Paris (2012) argues for a reconceptualization of Dr. Ladson-Billings’ (1994) pedagogy, and insists that we must strive towards a “culturally sustaining” pedagogy instead. Still more, other scholars have called for pedagogy that is “community sustaining” (Duncan-Andrade, 2011). For emergent bilingual students, the curriculum must be designed with this in mind, but perhaps even more importantly, the curriculum must also be linguistically relevant and sustaining (García, 2009; Villegas and Lucas, 2001). For the purposes of this work, I define equity in the classroom as occurring when students have access to the curriculum, when they can
be active participants in classroom discussions and contributors to the co-construction of their learning. In short, educational equity in the context of this work means having meaningful access to the learning that is taking place in students’ classrooms. It is impossible to have equal access if we are not taking into account the linguistic needs and strengths of emergent bilingual students’ in the classroom.

Since language is a social construct, and because societal norms dictate which features of language to use in certain contexts, society has also created a hierarchy of “languages” placing English at the top. English has been called a “killer” language due to its global dominance and its role in undermining minority languages (Skutnabb-Kangas 2013; Phillipson, 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). If we acknowledge translanguaging as a tool for a dynamic, transformative education (Cummins, 2000), then we have to also recognize not only the value of other “languages,” but also of other language practices and their significant role in the education of emergent bilingual students. This is true even when the goal is for students to acquire English, as is often the case in U.S. schools. Translanguaging combats the dominant monolingual ideology, which views the immersion of language-minoritized students into English as the superior pedagogical practice. Immersion is by far the most common pedagogical approach for language-minoritized children in U.S. schools. Translanguaging also combats the monoglossic ideology that sees bilingualism as two separate languages (Del Valle, 2000; García, 2009; Heller, 2008) and that espouses the strict separation of languages.

Students who do not fit into a monoglossic view of bilingualism have been described as “semilingual” or “dual nonnative speakers” (Valadez, MacSwan, & Martinez, 2000; Singhal, 2004). Similar conceptualizations of language have contributed to notions such as “Spanglish,” which deems students as not knowing one language or the other “fully” (García, 2009; for more
critiques on “Spanglish” see also Otheguy & Stern, 2011). Hornberger’s (1989) revisited continua of biliteracy (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003) reminds us the complexities of language, and the power relations that are associated to how we negotiate the resources allocated to one end of the continua over the other. Thus, educational equity also means brokering the powers of language, so that the diverse language practices of students’ are seen as valid forms of communication, and their home languages and languaging practices are not seen or treated as inferior to English. For García (2009), social justice is a key principle for bilingual education because it merges languages and cultures, making it necessary to broker fairness between the students. Furthermore, educational equity means viewing all students as “knowers,” borrowing from Freire (1970) (as cited in García, 2009, p. 318). Positioned as “knowers” students can increase their level of investment and engagement in the classroom and contribute to their own education, resulting in a more fairly distributed allocation of power.

Flores (2014) has said that translanguaging is a political act—a component of the broader political effort by language-minoritized peoples striving towards “linguistic self-determination” (para. 4). Thus, pairing translanguaging practices with a socially and culturally sustaining curriculum can bring about educational equity. García and Leiva (2012) have shown this in their work in New York City’s International High Schools—supported by the International Network of for Public Schools (INPS), a non-profit organization that supports a system of schools specifically designed to address the needs of newcomer immigrant youth (García & Sylvan, 2011). The IHS in NYC follow two distinct program models: a multilingual plurilingual model, which supports a linguistically heterogeneous student population through the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool, and the bilingual plurilingual model, which has also adopted translanguaging pedagogy, but specifically serves Spanish-speaking immigrant youth
(two NYC IHS, called the Pan American International High Schools, or PAIHSs, follow the latter model) (García & Sylvan, 2011, p. 392). The goal for schools in our current global context should be to adopt a *transglossic* norm. *Transglossia*, which has been defined as “the fluid, yet stable, language practices of groups of people” (García, Flores, & Homonoff-Woodley, 2012, p. 3), can be the standard that can help balance the scales of power that English currently dominates. The school curriculum must also be able to empower students by harnessing their critical consciousness, since increasing students’ awareness of themselves and their position within the dominant culture can help equip them with the tools to resist inequities and work towards balancing the scales of power.

**Theoretical Perspectives**

Several theoretical frameworks have guided this work. First, translanguaging, as García (2009) has theorized it, has been fundamental to my study since I will be examining it as a pedagogical practice in a New York City public school. What is more, García and Lin’s (2017) theory of “weak” and “strong” versions of translanguaging, described earlier, has also been central to this work, specifically in considering my role in sustaining each of these during the course of my research for this dissertation. This theory differentiates between two versions of translanguaging that can sometimes co-exist, but can also be in conflict with one another.

Bourdieu’s (1986) Cultural Capital theory has also been vital in the framing of this study. Speakers of minoritized languages have a cultural capital (their language and cultural practices) that is often ignored or seen as conflicting with the culture of schools in the U.S. Consequently, students that do not align to the mainstream school culture are often perceived as being “empty linguistic vessels” (borrowing from Freire, 1970). Bourdieu defines cultural capital as the types of knowledge, skills, and education that indicate higher status and facilitate possibilities for
upward mobility within the socio-economic structure. Thus, having cultural capital equals having power. Language-minoritized students’ cultural capital, then, comes in the form of their cultural and linguistic practices, provided they have a role in education, which translanguaging can provide.

Paulo Freire’s (1970) Critical Pedagogy Theory has likewise helped frame my study as well as provided me with an approach through which I conceptualized and implemented the unit of study for this research. Critical Pedagogy challenges the dominant traditional forms of teaching and learning; it supports the notion that learners can be active participants in their own learning, which using translanguaging as a pedagogical tool also aims to do. Similarly, Paris’ (2012) culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) framework has been crucial in the development and the teaching of the unit. CSP counters the deficit approach to teaching students of color and aims to “perpetuate and foster–to sustain–linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism” in schooling (p. 93). It seeks to disrupt school curriculums that normalize monolingualism and monoculturalism, and replaces it with content about communities of color as legitimate and worthy of learning.

Lastly, Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987, 2007) Borderlands Theory and Mignolo’s (2000) “Border Thinking” was explored in my research since their theories aim to break down the version of reality that is created by the dominant society and counters it with a different version of “reality”—a reality that emerges from a place of in-betweens; neither from here nor over there, but a hybrid of the two that is neither one or the other but part of both, which effectively describes what happens when students and teachers engage in translanguaging practices.
Chapter Three:
Methodology

For this qualitative case study, I employed an action-research approach. The purpose was to understand how emergent bilingual students use translanguage. In subsequent chapters, I describe the opportunities and challenges that translanguage presents and the ways in which it advances educational equity. I also describe the ways in which emergent bilingual students reflect on the use of translanguage. As Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) remind us, “the collaborative or participatory action research model implies that participant expertise is developed through the process” (p. 58). In some ways, I was counting on a degree of participant expertise to begin with, since the students’ use of translanguage is a normal communicative practice for them. It was my hope, however, that during our time together, students would become more reflective about their language use, or increase their level of consciousness on a practice they engage with everyday.

To understand the methods used in the collection and analysis of the data described in this chapter, I revisit the questions that guided my research:

1. How do students take up translanguage in bilingual classrooms and what are its effects in the classroom?
   
   • What are the opportunities and challenges that a translanguage pedagogy creates for students?
   
   • How do students negotiate translanguage to learn?
   
   • Does translanguage advance educational equity in the classroom, and if so, in which ways?
2. What are students’ views on translanguaging and how are those views related to student characteristics?

- How do students view translanguaging?
- Do students view translanguaging as their right?
- Do students view translanguaging as advancing educational equity?

In exploring these questions, I designed a unit of study that I implemented at a middle school in the Bronx, and collected data during the Spring 2015 semester.

The data consisted of (1) interviews with small groups of students; (2) interviews with six focal students; (3) audio recordings of classroom lessons and discussions; (4) student work; and (5) field notes and researcher memos. The following table describes the research design in further detail:
Table 3.1: Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Rationale/Goal</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do students take up translanguaging in bilingual classrooms and what are its effects in the classroom?</td>
<td>- To learn if and how how translanguaging can give students access to a more meaningful education;</td>
<td>- Field notes from classroom;</td>
<td>- Classroom students in various settings</td>
<td>- Thematic analysis of observation field notes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- To learn what translanguaging strategies students use to learn; and</td>
<td>- Audiotapes of students engaging in group discussions; and</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Thematic analysis of lessons;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- To learn what role translanguaging can play in enacting social justice in the classroom.</td>
<td>- Student work (Annotated texts, graphic organizers, essays, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Thematic and content analysis of audio transcripts of student group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the opportunities and challenges that a translanguaging pedagogy creates for students?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focal Student interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Content analysis of student work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do students negotiate translanguaging to learn?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does translanguaging advance social justice in the classroom, and if so, in which ways?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are students’ views on translanguaging and how are those views related to student characteristics?</td>
<td>- To gather students’ reflections and interpretations on using translanguaging to learn;</td>
<td>- Group interviews, students watched video segments of <em>Immersion</em> film to ground discussion on translanguaging;</td>
<td>Entire class, in small groups of 3 students</td>
<td>Thematic analysis of student group interview transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do students view translanguaging?</td>
<td>- To learn how students perceive translanguaging (e.g. as their right, as enacting social justice)</td>
<td>- Focal student interviews using audio playback of class discussions (stimulated recall)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do students view translanguaging as their right?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Six focal students</td>
<td>Thematic and Discourse analysis of audio transcripts from focal student interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do students view translanguaging as advancing social justice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selecting and Entering the School Site

I had an established relationship with the school in which I conducted my research from previous collaboration through the CUNY-New York State Initiative for Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB), which dated back to Spring 2012. As discussed earlier, through this initiative, schools across New York City have had the opportunity to work with CUNY faculty and CUNY student researchers, such as myself, and receive support and professional development for their teachers to help improve academic outcomes of emergent bilingual students. In my role as a researcher with CUNY-NYSIEB, my training enabled me to provide such support for teachers and school leaders. One of the key principles in this initiative was to support schools in utilizing students’ home language(s) as a resource in their education through the use of translanguaging pedagogy; thus, teachers in this school are familiar with translanguaging pedagogy and are already putting it into practice to some degree.

I kept in touch with this particular school because I was interested in pursuing work with a dynamic teacher I had the opportunity to work with, Ms. Flores⁶. The school principal, Mr. Kent, is a visionary leader, whose commitment to supporting his students’ bilingualism has led to the development of a dual language bilingual education program, as well as classes designed specifically to serve the needs of newly arrived emergent bilinguals. During the summer of 2014, I approached Ms. Flores to ask her if she would be willing to collaborate with me for this study. She was open and inviting to having me work on a project with her students, pending the approval from the principal. I then approached Mr. Kent for permission to conduct the research project. After receiving the proper authorizations from CUNY’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the NYC Department of Education, my fieldwork began January 2015 and concluded

⁶ All names, including the name of the school and the names of the teachers, principal, and children, are pseudonyms to protect anonymity.
June 2015.

The instructional unit was implemented over 12 weeks. Some extra sessions were needed to have students finish their revisions on their final essays, and to conduct the interviews. Both the group and focal student interviews took place after the conclusion of the unit. There was also a mid-winter break, spring break, and state exams that accounted for some interruptions, thus instruction was not always consecutive. I spent approximately five hours, twice per week at the school. I taught for one period during each of the two days, using the remainder of the time to work with small groups of students in the 6th grade cohorts as well as students from the 7th grade cohort with whom I was conducting my research. In a non-researcher capacity, I worked with the students on improving their reading and writing skills in both English in Spanish, or any assignments the teachers deemed important, acting as an extra set of hands for two of the teachers in the bilingual programs, including Ms. Flores. The other two teachers in the program were also made aware of my availability, but did not request my support. This additional time I spent in the school outside of teaching the unit was my contribution to the school for welcoming and allowing me to conduct this study.

The School Context

The South Bronx Academy (SBA) is a relatively small school with a student population of just over 300 students in grades 6th through 8th. It is located inside a larger school building that also hosts two other schools in the first and second floors, while SBA takes up the entire third floor. Approximately 70% of the students are Hispanic/Latino, predominantly from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, but more recently Mexican families have started moving into the area and enrolling their children there. Black or African-American students make up roughly 30% of the student population. The school has a highly transient student population.
This means that students are inconsistently matriculated in the school due to housing instability and other poverty-related issues. Most of the students (82%) qualify for a free or reduced lunch.

A third of the student population (33%) of the students are classified as ELLs; these students are mostly Spanish-speaking Latino students; however, SBA has had a large influx of students from various Francophone West African countries in recent years. The school’s programmatic structures were largely geared toward monolingual English-speaking students; however, the school began a dual language bilingual education program that CUNY-NYSIEB helped launch. At the time of this study, the bilingual program was in its third year, as mentioned earlier. In addition, the school has two self-contained ENL/English as a New Language (ENL) classes designed for newly arrived students that they call “Newcomer/SIFE” classes. These classes serve mixed grade students who speak a variety of languages including Spanish, French, Arabic, Wolof, and Fula, amongst others. These classes are geared towards students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), which make up 8% of this school’s student population, as well as newcomer students. It should be noted however, that being SIFE and a newcomer are not synonymous, since newcomers do not always experience interrupted schooling in their home countries. What is more, SIFE students often have low to no home language literacy. The teachers in these specialty classes are trained in teaching all content through the use of ENL methodologies. Students in the Newcomer/SIFE classes are then transitioned to either the general education monolingual program with ENL support, or to the bilingual program.

**The language policy of the school and my instruction**

The school’s language allocation policy posits that classes alternate Spanish and English weekly: one week in Spanish, the next week in English, and so on. Thus, I aligned my instruction to the schools’ policy by planning my lessons in the particular language as denoted by
the school’s schedule. However, all lessons had translinguaging spaces built in, and students were encouraged to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire in ways they saw fit, in order do their best work and express themselves more fully. This research project addresses how the flexible use of language and purposive and strategic translinguaging pedagogy can maximize students learning in a bilingual setting, which many times strictly segregates students’ languages. However, it should be noted that SBA is unique in its use of translinguaging. It does not enforce a strict language separation policy, and students and teachers engage with translinguaging practices regularly given their involvement in CUNY-NYSIEB.

The Participants in the Study

The collaborating teacher

Ms. Flores was born in NYC from Dominican parents and grew up in the Bronx, not too far from the school site. She is an experienced educator of nearly two decades, starting her career early on as a paraprofessional with NYC’s Bilingual Pupil Services program. For more than a decade, she has taught Social Studies, Humanities, and ELA/ENL. Before the bilingual program was established at SBA, she was an ENL teacher who naturally utilized her students’ linguistic strengths in her teaching, and so was enthusiastic about SBA’s earlier participation in CUNY-NYSIEB. Her role during the implementation of the unit of study was minimal, as she and the principal allowed me to take the lead in teaching the unit. She was in the classroom to supervise the students, help in refocusing students’ attention when needed (though this was rare), and perform her daily administrative duties.

The students

The 7th grade bilingual class cohort had 17 students. Students were mostly Dominican, with the exception of one Puerto Rican and one Mexican student. Some students were born in
the U.S; others were born abroad. A little under half the students were classified as “ELLs,” though their language and literacy levels in both English and Spanish range from emerging to more experienced. Moreover, at the time of the study they had at least one year of bilingual education completed, since all but one student began their 6th grade year in the bilingual program during the previous school year. Because of this schools’ involvement with CUNY-NYSIEB and their teachers’ regular use of translanguaging practices, students were amenable to the use of translanguaging in the classroom; again, something unique to SBA. Hence, translanguaging pedagogy was not new to them. What was new to students was that their use of and reflections on translanguaging was now being systematically studied as a result of this research study.

All 17 students participated in the group interviews. There were five groups of three students, and one group of two students.

Out of the 17 students, six were selected to be the focal students, and they were also interviewed individually. They were equally divided by gender: three girls and three boys; an originally unintentional, but welcomed configuration. The following table provides a snapshot of the six focal children selected– a more detailed profile of the focal students is provided in chapter five:

Table 3.2: The Focal Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Official NYC DOE ELL Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lianna</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>12, born in DR, living in the US for 2 years</td>
<td>ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mateo</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>13, Born in DR, living in US 4 years</td>
<td>ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giselle</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>12 years old, born in DR, living in the US 8 years</td>
<td>Non-ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>13 years old, born in DR, living in the US for 7 years</td>
<td>Non-ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>13 years old, born in PR, living in the US 7 years</td>
<td>Non-ELL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Menken (2013) has noted, EBL students in the secondary level must not only learn content, but also develop their literacy. This can present a unique set of challenges since often times secondary teachers are not well equipped to teach these students. Foundational literacy skill-building is often consigned to teachers at the elementary grade levels. There is limited research on middle school students, their bilingual/biliteracy development, and especially the use of translanguaging. Thus, this research hopes to fill some of that void.

**The Instructional Unit**

For this research study, I designed and implemented a unit of study to the 7th grade bilingual class cohort at SBA. This unit was designed to awaken students’ socio-political consciousness and increase their awareness on important issues and policies affecting the Latinx community. It covered contemporary immigration issues and explored how the media and social media impact the public narrative. I focused the unit on the tens of thousands of undocumented and unaccompanied children and youth coming to the U.S. from Mexico and Central America to the border along the U.S. Southwest, their trajectories, and their legal struggles as they reached the U.S. We also analyzed the various perspectives on Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration, which was announced on November 20, 2014 and temporarily delayed the deportation of undocumented immigrants without a criminal record and gave them an opportunity to apply for a work permit. As stated before, translanguaging itself is a political act (Flores, 2014), thus, the curriculum also had to be community sustaining and aim towards raising students’ critical consciousness.

The unit focused on literacy development in English and Spanish through the use of
translanguaging pedagogy. The sessions took place twice a week, for approximately 12 weeks, during one instructional period of 45 minutes. The lessons occurred during the regular social studies period. I used a variety of texts and newspaper articles that I made available to students both in English and Spanish, for reading, discussing, and debating, as well for written assignments. It was multimodal, and included the use of videos, images, political cartoons, and social media to diversify the medium through which students learned the content. What is more, I drew from the teaching strategies found in Celic and Seltzer’s (2012) CUNY-NYSIEB Translanguaging Guide. I will go into further detail on the unit of study and related activities in the next chapter.

**Role of the Researcher**

My primary role during this study was that of an action researcher. My main objective was to incorporate translanguaging pedagogy into this bilingual classroom and examine its effects as well as students’ own reflections of the pedagogy. Mackey and Gass (2005) posit that there is little agreement on what exactly action research is due to its dynamic nature. They describe it as teacher-initiated research with the objective to understand the learning process of students, often a particular aspect, which will help improve classroom practices (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Herr and Anderson (2015) describe it as a “reflective process,” and point out that most scholars agree that, “action research is inquiry done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them” (p. 3, emphasis in original). As such, I am positioning myself as an insider in both the school and in the community by various measures: as an experienced classroom teacher, as a professional developer having previously spent some time working with the school, Ms. Flores, and the other teachers in the bilingual program, and as a Spanish-speaking Latina. My goal was to carry out a classroom project that allowed me to better
understand students’ learning process when translanguaging pedagogy is enacted and assessed in the various ways as postulated by my research questions.

Data Collection

In order to accurately document the work, data was collected through five different methods, as previously specified: (1) Semi-Structured interviews with small groups of students; (2) Semi-Structured interviews with six focal students; (3) audio recordings of classroom lessons and discussions; (4) student work; and (5) field notes and researcher memos. These processes will be described in detail in the following sections.

Semi-structured interviews with small groups of students

I interviewed the whole class of 17 students in small groups of three, and on one occasion, a group of two students. I chose small groups so that everyone could get a chance to have their voices heard; a larger group might have made it especially difficult to discern the students’ voices during the transcription stage of the recordings. During the group interviews with students, I used a Stimulated Recall Interviews (SRI) strategy (Baker & Lee, 2011) and played back key moments from the short film, Immersion by Richard Levien. A bilingual film with English subtitles for the Spanish parts, Immersion is about a young boy, Moisés, who recently emigrated from Mexico to the United States and is taking his first standardized Math exam in a new language. The film highlights the various roles of those around the young protagonist: his teacher, principal and classmates, and how they each respond to his struggles.

Baker and Lee (2011) note that one of the benefits of SRIs is that it helps contextualize actions that could have otherwise been more difficult to recall. Many students in this group can identify with Moisés’ challenges, and by showing them snippets of the film, my intention was for students to articulate their views on how the various people in Moisés’ life – the teacher,
principal, classmates– could have helped him. After the video playback, I asked students questions, following a semi-structured interview protocol I designed, leaving enough room to follow-up and engage with student responses. A semi-structured interview approach was chosen as opposed to a more structured format because as Rubin and Rubin (2005) assert, the flexibility integral to semi-structured interviews allows room to “probe and expand the interviewee’s responses” (p. 88). Consequently, the actual interview audio recordings and the corresponding transcripts reflect a more expansive set of questions, beyond those reflected on either of the interview protocols, since each was tailored to the interviewees as the discussion developed (See Appendix A for the Focal Student Interview Protocol and Appendix B for the Group Interview Protocol).

Playing back short parts of the film for the students also served a second purpose during my interviews: Moisés’ story helped contextualize some of the questions I asked students. The objective was for students to reflect on their own languaging experiences throughout their schooling; students had to think about whether or not they had been in a similarly challenging position as Moisés. Thus, showing his story helped tap into students’ own experiences and subsequently examine how they may have grappled with similar situations.

Mackey and Gass (2005) argue that using the interviewee’s home language can help reduce or eliminate any concerns that language proficiency of the interviewee will have an effect on the “quality and quantity of the data provided” (p. 174). Accordingly, the language of the interview largely depended on the make-up of the group. By the time the interviews took place, I had been working with the students for several months, and had already learned about their linguistic strengths. Some interviews were conducted mostly in English, while others were conducted mostly in Spanish, but all were conducted bilingually to various degrees. All
interviews were audio recorded with the students’ consent.

**Semi-structured interviews with focal students**

At the end of the unit, I selected and interviewed six focal students individually, whom I describe in greater detail in chapter five of this dissertation. I chose these students because I saw them often engaging with translanguage practices during their interactions as observed in the classroom, as well as in their classwork. The focal student interviews provided me with an opportunity to get a more in-depth account of their experiences engaging with translanguage pedagogy. For these particular students, I designed an interview protocol inspired by Irving Seidman’s (2006) in-depth, phenomenologically based interview protocol. Seidman’s (2006) protocol is a series of three interviews, each with distinct goals to allow the student to reconstruct his or her languaging experience (p. 15). Nevertheless, due to time constraints and the inability to keep students after school, I combined these goals into one semi-structured interview protocol and interviewed the focal students once. In designing the interview protocol, I sought to capture three main elements as inspired by Seidman (2006): the students’ background and experiences with schooling up to the present, the students’ experiences with translanguage in the classroom during our project, and finally, the students’ reflections on their language practices (See Appendix A for the Focal Student Interview Protocol).

Similarly to the small group interviews, I used the SRI strategy for these interviews and played back a short piece of an audio recording from a class session in which the focal child engaged in the use of translanguage during a discussion. This was done so that students could elaborate and reflect on what translanguage allowed them to do in specific, contextualized moments. As with the group interviews, the language use for the interviews was student-led. Specifically, two of the focal students were primarily interviewed in Spanish, since it was their
dominant language, and four preferred to be interviewed primarily in English. As with the group interviews, I audio recorded all individual interviews with the students’ consent.

Audio recording of lessons and group discussions

Audio recording during the lessons and discussions was slowly introduced. As a result, only the second half of the unit was captured through this method. I decided to wait to record the lessons until I felt I had gained the students’ trust and more meaningful discussions were underway. Once the recording began, I placed the audio recorder near me as I introduced the topic and the lesson, and as the conversations were taken over by students in their groups, the recorder was then placed at the center of the table cluster whose discussion I joined. I was present in those groups to listen in on the discussion as well as to make sure students did not meddle with the recorder. After a while, the students seemed to ignore the presence of the recorder altogether.

The small groups consisted of students at a variety of proficiency levels in both English and Spanish as previously organized by Ms. Flores. I did not suggest the alteration of any groups and kept the classroom organization as it had always been in order to avoid interfering with the normal classroom arrangement. The purpose of audio recording students in this manner was to collect data of the group discussions as students engaged with the content, and to capture any of the translanguaging moments that ensued.

Student work

In addition to the student interviews and audio recordings from the classroom, student work was collected from the sessions, including the student composition notebooks that were provided for the class. Student work, such as graphic organizers, annotated texts, and other writing were also collected in order to provide additional examples of student use of
translanguaging practices. What is more, photos of charts were taken. These charts were made in collaboration with the students or by students themselves during group work.

**Field notes and researcher memos**

Following each session, I wrote field notes, noting the language dynamics in the classroom, paying special attention to student-to-student interactions as they made sense of the work and how they engaged with the content. I noted language use specifically, as well as any moments that were deemed to be interesting and noteworthy. This aspect of the data-collection was particularly challenging given that these were often written once I had finished teaching and after having worked with other students in a non-researcher capacity. The researcher memos came later, during the data analysis stage. During this later phase, I wrote researcher memos as soon as I finished re-reading and coding the transcripts with the purpose to synthesize and reflect on the essence of the interviews.

**Data Analysis**

Approximately 10 hours were captured on an audio recorder during the lessons and discussions in the classroom. These audio recordings captured the introductions of the lessons for the day, the whole-class conversations that ensued, as well as group discussions since the recorder was placed in one table cluster at a time. For classroom recordings, only the most pertinent data was transcribed, specifically, the moments in which students engaged in translanguaging practices.

Each interview with the focal students lasted roughly 30 minutes. Each interview with the small groups also lasted about 30 minutes. The semi-structured interviews with the focal children and the small group interviews were transcribed.
The relevant data from the class lessons/discussions and all of the audio from the interviews were transcribed onto Microsoft Word documents. The transcriptions for the focal students were first coded using Dedoose, online coding software, which I found useful when writing researcher memos that synthesized what I gathered from each transcript. Dedoose was also helpful in quantifying the occurrences of the most prominent codes. What is more, this program was used to generate a word cloud that helped me visualize some of my codes, with the more prominent codes being shown in a larger text compared to less occurring ones (See Appendix D). However, I ultimately decided to transfer the transcripts and codes onto Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, which I found to be a more efficient place to keep all coding of transcripts centrally organized. As a result, I used Excel spreadsheets to organize and code the remainder of my transcripts from the classroom discussions and the group interviews. Details on the coding approach are discussed later in this chapter.

Transcripts of group discussions and focal student interviews

I utilized the accompanying audio recordings of the lessons and group discussions to perform the same thematic analysis as above, focusing this time on the different translanguaging strategies that students used, and paying particular attention to evidence that would help me answer my first set of research questions:

• What are the opportunities and challenges that a translanguaging pedagogy creates for students?
• How do students negotiate translanguaging to learn?
• Does translanguaging advance educational equity in the classroom, and if so in which ways?

I organized the themes and created categories that helped guide my analysis with the other data
sets. I used these to make connections with the group interviews, and sought examples in the student work collected.

The focal student interviews were analyzed in conjunction with the audio of the group work and were used to add to the students’ reflections and interpretations about the process of using translanguaging to learn. As with the transcripts of the class sessions, the data was used to answer the first set of research questions.

**Small group interviews**

The transcripts from the small group interviews also called for content analysis in order to look for specific instances describing students’ views and reflections on translanguaging. I also focused on the ways in which students viewed translanguaging as a right, with specific attention to how they responded to Moisés’ experiences in the classroom in the scenes they viewed from the short film, *Immersion*. I used these transcripts to analyze the emerging threads that relate to how translanguaging impacts student learning and how it relates to their rights and the social justice agenda, similar to the approach detailed above.

Although the transcripts of the small group interviews were also thematically analyzed in order to answer the first three questions, this data set enabled me to focus on the second set of questions:

- How do students view translanguaging?
- Do students view translanguaging as their right?
- Do students view translanguaging as advancing educational equity?

In analyzing the data, I conducted not only thematic analysis but also discourse analysis focusing on how students talk about their views. For Gee (2011), discourse analysis “is based on the details of speech (and gaze and gesture and action) that are arguably deemed relevant in the
context where the speech was used and that are relevant to the arguments the analysis is attempting to make” (p. xi). So to perform my analysis, I followed Gee (2011) and focused especially on how students reflected on the use of language.

**Field notes**

The field notes were reviewed, in conjunction with the audio recordings of the group discussions to find any evidence of: 1) what I noticed when I used translanguaging strategies and 2) how students engaged in the learning. I categorized these observations thematically and then used them to inform my analysis of the student data, which was the focus of my study.

**Student work**

I corroborated my findings from the data described above with a content analysis of student work, which were matched with the audio recordings of the class sessions and the focal student interviews. I collected student written work and annotated texts, and analyzed it for instances of translanguaging, noting the opportunities it afforded them.

**Coding of Data**

The content, thematic, and discourse analysis described above led to the creation of an extensive list of codes after the initial reviews of the transcripts, and later, a list of categories and themes that shape this dissertation. Johnny Saldaña (2009) describes coding in a qualitative study as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). Researchers also point out that the lens of the researcher can affect the types of codes that researchers develop (Saldaña, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). I have already described my role in this work and given my background in education and in activism, and it is no doubt that my coding likely reflects my prior experiences. Two types of coding were used in the reading of the data:
descriptive and, to a lesser extent, In Vivo coding. Descriptive coding aims to capture the topic of an excerpt in the data in a word or short phrase, whereas In Vivo coding uses the participant’s own language to label a passage (Saldaña, 2009). In Vivo coding offered the opportunity for the students’ voices to be heard, which was a powerful element to include in this work. I then developed sub-codes for some of the major codes, which evolved into categories and themes that helped frame the story I wanted to tell from my research. The researcher memos written throughout the reading of the data were especially useful in the development of the themes that shaped my findings, as these helped me start putting into words the essence of the data gathered.

**Study Limitations**

The limitations of this study are several. First, this study examined a specific subgroup of students: Spanish-speaking middle school students in a dual language bilingual education program. This small sample size cannot possibly show the many opportunities and challenges translanguaging pedagogy can present to all emergent bilingual students. Secondly, I taught this unit myself, which provided me with a somewhat controlled study given that I was in charge of planning the lessons and took the lead on teaching and facilitating the discussions. Additionally, I have been immersed in translanguaging pedagogy in a professional capacity, and thus I am better versed in this pedagogy than the average classroom teacher. I am also an experienced bilingual, which further places me at an advantage in employing translanguaging strategies with Spanish-speaking students. Perhaps these last three points may not be limitations at all, since they were all assets in the implementation of the unit. Nonetheless, it’s important to recognize and disclose these points, since these conditions may not be able to be replicated.

Finally, the power relations that typically play out between teacher and students may be more magnified during this study because I was not their regular classroom teacher. While I have
positioned myself as an insider in the description of the “role of the researcher” included earlier in this chapter, I may not have been seen as such by the students. Ultimately, I am a university-affiliated researcher and teacher, an “other,” which may have affected how students perceived me, and how honest and forthcoming they may have been during all aspects of this study, including their participation in class discussions and during the interviews. Interviewer effect could have been a factor since I asked students to reflect on various instances of trans languaging, while having a clear idea about my own positive views on this practice. It is my hope that sharing a language and Latino identity with these students, as well as my best efforts to provide them with a quality learning experience, has helped mitigate this last limitation, and that students felt comfortable participating during all aspects of the unit and the research. Even with its limitations, I hope this research will fill in some gaps in the literature on translanguaging pedagogy.
Chapter Four:
The Instructional Unit

In this chapter, I provide a description of the instructional unit I designed and implemented as part of my research in the South Bronx Academy (SBA). I begin by giving some background on my arrangement in Ms. Flores’ classroom. I give an overview of the unit that I taught to my target class of 7th grade students in a dual language bilingual education program (DLBE). I describe the series of lessons that formed part of the unit, including the specific activities I designed for the lessons, and a description of the assignments given to students.

For this research study, I taught a unit on immigration that I titled, *The Flight of Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors and the Immigration Debate* (See Appendix E for the unit of study). The unit of study lasted approximately 12 weeks. I visited my site twice a week, and taught during one period each time. I used the remainder of my day at the school to assist the classroom teacher, Ms. Flores, in any way. For instance, I worked with a small group of students or with students individually during her other class periods to provide support. I also made myself available to other teachers in the DLBE program, but only one other teacher made use of my time by having me work with some of her students; these students were part of the same bilingual class cohort involved in my study, so they were already familiar with me.

My unit project, *The Flight of Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors and the Immigration Debate*, investigated the trajectories of Latino immigrant youth to the United States. We focused particularly on the large influx of unaccompanied minors, largely from Central America, that were detained at the southern border between the U.S. and Mexico, as they attempted to cross

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7 Pseudonyms are used for the names of the school, students, and teacher in order to protect anonymity.
into the Unites States. A significant portion of this unit was also spent on learning and analyzing the different perspectives on President Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration issued in November 2014—a couple of months before this study began. Around that same time, an unprecedented number of unaccompanied minors had attempted to cross into the U.S. and had been detained and held at detention centers along the US-Mexico border. I chose this topic due to the relevance, not only of the topic of immigration since all of the students come from immigrant families or are immigrants themselves, but also because many of the children attempting the dangerous journey and crossing into the U.S. were often the students’ same age. Also, like the unaccompanied minors, all of the students in the class are Latino/Latina, so there was an element of linguistic and cultural connection. Lastly, I chose this topic because I wanted to impact students’ socio-political consciousness. It covered current events taking place during the time of implementation of the unit that I believed students would feel compelled to learn about and promote classroom discourse surrounding immigration issues and policies, and the omnipresent anti-immigrant rhetoric. The purpose was to apply a Freirean approach to my pedagogy, in which students learned to question, critique, and resist the information they are given by the media and social media, while creating a learning experience that was both community and linguistically sustaining.

The unit was inspired by the unit, “Immigration: Stories, Struggles and Debates,” created by Maria José Aragón, Tiago Bittencourt and KatyAnna Johnson, with Tatyana Kleyn, a companion curriculum to Tatyana Kleyn’s (2011) text, Immigration: The Ultimate Teen Guide. Some of the introductory lessons in my unit were drawn and adapted from this curriculum. In

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order to build background knowledge, students began the unit of study by surveying their own or their families’ immigration experiences. For this, they had to interview a parent or a family member on their experiences emigrating to the U.S. from their home countries, while also reflecting on their own, when applicable. I gave the students some interview questions, which I made available to them in both Spanish and English, but encouraged them to construct their own questions as well. Students were advised to conduct the interviews and take notes bilingually, or as they deemed appropriate. This enabled students to develop a more personal connection to the unit of study, and start critically reflecting on their own and/or their families’ immigration stories and struggles.

Students then examined the plight of the unaccompanied minors during their journey to the United States, and the legal struggles that ensued, based on readings, videos, images, and newspaper and other media accounts. They learned about firsthand accounts of the youth’s lived experiences on the violence they suffered at the hands of gangs in their hometowns, stories of their difficult journeys through Mexico (most of them were from Central America), and of their detention at crowded holding centers along the U.S. border. They also analyzed U.S. immigration policy, particularly President Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration, as mentioned above, and explored what it meant for the unaccompanied minors as well as immigrants already in the U.S. Moreover, students utilized social media as one of the lenses by which to examine immigration policy and its role in the shaping of a national narrative on immigration. For instance, we looked at tweets with the hashtags #executiveorder and #immigrationaction to examine the response to Obama’s executive order and discussed the influence of social media on the public.
The DLBE program at SBA alternates between the language of instruction, Spanish and English, on a weekly basis. Therefore, my lessons were primarily taught in the target language for the week in order to be in alignment with the school’s language allocation policy. García and Lin (2017) remind us that “translanguaging has been taken up by scholars especially to push back against the ‘two solitudes’ (to quote Jim Cummins (2007) that characterizes dual language bilingual programs” (p. 122). Fortunately, the bilingual teachers in the school do push back on language separatist notions and have the full support of their administration, but that is not always the case in many other schools with bilingual programs. Thus, this unit was grounded on the use of translanguaging pedagogy, thereby utilizing translanguaging strategies to support student learning regardless of the weekly target language.

**Translanguaging Pedagogy**

Translanguaging pedagogy facilitated students’ engagement with the topic through the various modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) by encouraging them to tap into their entire language repertoire. Some of the translanguaging pedagogical strategies that I used with the unit of study were:

- Encouraging students to discuss texts and write texts using all their language repertoire
- Providing students with texts in both English and Spanish and encouraging them to use the texts flexibly
- Providing students with multimodal texts (videos, images, etc.) to encourage students to use all their meaning-making potential
- Sharing authentic texts, including personal narratives that were in either language or both
• Encouraging students to annotate text in one language in the language of their choice
• Encouraging students to collaborate and share out using their entire language repertoire
• Encouraging students to brainstorm and pre-write in the language of their choice

In the chapters that follow I go in depth into the workings of this translanguaging pedagogy, but here I describe the Unit of Study.

As I said before, I utilized a variety of texts and media sources to teach the lessons in this unit. Besides excerpts from Kleyn’s (2011) *Immigration: The Ultimate Teen Guide*, I included articles from various newspapers, and video clips from Spanish-language news stations. I also included posters and bilingual video propaganda by the U.S. government to discourage migration targeted to various Central American countries, and images of the minors’ journey through Mexico and their detainment at the border, and in holding facilities. These were all found online. Finally, I used political cartoons that expressed a variety of viewpoints on immigration issues and policy, and tweets (from Twitter) from institutions and politicians as they responded to Obama’s Executive Action on Immigration.

I describe here the activities from the unit organized into four sections:

• In *Part I: the Introductory lessons*, I describe the opening lessons that helped prepare students to learn about this topic by tapping into their prior knowledge on immigration and the different reasons why people migrate.

• In *Part II: Los niños, la bestia, y la migra*, I explain how students learned about the unaccompanied migrant children and their experiences.
• In Part III: *La orden ejecutiva del Presidente Obama*, students then analyzed different perspectives on immigration, and President Obama’s Executive Order on immigration.

• For Part IV: The culminating project, students spent the last several sessions of the unit working through graphic organizers and drafts to compose their final paper on the influence that media and social media have on constructing a public narrative.

**Part I: The Introductory Lessons**

*Essential Questions:*

*What are different reasons immigrants come to the United States?*
*How does the immigrant experience relate to my own identity?*
*How has immigration affected my family?*
*What are some of the challenges faced by Latino immigrants in the United States?*
*What are the lived experiences of undocumented immigrants?*

The unit began during an English-designated week, but I shared my own immigration story with students bilingually. I shared with them some of the struggles my family went through: the separation from my father while he was getting situated in a new country and we remained in Mexico, and finally joining him and adjusting to a new school and life. I also shared all the difficulties that it entailed. I shared what my mother says is one of the happiest memories of her life: when we first joined my dad, living in a one-room studio apartment that he was finally able to afford. My mother loved it because we were finally all together. I shared bilingually, because this allowed me to retell it in a more authentic way.

After I shared my personal story, we read the testimonies of young people from Kleyn’s (2011) book, *Immigration: The Ultimate Teen Guide (It Happened to Me)*. In groups, students read the stories in English and were encouraged to discuss with their groups and share with the
class in a language of their choice. They compared and contrasted the various experiences from immigrant youth from all over the world.

They were then given an assignment to gather their own immigration stories from what they could recollect, if applicable, or alternatively, from their families. Students interviewed someone in their family to gather their own personal immigration stories. Even though I had given them some questions, they were encouraged to add their own. The pre-written questions were in both English and Spanish, and they were told to conduct the interviews in any language they thought was appropriate or they could choose to do it bilingually.

During the following session, students used sticky notes to write in some of the events that were most surprising or significant to them and their families. They wrote in a language of their choice and then placed the notes on a class chart. We heard everyone’s story and shared with one another. Some students shared in English, others in Spanish, but most shared bilingually.

Translanguaging strategies

The primary text was in English, but was discussed and deconstructed bilingually. Students interviewed family members in their home languages, and took notes and shared with classmates in the language of their choice. They collaborated with classmates in any language or bilingually, wrote journal entries also in any language or bilingually. Students were furthermore free to draw from their entire language repertoire throughout the lessons.

Part II: Los Niños, la Bestia, y la Migra

Essential Questions:
Who are the unaccompanied minors? Where are they from?
What are the push/pull factors that led minors to flee their countries?
What are the experiences of the minors detained at the border?
What are some of the challenges faced by the unaccompanied minors during and after detainment?
After building student background on the topic of immigration and discussing their own immigration stories, students learned about the international crisis affecting tens of thousands of young people. In the sessions that followed, students learned about the migrating youth, the conditions in Central America they were escaping from, their long and arduous journey to the north, and their detainment at the U.S. border—a humanitarian crisis that has affected and continues to affect many children that were the students’ own age.

We read firsthand accounts from the migrant children from *La Opinion* and *The Tennessean*, watched news reports from *Primer Impacto*, and saw images of the crisis unfolding. Students got a firsthand account when they read Wadhwani’s (2014) article, “‘Border child' tells of path from Honduras to Tennessee,” from *The Tennessean*, the story of 17-year-old Gerardo on his journey into the U.S. They learned about his detainment and being bounced around to different detention centers in dehumanizing conditions. He was able to leave these places after arranging for his aunt in Tennessee to be his guardian as he waited his day in court. We read this during an English-designated week, and while this article was in English, students were able to discuss the key words and the concepts in a language-flexible environment. They wrote reflections in their journals aided by some guiding questions, also using their entire language repertoire.

One particular session during this Part took place during a Spanish-designated week, which meant that the materials and lesson was prepared primarily in Spanish, but had English language supports that in this specific case were mostly discussion-based. During this lesson, students watched a short news video clip on the unaccompanied minors from the Spanish-language news channel, *Primer Impacto*. We then debriefed and discussed bilingually what was reported in the video and then we read an article from *La Opinion*, a popular-Spanish language
daily newspaper based in Los Angeles, California. Morales Almada’s (2014) article, “Testimonio: Hermanitos migrantes relatan su trauma por ‘la hielera,’” offered the testimony of two immigrant brother and sister on their traumatic experience in a Texas detention center they called “la hielera,” or ice-box due to its freezing temperatures. We discussed the text bilingually to make sure every student was able to grasp the horrific experiences of the young children. The anti-immigrant rhetoric often dehumanizes these children, and many forget that they are only children. So it was important to include the children’s own voices, and for students to be able to connect faces to the struggle.

During the following session, students briefly reread the article to get reacquainted with the children’s story, and then I showed the class a slide presentation with graphs depicting the countries the kids were mostly migrating from. It also included a map of Central America to show the geographical location of the countries of origin of these youth, as well as the commonly followed route from Central America into Mexico and the U.S. There were moving images of people crowding on top of La Bestia, the nickname given to the freight train, a major mode of transportation carrying thousands of migrants in their dangerous journey north. There were images of the local people in the rural towns that the train passes through, and of the bags of food they threw to a moving train so that the travelers could have something to eat. Images also included the heavily-tattooed men of La Mara—some of the major perpetrators of the violence the kids were escaping from in their countries. The slide show presentation also included photos of children in the detention centers, mothers with their toddlers, people sleeping shoulder to

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9 La Mara is a notorious gang whose members are mostly from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. They distinguish themselves from other gangs by covering their bodies and faces with tattoos. They are known to carry out brutal attacks and are feared widely.
shoulder on mats on bare floors and covering their bodies with thermal blankets, much like what the young brother and sister described in the testimony that students read.

I gave students sentence starters (see Table 4.1) that they could use to help them get started on their writing of a reflection in their journals. I offered these in Spanish and English, and welcomed them to answer in the language that allowed them to express themselves on a deeper level, or in both languages.

Table 4.1: Sentence Starters (See Appendix E for more on the lessons):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Las imágenes me hicieron sentir…</td>
<td>The images made me feel…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La vida en un centro de detención ha de ser…</td>
<td>Life in a detention center…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si yo fuera uno de esos niños, …</td>
<td>If I were one of the detained children, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pienso que los niños deberían…</td>
<td>I think the children should…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yo pienso que los niños sienten…</td>
<td>I think the children feel…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students learned about the U.S. government response to the massive migration of young people, which presented a unique set of challenges given their age. As a result, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) launched the Dangers Awareness Campaign in an attempt to dissuade families from allowing their children from leaving their country. They produced a series of posters that were distributed in countries like El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. They also aired videos in the local channels, and made public service announcements through the radio and various other outlets, each tailored to the specific Spanish language variety of the targeted region. In class, we discussed the purpose of this campaign and the potential consequences, and pointed out the differences in the Spanish language varieties or words used.
Figure 4.1: Dangers Awareness Campaign, Poster 1
Poster message: Creí que sería fácil que mi hijo consiguiera papeles en el norte...
No era cierto. Nuestros hijos son el futuro: Protejámoslos.

Figure 4.2: Dangers Awareness Campaign, Poster 2
Poster message: Creí que sería fácil que mi hijo consiguiera papeles en la USA...Me equivoqué.
Nuestros hijos son el futuro: Protejámoslos.

During one session in a Spanish-designated day, I pasted an image of a campaign poster on a large piece of chart paper (See Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 for some examples). I wrote the words “describe” in one section for students to describe in a literal sense what they saw in their respective poster. In the two other parts, I wrote in “thoughts” for students to write in some of
their inferences on the image and the message it was meant to convey, as well as “questions,” for them to pose any questions or wonderings they each had after studying the poster. Each section title was written bilingually and had a visual representation as well (i.e. a drawing of a light bulb for “thoughts”). In groups, students were able to write in a word or a phrase in their response to the image in their respective chart paper. They then conducted a gallery walk to see the other posters of the campaign and hear one another present their group’s poster to the rest of the class using the following sentence frames to guide them:

1. En el cartel, se ve/nosotros vemos… (In the poster, we see…)  
2. Nostros pensamos que… (We think that…)  
3. Nuestras preguntas son… (We wonder/Our questions are…)

We also watched the Spanish-language Public Service Announcement (PSA) videos that were aired in the local channels in the various regions of Central America. We discussed the messages, the intent, and the potential outcomes of this campaign, and wrote a reflection, using the following as a guide:

If you were the parents of these young children and you saw these posters, what would you think?  
Si fueras la mamá/papá de estos jóvenes y vieras estas imágenes, ¿Qué pensarias?

If I were the young migrant’s parent, brother or sister, I would….  
Si yo fuera la mamá/papá/hermana/hermano de un niño o joven migrante, yo…

¿Qué es más peligroso, tomar el viaje o quedarse en su país natal?  
What is more dangerous: Taking the journey or staying in their country?

Students learned to use evidence to support their responses, whether it was oral-based during the gallery walk presentations, or by providing examples in their reflection writing.

Once the young migrants were detained by the border patrol, they were often shuffled to various detainment centers; much like Gerardo’s experience discussed above. In addition, many of these young, unaccompanied minors were released to a guardian to wait for their court date.
As such, they attended schools and lived with family as they waited to go in front of a judge.

During one lesson in a Spanish-designated week, the objective was for students to read about the different points of views when it comes to the unaccompanied minors’ detainment. I shortened a news article in Spanish by Univision (2014), “Manifestantes bloquean autobuses con migrantes en California.” Students were encouraged to annotate the text in the language of their choice.

The news article, which I condensed into a one-page article, included several images of protesters blocking the roads in an effort to prevent buses from transporting the detained minors to a detainment center in Murrieta, California. The detainment centers in Texas had exceeded their capacity, and the migrants were being distributed to centers along the southwest to ease the burden faced by some centers. The images included in this article also depicted protesters waving American flags as they blocked the roads, and another showed a man holding a sign that read: “Stop illegal immigration” and “Return to Sender.” After we read the article and discussed our interpretations of the images, students wrote a letter to a hypothetical child riding on one of the affected buses, as the protesters were blocking it. The purpose of the letter was to make the children feel at ease about what they are seeing out of their bus windows. I overviewed the basic parts of a letter, and students constructed a short letter to the children in their journals in the language of their choice.

Students also read another perspective during an English-designated week, this time from a more local source, The New York Post. In their article, “Flood of Illegal Immigrants to pour into NYC schools,” Edelman and Vincent (2014) give an alarmist perspective on the surge in numbers of undocumented immigrants into NYC schools. The authors argue that the children will burden the state and speculated what it would cost the taxpayers to educate the children in our public schools. We read the article and discussed some of the implications involved in the
authors’ tone. In particular, the lesson’s objective was for students to determine the purpose and the tone of the article. Students were to annotate the text in any language and write a response on the reading and use text-based support for their statements using the following sentence frame as a guide:

I can tell that this author believes/feels that ____________ because she/he said ____________.

Through news clips, articles, and images, students were able to understand some of the reasons why people risk their lives to take on this difficult journey: some come for economic reasons, but many are seeking refuge as they risk everything to escape the violence they face in their countries from gangs like La Mara. They learned the different obstacles the youth faced during their journey, and the challenges they encountered when they finally made it to the border and were detained by the U.S. Border Patrol. They learned information through the various sources in different languages, but more than that, they had the opportunity to discuss with their classmates and myself, reflect, and write in a language-flexible environment. The primary objective was for students to learn the often difficult and abstract concepts of empathy, justice, and humanity that these lessons sought to convey, and openly voice what they are thinking through various, unconstrained means. The language allocation policy dictated the language that the primary content medium would be in, but students always were encouraged and had the freedom to draw from all their language resources available. They did this while awakening their political consciousness on important issues in the broader community.

Translanguaging strategies
The texts were either in English or in Spanish, in accordance with the designated language of the week, however, they were discussed bilingually and students were free to annotate in the language of their choice. The posters and video PSAs were in Spanish, but examined bilingually. Discussion questions and journal reflection prompts were provided mostly bilingually, and students also received bilingual sentence starters or sentence frames to assist their writing. Students collaborated with classmates in any language or bilingually, wrote journal entries also in any language or bilingually. Students were free to draw from their entire language repertoire throughout the lessons.

Part III: La Orden Ejecutiva del Presidente Obama

Essential Questions:
What are some of the challenges and opportunities faced by undocumented immigrants?
How do immigration policies affect the daily lives of immigrants in the United States?
How have immigration policies affected the lives of the detained minors?
What role has social media/media played during the plight of the unaccompanied minors?
What is the role of social media/media on the immigration debate?

During the next several sessions, we learned President Obama’s response to the pressure of much-needed immigration reform, which led him to bypass U.S. Congress and issue an executive order. We talked about the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants and what’s being done on a larger scale. We focused the discussion on the Presidential Executive Order on Immigration, since it had recently occurred and was an important victory for the immigrant community. Although it did not directly address the immediate needs of the detained minors we had spent several weeks learning about, it did address (to some degree) the concerns of millions of people living undocumented in the US, particularly the many young people that were brought to the U.S. as minors—an equally important topic for my students to learn about and discuss.
During this part, we focused on three genres of study: news articles, tweets, and political cartoons. I comment on each of these below.

**News articles**

Once we learned some background on the executive order and what it entailed, we spent several sessions analyzing the different responses it garnered. The first activity I describe here was a comparative analysis activity. In this activity, students had to examine and compare two news articles with opposing views on Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration. The objective was to conduct a comparative study of two perspectives on the executive order, which temporarily delayed deportations of undocumented immigrants without a criminal record and allowed them to apply for a work permit. We analyzed the two articles in English, which showed opposing perspectives: one in support of the executive action, “Obama's immigration move is a win,” written by CNN political commentator, Maria Cardona (2014). The second article, “Restraining Presidential Power - Executive Orders,” showed the dissenting position by Mississippi Republican Senator Chris McDaniel (2015) for *The Clarion-Ledger*, a conservative daily newspaper based in Jackson, Mississippi. The students looked closely at the arguments in both articles in their groups. I modeled for them how to utilize a Venn diagram to record the opposing viewpoints gathered from the articles, and they continued the work for the rest of the reading using their own Venn diagrams in their groups. We then came together to discuss these as a whole group and complete the rest of the Venn diagram I had drawn onto chart paper. The target language of the day was English, and the articles were in English, however, students used language flexibly during the group discussion, as well as during the whole-class discussion to gain a better understanding of the articles, as I will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter.

**Twitter**
In preparation for this lesson, I gathered relevant tweets with the hashtags, #executiveaction and #immigrationaction since I wanted a collection of what various people and entities had expressed on the subject through Twitter. I introduced the lesson by asking students to describe some of the social media platforms they used and how they use them. The top social media platforms students reported using were Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We discussed how different people use the various platforms, especially those with a large following such as celebrities and politicians. The aim of the lesson was for students to examine the impact of social media on shaping the conversation on immigration. I then showed students some tweets from various Twitter users that I printed and pasted onto pieces of paper for them to analyze. Included were some tweets from the Republican National Convention (RNC), Hillary Clinton, the sitting Speaker of the House at the time, John Boehner, among others. We discussed one of the tweets in the class, and then each group had a tweet assigned to their group and had to analyze it, discuss with their groups, and write their analysis in their journals. We closed the session by debating the increasingly significant role of social media on influencing public opinion. Students were cautioned and advised to be critical about what people share and question their intentions based on who or what they represent. The tweets used were in English, but were discussed bilingually with the class and between groups; moreover, students were encouraged to write their analysis in any language.

**Political cartoons**

In another activity that formed part of this series within the unit, we analyzed political cartoons that depicted the response to the controversial executive order described above. The objective of this particular lesson was for students to analyze the political cartoons and their intent in an effort to further examine the different points of views on the immigration debate as
expressed through a different medium. To start the conversation, I pasted a political cartoon onto the center of a large piece of chart paper and asked students to tell me their interpretations of the image while I wrote their answers in words or phrases around the image. After a few students participated, I pointed to the pieces of chart paper posted all around the classroom, each with a different cartoon on it and asked them to conduct a gallery walk and write their comments and reactions on each chart paper in any language, as we had just done as a class. The lesson took place over two sessions, beginning during an English-designated week and continuing during a Spanish-designated week. Students wrote a reflection in their journals on a cartoon of their choice using the following guiding questions originally written on the board in Spanish, but orally shared in both languages:

1. What message is it sending?
2. How might it make you feel about President Obama?
3. If you were an immigrant that has benefitted from the executive order, how would this (political cartoon) make you feel?

We concluded the discussion by pointing out that artists have historically used political cartoons to sway the public opinion on controversial topics, and again, connecting it to the larger theme of the overall impact the media has on the formation of the public narrative. Again, as in the other Parts of the unit, the language of the week dictated the language I prepared the main content of the lesson, but it did not limit students to using only that language. Students were encouraged to draw from their entire linguistic resources available.

**Translanguaging strategies**

The texts highlighted in this section were in English, but were discussed bilingually and students had the freedom to use all of their available language resources when annotating on the margins. The tweets and speech bubbles on the political cartoons were also in English, but were deconstructed through the use of both languages. Discussion questions and journal reflection
prompts were provided in English in some instances, depending on the designated language of the week, but again, discussed bilingually to ensure every students’ understanding. Like in the previous two sections, students collaborated with classmates in any language or bilingually, wrote journal entries also in any language or bilingually. Students were free to draw from their entire language repertoire throughout the lessons.

**Part IV: The Culminating Project**

In preparation for the culminating project for this unit, students spent the last several sessions drafting their essay on the role of the media and social media on the shaping of a public narrative. The goal was for students to consider how status updates, tweets, and photos posted by people with large a following can influence people. During this time, the language allocation policy was followed more loosely. Students had the freedom to brainstorm, complete their graphic organizers, and prewrite through the use of their entire language repertoire, and write their final papers also in a language of their choice.

I started by modeling how to effectively use a graphic organizer by getting the class to tell me a few points to include. I asked them to think about the people they follow on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and asked them to consider the ways in which they can be influenced. They then worked on their organizer independently in their cluster tables, with the option to consult and collaborate with one another. The students started by using a spider graphic organizer that allowed them to brainstorm the various outlets of media and social media that can be used as tools to influence the public opinion, using the language or languages of their choice. They added a few points of details onto each of them in order to prepare for the next step.

The next step was to take each main idea and begin organizing and developing their paragraphs on a five-paragraph essay graphic organizer with designated blocks for the
introductory, body, and closing paragraphs. The aim was for students to visualize the organization of their writing and work on developing each body paragraph from a main idea they had already brainstormed on their spider organizers during the previous session. I conferred with students and advised them along the way; however, they also utilized each other as a resource. As they revised their essay diagrams, they began to transfer their ideas and further develop their writing on lined paper. After conferring with me and with each other further, and editing their writing, they wrote their final drafts of their essays. During the brainstorming, planning, and pre-writing of their essays, students were able to use their entire repertoire. They conferred with me and with each other, also following a language flexible approach, and then had the option of choosing the language they wanted to write in for their final drafts.

Conclusion

This unit was designed not only to engage students in their normal bilingual practices through translanguaging and heighten their awareness of their language use, but to also awaken students’ critical consciousness of the anti-immigrant narrative prevalent in U.S. society. In the next chapter, we see some of the lessons described in this chapter in action. We revisit specific moments from these lessons and show the ways in which students took up translanguaging (or not). Specifically, we focus on the session when we did a comparative study of two perspectives on Obama’s Executive Action on Immigration through a close reading of two texts. There we will see how students respond to government efforts to deter migrants from taking the dangerous journey, and how students like Lianna utilized translanguaging during the analysis of tweets. We will also see what happened during the political cartoons lesson, in which Giselle, Orlando and Edgar take up translanguaging during the writing of a reflection activity and during a group
discussion. I will show some of these moments, which illustrate how students took up translanguaging to gain greater access to the content being discussed in the classroom.
Chapter Five:

Taking Up Translanguaging

In this chapter, we first describe the six focal students in greater detail before we describe how they take up translanguaging. To do so, we analyze a sample of their student work, as well as select audio recordings from these lessons, in which they were largely the protagonists. There is also an examination of what occurred during the class activities as students engaged with the content through the use of translanguaging strategies. The focus is on the lessons at various moments: during whole class discussions, group discussions, as well as when students are engaged in independent work activities. In these moments, we see how taking up translanguaging in the classroom facilitates the positioning of students as knowers, thereby disrupting the traditional power dynamics in the classroom. We also see how students take up translanguaging to be able to do, to expand, and to clarify and amplify their understanding of concepts.

The Focal Students

As discussed in chapter three, six students were selected as my focal students later on in the project — Lianna and Mateo, born in the Dominican Republic, but recent arrivals and categorized as English language learners; Giselle, Orlando, and Ana, all born also in the Dominican Republic but with strong English abilities because of their long residency in the U.S.; Edgar, the only Puerto Rican, who has lived in the US since he was two years old and has strong English abilities. Thus, the six focal students fall at different points along the bilingual continuum. I give a short description of each of them below.

Lianna
Lianna is 12 years old and grew up in Tenares, Dominican Republic. She moved to the US almost two years prior to the commencement of this study and went into the Newcomers/SIFE class when she started school in the 6th grade, which is described in chapter three of this dissertation. She uses Spanish at home with her family, and both English and Spanish with her friends at school. Her Spanish literacy is below level. What is more, Lianna is designated as an ELL.

Mateo

Mateo is 13 years old and was born in San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic. He moved to the US nearly four years ago and started the 5th grade, where he was in a monolingual English setting with ENL support. When he reached SBA in the 6th grade, he was in the same Newcomer/SIFE class as Lianna. He recalls that his teacher would let him write in Spanish since he was unable to produce any written work in English. Although Mateo has strong oral language skills in Spanish, his literacy levels in Spanish are well below grade level. Like Lianna, he is also designated as being an ELL.

Giselle

Giselle is 12 years old and was also born in the Dominican Republic. She moved to the US when she was four years old. She has the longest experience being in bilingual education out of all the other focal students because she has been in a bilingual program since she was in kindergarten. She is strong in both English and Spanish, but prefers using English in school. At home she uses Spanish with her mother and English with her two older brothers. Giselle is a high-performing student and at the time of this study, she was ranked in the second place in the entire school, just behind Orlando.

Orlando
Orlando is 13 years old and was born in the Dominican Republic. He moved to the United States when he was six years old and started the 1st grade. At home, he uses mostly Spanish with his mom since she doesn’t speak much English, but uses English with his cousin that lives in the same house. He was in a bilingual class in the 1st grade, but in a monolingual setting from 2nd through 5th grade. He doesn’t know exactly why he was taken out of the bilingual program after the 1st grade, nor does he know how he came to be in the bilingual program starting in the 6th grade. Orlando is a high-performing student; at the time of this study, he was ranked 1st in the entire school, 6-8th grades combined. Though he considers himself to be equally “good” at both English and Spanish, it was evident to me that he is stronger in English, both academically and socially.

Ana

Ana is 14 years old and was born in the Dominican Republic, but moved to NYC when she was two years old. Ana, like all students in this study, lies along some point of the bilingualism spectrum, but she clearly prefers English. At home, she speaks both English and Spanish, but more so Spanish since she lives with her mother and that is her mother’s dominant language. At school, Ana is learning to use Spanish in more academic ways, having had a monolingual English educational experience throughout most of her years of schooling. Ana is rather new to the bilingual program. She doesn’t know exactly how she came to be in the DLBE program, she just knows that she was transferred into it when she started 6th grade. Consequently, she had only completed one full year in the program at the time of this study. Ana is no longer considered an ELL.

Edgar
Edgar is 13 years old and was born in Puerto Rico. He moved to the U.S. mainland when he was two years old. Edgar uses both languages at home, but mostly Spanish because although his mother understands and speaks English, she prefers to speak Spanish. Edgar had only studied in English monolingual settings until he started the bilingual program in the 6th grade. He is learning to use Spanish more and more in an academic setting.

Although I have included the ELL status of each student as determined by New York State, it is important to note that all students in this class are considered emergent bilinguals, as they are all emerging in their bilingualism. Furthermore, they are all at different points along the bilingual continuum and all took up translanguaging in different ways and for different purposes, as this chapter will detail.

**Taking up Translanguaging**

In this section, I focus on four lessons from the unit and use these to discuss the various ways students took up translanguaging.

1) In one lesson, we did a comparative analysis in which students had to compare and contrast two news articles with opposing views on Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration. This lesson fell on an English-designated day.

2) In another lesson, students studied the plight of the unaccompanied minors migrating from Central America into the U.S. We read some of the minor’s testimonies and learned about the U.S. government efforts to dissuade migrants from taking the dangerous journey in an attempt to cross into the U.S. The first part of this lesson fell on a Spanish-designated day, and continued during an English-designated day.
3) The third lesson was an analysis of tweets using the hashtags #executiveaction and #immigrationaction, tweeted by various politicians and institutions to express either their support or disapproval of Obama’s executive order. This lesson fell on the English-designated day.

4) In the final focus lesson, students analyzed various political cartoons created also in response to Obama’s controversial order. This was a two-part lesson that started during an English-designated day and continued during a Spanish-designated day. Though these lessons are detailed in chapter four of this dissertation, a brief summary of each highlighted lesson is provided in each corresponding section.

In this chapter I focus on moments of classroom instruction during this lesson where translanguaging occurred. The data is drawn mostly from classroom instructional talk as well as the work of the focal students in their classroom journal, as well as journals of a few other students. I offer an analysis of what the translanguaging moment enabled for the different students. As we will see, students used translanguaging during these classroom moments for the following purposes:

1. To position themselves as knowers and dismantle power dynamics
2. To “do” and have a voice as newcomers
3. To expand their repertoire and their message
4. To clarify and amplify their message

**Translanguaging to position themselves as knowers and dismantle power dynamics in the classroom**
In the first focus lesson we analyze here, the objective was to conduct a comparative study of two perspectives on Obama’s Executive Action on Immigration issued in November 2014, which temporarily delayed deportations of undocumented immigrants without a criminal record and allowed them to apply for a work permit. Students looked closely at the arguments in both articles in their groups, and we then came together as a class to discuss them. The target language of the day was English, and the articles were in English, however, we used language flexibly during the group discussion, as well as during the whole-class discussion to gain a deeper understanding of the articles and have a more productive discussion.

During the whole-class discussion, we discussed both the metaphorical and literal meaning behind the saying, “the well is not poisoned” taken from the following excerpt of Cardona’s (2014) article: “The President delivered on his executive action and he, the Democrats and the immigration advocacy community will now have to work diligently to explain to the American people that the well is not poisoned, and that this is the right thing to do for our economy, national security and above all, it is consistent with our American values” (para. 17). The following is a transcription from the audio recordings that captures this moment during the discussion:

Student 1: [President Obama has to] show that the well is not poisoned.
LH: Right, that the “well is not poisoned,” what does that mean? That’s an idiom.
Student 2: That immigrants are not dangerous.
LH: Right! That the well is not poisoned…What is a “well”?
Various Students: It’s this circle, it’s like…[several students make a circle motion with their arms]
LH: [I draw a well on the white board] I don’t know how to draw, but people go and fetch water con una cubeta, la gente va a una well para agarrar agua.
Student 3: With a string [rope] and like pulls it… [makes a pulling motion]
LH: Aja ::nodding:: ¿Ustedes han visto? So they throw the bucket in there [pointing to my drawing of a well] and they pull it out and get buckets of water. Entonces, “well is not poisoned…” que es “poisoned”?
Edgar: A type of chemical that will kill you.
LH: A chemical that will kill you. ¿Cómo se dice en español?
In this exchange, the students start out with a good idea of the meaning behind the expression, “the well is not poisoned.” In this context, it is used to appeal to the public and send the message that “immigrants are not dangerous,” as a student says, but in order to break it down further and make sense of it, we sought out the literal meaning of the expression. In the above discussion, students take on the role of “knowers” (García, 2009) of the Spanish language, and I view them as such when I ask them to tell me the meaning of “poison” in Spanish because I could not recall it at that moment; thus, the students became my teachers and reminded me of a word in Spanish I had not used in a long time. In previous discussions, I had positioned myself as a speaker of the Mexican variety of Spanish, with New York Spanish influences, of course, and they revealed their own, mostly Dominican, but also some Mexican and Puerto Rican Spanish varieties. Thus, this exchange reveals the class awareness of the various varieties of Spanish as demonstrated by my comment, “Nosotros decimos ‘el pozo de agua’” [We say “the well”], and the students volunteering how it matched their own variety by assuring, “también nosotros” [us too]. Finally, by later explaining to them that I also need help with my Spanish, I put myself in a learner position, where again, students can take the place of the knowers. Opening translanguaging spaces in the classroom in this case enabled and empowered students to be able to take up the role of language experts and support one another, including myself, in the meaning-making process during this class discussion. Taking up translanguaging, then means creating awareness...
in the classroom to recognize and value the language varieties that co-exist in our collective repertoires, without subconsciously assigning more power to one over the other.

**Translanguaging for newcomers to do and have a voice**

For several weeks, students studied the plight of the unaccompanied young migrants. They read various testimonies of these minors from *La Opinion* and *The Tennessean*, and learned about the Spanish-language Dangers Campaign launched by the U.S. government in an attempt to dissuade the migrants in their home countries from taking the journey North. During one lesson, which took place during an English-designated day, I asked students to imagine themselves as a family member of one of these minors about to take the journey. I wrote down sentence starters to get students underway in their writing: “If I were a migrant’s ______, I would…”

Lianna, whom as you recall has been in the U.S. for two years and is an emergent bilingual who is developing English writes in her notebook, “If I were the migrant’s sister, I would *aconsejar a mi hermana para que no se arriesgue*” [advise my sister to not take the risk] (Lianna, Student notebook, March 10, 2015). She utilizes the sentence frame provided and extends it by adding her own words on the subject. She writes the Spanish portion of the sentence in a logical manner, abiding by grammatical rules of sentence construction, adding on what she wanted to say and correctly completing that sentence. If required to do so in English only, Lianna would not have been able to voice her opinion.

Students were also asked to respond to the following reflection question: “What is more dangerous, taking the journey or staying in their country?” Lianna copies the question onto her notebook, and then she begins to write in English, “I think…” She erases these two words
already written on her notebook and begins to rewrite in its place, “Yo pienso…” See Figure 5.1 below:

![Image of handwritten notes](image)

**Figure 5.1: Lianna’s Reflection**
*(Lianna, Student Notebook, March 17, 2015)*

*Transcription of student work:*

> What is more dangerous, taking the journey or staying in their country?
> Yo pienso que mejor es quedarse o irse, depende. Pero yo creo que mejor que venga para que ayude a su familia y el y que le cuente su caso a la policía. El riesgo de venir es que se puede morir en el camino. I think it is better to stay or leave, it depends. But I think that it is better to come in order to help their families, and to tell the police about their case. The risk of coming is that they could die on the way here.

In Figure 5.1, you can faintly see the words, “I think” under “Yo pienso.” The question posed was in English, but it was discussed in Spanish, and she copied it down onto her notebook as it was written on the board. She starts writing her response also in English, but seems to decide against continuing to write what she wanted to say in the same language as the question. So she erases the words already written, and starts over, this time in Spanish. This action seems to have allowed her to write what she wanted to write and express herself. Taking up translanguaging within this activity enables Lianna to be able to *do*, to voice her opinions, to learn and show that she knows.
In another focus lesson, students examined the impact of social media, specifically by looking at some tweets tweeted in response to Obama’s executive order on immigration. We discussed one of the tweets as a class; we talked about intention and potential impact on the public in terms of shaping their perspective on the topic. Then, students worked individually in their cluster tables to analyze a tweet of their choice. Lianna chose to analyze a tweet by Hillary Clinton, shown below in Figure 5.2:

![Figure 5.2: Hillary Clinton’s Tweet](image)

Tweet: *Thanks to POTUS for taking action on immigration in the face of inaction. Now let’s turn to permanent bipartisan reform.* #immigrationaction

In her notebook response to the tweet, she wrote, “*Yo creo que este tweet ayuda a la gente para que vean cosas importantes acerca de los inmigrantes*” [I think that this tweet helps people see important things regarding immigrants] (Lianna, Student notebook, April 28, 2015). Lianna’s receptive skills in English enables her to understand the discussion that was mostly in English and to read tweets that are also in English, such as the one she responded to above in Figure 5.2. She writes her response using her productive skills in Spanish, which are still emerging in English. The flexibility in the classroom allowed her to access her language repertoire and tap into the productive skills she does have in order to do. Like with the example shown above with the reflection activity, taking up translanguaging within this activity also enables Lianna simply to do.
Translanguaging for emergent bilinguals to expand their repertoire and their message

During the same activity in which students were asked to reflect on what is more dangerous when it came to making a decision to stay or to migrate, students use translanguaging for different purposes. In the same reflection activity, Mateo, the other newcomer in the group who is developing English answers:

![Image of Mateo's Reflection]

Figure 5.3: Mateo’s Reflection
(Mateo, Student Notebook, March 17, 2015)

Transcription of student work:

What is more dangerous, taking the journey or staying in the country?
1) I think the more dangerous is quedarse en su país because the gang can kill her [to stay in her country because the gang can kill her]
2) I think the gang quiere que se una in the gang if not [they] can kill her [the gang wants her to join]
3) I think the city [has] no jobs for the people por eso they cross the border [that is why they cross the border]

Mateo has been in the United States longer than Lianna. Whereas Lianna arrived two years ago, Mateo has been in the U.S. for four years. In his work, Mateo shows his understanding of the questions as well as his understanding of the discussion on the threats that migrants face in their home countries and the lack of economic opportunities, leading to their decision to risk their lives and take the dangerous journey north. Mateo knows that the language of the day is English and thus he attempts to write in English. However, the flexible translanguaging allowed in this classroom gives him license to produce a translanguaged text — for example, “more dangerous is quedarse en su país” [to stay in her country]. Mateo uses translanguaging to expand on what he knows, but also to expand his present repertoire, which at the present time consists mostly of features from Spanish. He is appropriating the new features of English into his own language repertoire, and here we see it clearly. In other words, he is expanding his repertoire.

Mateo starts each of the sentences in the same language of the question, English, and even draws from the vocabulary in the question, “dangerous,” in formulating his responses. Finally, Mateo draws from his available resources to expand on his writing.

In a separate activity, we analyzed political cartoons that were a response to the Executive Order on Immigration we had been learning about. This particular lesson’s objective was for students to analyze the impact of the media in shaping the conversation on immigration and to further examine the different points of views on the immigration debate. This was a two-part lesson using political cartoons: the first part of the lesson occurred during an English-designated week and the second part continued during a Spanish-designated week. The parts highlighted here specifically took place during a Spanish-designated week. Two students, Giselle and Orlando, both English dominant students, show how they made use of
translanguaging spaces in the classroom during a reflection writing activity. Though the speech bubbles in the cartoons were in English, the questions that I posed for the written reflection were in Spanish, and my discussion of the questions and further descriptions of the cartoons were also in Spanish, while using English to support and clarify for students along the way.

As stated earlier, Giselle is a top-performing student in the school. She ranked 2nd in the entire school at the time of this study, and she has been in a bilingual classroom since she was in kindergarten. Giselle’s notebook entry shows her response to one of the reflection questions I gave the students during an independent work activity. Her entry is based on the cartoon shown in Figure 5.4, and her response can be seen in Figure 5.5:

Figure 5.4: Political Cartoon – Amnesty
Cartoon message: Why are you planning to grant amnesty to millions of illegals? Because they will do the jobs Americans don’t want to do. Like what? Voting Democrat.
Transcription of Student Work:

¿Qué mensaje está mandando tu caricatura? [What message is your cartoon sending?]

El mensaje que está mandando esta caricatura es que Obama cree que los 
imigrantes [sic] van a hacer su civic duty, unlike Americans. If this civic duty is 
carried out any further, Obama believes that the immigrants will vote for 
him, making this a selfish act. (Also, these people are against Obama because 
they think he is being selfish. [The message that this cartoon is sending is that Obama 
believes that immigrants will do their civic duty, unlike Americans.]

As mentioned before, Giselle’s more dominant language is English, and though the questions 
were in Spanish, Giselle draws from her entire linguistic repertoire when formulating her 
response to the question as shown in her entry. In her journal entry, Giselle shows that she is able
to understand the question and begins formulating her response in the same language as the question (Spanish), but finishes her response in English. It is interesting that here English production is triggered by the concept of civic duty, a concept that perhaps she has never articulated in Spanish. Having the freedom to draw from her entire linguistic repertoire allowed Giselle to be able to expand on her response. Giselle’s writing demonstrates the logical reasoning that is aligned with Canagarajah’s (2006, 2011a) codemeshing. In this instance, taking up translanguaging through the use of codemeshing in writing enabled her to be able to write what she wanted to convey without having to restrict herself due to the imaginary language boundaries of linguistic purism often imposed onto bilingual students. In follow-up lessons, we further discussed the role and intentions of political cartoons, and engaged in a dialogue on the importance of being critical of the media.

During this same lesson, Orlando who has been in the United States since he was six years old, but has been schooled in English prior to coming to this school in the sixth grade, chose to respond to a different cartoon, shown in Figure 5.6 below:

Figure 5.6: Political Cartoon – Executive Orders
Cartoon message: *We don’t have time to wait around for congress to act.*
There were three prompts for the cartoon: 1) ¿Qué mensaje está mandando tu caricatura?; 2) ¿Qué te hace pensar sobre el Presidente Obama?; and 3) Si fueras un inmigrante que te beneficiarías de esta orden, ¿qué sentirías al ver esta caricatura? [1. What message is your cartoon sending?; 2. What does it make you think about President Obama?; 3. If you were an immigrant that benefitted from this order, how would this cartoon make you feel?]. Giselle’s response above only reflects the answer to the first question, but here, Orlando’s response for all three questions is included, and is shown in Figure 5.7:

1) ¿Qué mensaje está mandando tu caricatura? [What message is your cartoon sending?]
   El está throwing the law away. [He is…]
2) Me hace pensar que [a] Obama no le importa las otras reglas, solamente las de inmigración. [It makes me think that Obama doesn’t care about other rules, only the ones on immigration]
3) Yo me hubiera sentido mal porque me beneficiaría a mí. [I would feel bad because it would benefit me.]

Cartoon:
– Obama with a shredder and the constitution.
– Shredding the law.

Figure 5.7: Orlando’s Reflection
(Orlando, notebook entry, May 12, 2015)

Transcription of Student Work:

1) ¿Qué mensaje está mandando tu caricatura? [What message is your cartoon sending?]
   El está throwing the law away. [He is…]
2) Me hace pensar que [a] Obama no le importa las otras reglas, solamente las de inmigración. [It makes me think that Obama doesn’t care about other rules, only the ones on immigration]
3) Yo me hubiera sentido mal porque me beneficiaría a mí. [I would feel bad because it would benefit me.]

Cartoon:
– Obama with a shredder and the constitution.
– Shredding the law.
Orlando’s productive skills in Spanish are almost as developed as those in English. He is able to respond to the prompts exclusively in Spanish, with the exception of the second line, “El está throwing the law away” [He is throwing the law away] (Orlando, notebook entry, May 12, 2015). This sentence is completed correctly. The order of the words follows grammatical rules with the correct use of the infinite verb, “throwing,” and responding correctly to the first question. Furthermore, he also uses English to provide a brief description of the cartoon, which students were asked to do in order to identify which cartoon they were responding to. Orlando takes up translanguaging here similarly to Giselle, in order to expand on his thoughts and to get them onto paper by drawing from his entire language repertoire.

**Translanguaging to clarify and amplify understanding**

During this same lesson using Political Cartoons, I sat with a group of students having a discussion on the cartoon shown in Figure 5.8 below:

![Figure 5.8: Political Cartoon – The Welcome Mat](image)


Students in the classroom sit in groups of four to five, a sitting arrangement designed to facilitate discussion and collaboration amongst peers. I sat with a group where Edgar was sitting. Edgar was born in Puerto Rico, but has been raised in New York City since he was two years old, as
mentioned earlier. Like Giselle, Orlando, and Ana, he speaks English fluently. The following is a short excerpt from an audio recording during a group discussion. Initials are used here to differentiate the various speakers during the exchange. Edgar is the protagonist in this short exchange with me (LH), along with other students who also participated (two non-focal students are featured here), but to a lesser extent. The language of the day during this lesson was Spanish, thus, I spoke in mostly in Spanish to the group:

LH: ¿Qué es lo que ves aquí? [Referring to the cartoon in Figure 5.8] [What do you see here?]
Gibran: Un hombre poniendo un letrero [A man placing a sign].
LH: Un hombre poniendo un letrero. Y ¿quién tú crees que es ese hombre? [A man placing a sign. And whom do you think that is?].
Edgar: Who’s that supposed to be?
Ana: Obama.
LH: Aja…::nodding:: [Yes]
Edgar: ::Laughs:: Um, I mean, yeah, but don’t you think it doesn’t look like him?
Andrés: Yeah, it doesn’t look like him, but it’s supposed to be Obama.
LH: Pero lo están exagerando, siempre le hacen [They’re exaggerating him, they always…][Edgar interrupts]
Edgar: He’s trying to welcome the immigrants.
LH: Umm hm ::Nods:: ¿Qué es esto aquí? [What is this?] [Pointing to the wall/ U.S. border]
Edgar: The border
LH: The border. Es la frontera de los Estados Unidos y México. ¿Qué es lo que está poniendo así, como el mat? [It is the U.S.-Mexico border. Who is placing down the mat?]
Edgar: Like “Home Sweet Home,” like, “you can enter.” The welcome mat.
LH: The Welcoming Mat. ¿Qué es lo que está usando como el Welcoming Mat? [What is he using for the welcoming mat?]
Andrés: Para que ellos puedan pasar a los Estados Unidos…[So they can come into the U.S.]
LH: Um hum. Eso es lo que están diciendo ellos [That’s what they’re saying] [the cartoonist]. ¿Qué está poniendo…un, ¿Cómo se llama esto? Ya no me acuerdo…como una carpeta? [That he is setting down, what is it called? I can’t recall…like a carpet]
Edgar: Carpet?
LH: A rug, a welcoming mat, no me acuerdo cómo se dice en español…Este es un papel, si es cierto, pero él lo está usando, según, como para bien venir a la gente, ¿no? ¿Pero tú sabes que es este papel? [I don’t recall how to say it in Spanish, but he is using it, supposedly, to welcome people, right? Do you know what that paper is?]
Edgar: That’s the…[pause]
LH: The Constitution!
Edgar: Oh yeah! It is!
LH: Entonces ¿qué lo que tú piensas que ellos están diciendo [the cartoonist]?[So then, what do you think the cartoonist is saying?]
Edgar: That he’s like…he’s trying to break the rules of the Constitution.
LH: Right. Can you write that? Exactly. Él está usando la constitución como un…algo para bien venir a los inmigrantes. Y [the cartoon] están diciendo que al presidente Obama no le importa la constitución. [He is using the constitution as a…(mat) to welcome immigrants. And it’s saying that Obama doesn’t care about the constitution].

(Class Session Transcript, May 12, 2015)

In the above exchange, we see the ease with which Edgar is able to answer in English to all questions and probes in Spanish. In the exchange, it is clear that he understands everything being said in Spanish. Edgar never gave me the sense that he wasn’t following the discussion, thus there wasn’t an evident need in this particular instance to adjust my language use. We know that he understands everything because he answers and reacts appropriately for the exchange by creating his own translanguaging space, which as a result allows him to amplify his understanding of the message the cartoon was meant to convey.

Edgar also has no qualms about being vocal when he is not following or if he needs clarification. Later on during the same lesson in which the exchange above took place, he asked, “Miss, can you repeat that in English? [Referring to one of the questions] I’m already done with questions one and two” (Class session transcript, May 12, 2015). He had completed two out of the three questions posed, which had been written in Spanish on the board, and communicated with the students orally through the use of both languages. As a result, the use of English to clarify the third question enabled him to continue working and complete his assignment. Ultimately, Edgar was able to understand the context and the political message the cartoon delivered, which highlighted the opposing viewpoint and reaction towards a contentious topic – the objective of this activity. As educators, one of our main objectives is to develop students’ critical thinking, to understand concepts, and draw conclusions; all of which Edgar was able to
accomplish, despite departing from the traditional language separation model often enforced in typical bilingual settings.

When I interviewed Edgar a few weeks later and played back the short audio clip of the exchange described above, I asked him what would happen if he had been restricted from using language as freely as he was during the lesson. Below is a short transcript of Edgar’s reflection on that exchange:

LH: The lesson was primarily in Spanish on this day. What if I said that you couldn’t speak in English, only Spanish?

Edgar: Well, for sure I can’t speak Spanish like, good…

LH: So how would you feel?

E: I don’t know...like, disappointed…

LH: Would you feel like you would want to participate again, or how would that affect your ability to do that?

E: I mean, it would only affect me if I’m talking. Like I would just be quiet the whole day …and just listen… so then I would understand.

LH: That’s really important that you say that you would probably just be quiet the whole day…Can you talk a little bit more about that? Why would you be quiet the whole day?

E: ::Laughs:: because like, I don’t want to embarrass myself for saying something wrong…And then everybody will laugh at me.

LH: When we had that group interview [referring to the group interview that took place separately from the lesson], you said something really interesting to me. You said, “I’m supposed to be Latino…” [He interrupts me].

E: “…And I’m supposed to speak Spanish…”

LH: Yeah, can you talk a little bit more about that, and how that makes you feel. Being Latino and not feeling like your Spanish is as strong as other Latinos that you know. Can you talk more about that?

E: It makes me feel alone, because usually when I’m speaking English everybody is in the conversation and we know what we’re talking about; but in Spanish, I’ll bring up something that they don’t even understand.
In this interview, Edgar reveals three major aspects about himself as a learner. First, insisting that he adhere to a strict language separation policy would make him feel “disappointed” and render him voiceless (Interview Transcripts, June 19, 2015). He states that he would “just be quiet the whole day,” something that many EBLs tend to do in language restrictive environments (Interview Transcripts, June 19, 2015). Secondly, it shows that for Edgar, language expression is not only about the self, but also about others’ opinions and perceptions of himself. It reveals a distinctively adolescent fear of being laughed at by his peers for making a mistake. Lastly, it reveals that Edgar is cognizant of his inability to fully express himself in Spanish, as opposed to English, and sees that as being in conflict with his Latino identity. Edgar shares his belief that he is “supposed to speak Spanish,” and that he feels left out of interactions with other Latino students whose Spanish is more fluid or developed than his own. Edgar’s concern shows that he not only values Spanish as a language, but he also sees it as an essential part of his identity formation as well as a means to form relationships with his peers. DLBE programs can sometimes be distancing to Latino students when they are silenced. For this reason, we should aim to extend and grow the language practices of students like Edgar through translanguaging pedagogy.

At times, having the language flexibility to even define one word can make a big difference during a lesson. During a lesson in which we were doing a shared reading of an article in Spanish, we came across the word extorsión, extortion. We took a few minutes to discuss this word and its meaning within the context of the article before continuing on with the reading. After the lesson, I wrote the following in my field notes:
A student in the class asked what extorsión was. Ana [who is English dominant] quickly interceded that it sounded like, “extortion” and that extortion is when you try to get somebody to do something by force…she thought more for a few seconds and said, “like blackmail.” Ana was able to quickly make the connection between the cognates for extorsión, and was able to help define it for the rest of the class. We moved on with the reading and with a clearer idea on what the article was meant to convey. (Field notes, March 26, 2015)

The flexibility in the classroom allowed this student to make a cross-linguistic connection in order to help clarify the understanding of a key term. Allowing students to erase language boundaries that traditionally exist in bilingual classrooms, enabled students like Edgar and Ana to take up translanguaging for clarification and to amplify their understanding of the concepts.

**Conclusion**

Through the audio sessions of the lessons, student work, classroom observation field notes and reflections, and focal student interviews, I wanted to understand how students took up translanguaging in the classroom and what it enabled them to do as a result. As I stated in the introductory paragraph, all students regardless of their official ELL status, are emergent bilinguals and they all took up translanguaging in order to access the content in the classroom. The findings detailed in this chapter show that taking up translanguaging, enabled students to:

1) Position themselves as knowers and disrupt the power dynamics that are traditionally found in classrooms, as per Freire (1970);

2) *Do* and have a voice as newcomers;

3) Expand their repertoire and messages; and

4) Clarify and amplify understandings of concepts.
If we are committed to increasing educational equity for all students, we not only have to do the work that it takes to empower our students through teaching content that is relevant and culturally sustaining, but we also have to empower our students to use all their available linguistic resources. In this classroom all students whose language practices fall along all points of the bilingual continuum are given permission to language flexibly, and thereby have a voice. Translanguaging pedagogies enable them to be knowers no matter what is their language proficiency. Translanguaging also enables all of them to do and act, as well as appropriate new features that expand their repertoire. Finally, translanguaging enables all students to clarify concepts that would have been missed. Without translanguaging spaces, children do get silenced despite the good intentions of DLBE programs. Translanguaging pedagogy offers a way for EBL students to learn language and content while having a voice in the classroom. Translanguaging then acts as the great equalizer, opening up educational opportunities for all students, regardless of language proficiency.
Chapter Six:

Learning from Students’ Views About Bilingualism and Translanguaging

The previous chapter focused on how students in a dual language bilingual education (DLBE) program took up translanguaging in classroom instruction, and what it enabled for them. This chapter focuses on how the students in the classroom in which I conducted my research view both their bilingual program, as well as the translanguaging practices that I used in instruction. In other words, this chapter focuses on the beliefs, feeling and emotions that students expressed in interviews about their bilingual schooling and the translanguaging practices of instruction.

As I said before, students in this program are unique, for they, along with their teacher, openly engage in translanguaging practices in their DLBE classroom. I want to emphasize that this is a highly unique situation, for most DLBE classrooms separate languages strictly. In this classroom, however, there is already an ethos that bilingual students translanguate and that therefore, the language policy of the classroom offers flexibility.

When I came to teach my unit of study, grounded on the use of translanguaging strategies, students were already accustomed to engaging in such practices. However, no one had systematically studied how these students viewed their bilingual program and the translanguaging practices in their classroom, and how they understood them and were able to articulate these understandings. The data for this chapter comes from the small group focus groups with all the classroom participants, as well as the individual interviews with the focal students.

As detailed in the Methodology chapter of this dissertation, I carried out two sets of interviews upon the conclusion of the instructional portion of the study. I first interviewed
everyone in the class in small groups of two or three at a time. Then I chose six focal students, whom I interviewed individually (see Appendices A and B for the two interview protocols).

During the individual student interviews, the focal students — Lianna, Mateo, Giselle, Orlando, Edgar, and Ana — reflected on the ways in which they took up translanguaging, not only during the unit I taught, but also in general, and what it enabled them to do as a result. As we will see, these individual interviews also revealed some important consequences of not using translanguaging in the classroom, both imagined, and as they’ve experienced in the past, prior to their participation in their current bilingual program. The individual student interviews are the basis for the first two sections of this chapter — views about the bilingual program, and views about translanguaging.

During the small focus group interviews, I asked students to reflect on their language use both at home and school. Additionally, I showed them scenes from the short film, Immersion (2009), in order to capture students’ reactions about bilingualism and schooling. The small focus group interviews form the basis of the last section of this chapter, on the solutions that students offered as they expressed their views about bilingualism and bilingual education.

Overall, as we will see, students expressed that being in a bilingual education program had significantly changed their trajectories as students. Also, they all viewed translanguaging as being beneficial and an asset to their education. Students described the unique ways that translanguaging helped them achieve academically. They all expressed similar views on what could be the result of not allowing them to use their entire linguistic resources, namely, silencing and disengagement. As stated in the limitations section of this work, student answers are subject to interviewer effect, and my own positive views on translanguaging could have influenced their responses.
In this chapter I first start by focusing on the focal students’ views on the bilingual program and the use of two languages in instruction in general. Then, I describe how the focal students feel about pedagogical translanguageing, what it enables, its potential, and its limitations. I end by sharing the views of all the bilingual students on possible solutions to their education.

**Views about the Bilingual Program: Use of Two Languages and Bilingual Help by Teachers**

As we have seen from the student profiles in the previous chapter, students in bilingual programs are diverse and experience the program differently. For example, Giselle has spent the longest time in a bilingual program, whereas two students, Lianna and Mateo, had not yet completed their first academic year in a bilingual program at the time of this study. Still, from the most seasoned participants of the bilingual program to the more recent ones, students reported only positive experiences as a result of being in the program. Four significant themes emerged from the interviews:

1) using the home language enables students to do their work and strengthens the home language;

2) drawing from two languages flexibly enables students to understand and learn;

3) bilingualism is an asset; and

4) bilingual teachers as helpers: the bilingual program works for them because of teachers who understand them and the ability to use two languages to make meaning.

**The bilingual program to use and strengthen the home language**

Students indicated the importance of having a space where they can use their home language and use it to advance academically. As previously reported, this is Lianna’s first year in the bilingual program. During the previous year, she was in the SIFE/Newcomer class and all of
the instruction was in English, with ENL support. In reflecting on her experience this year being in the bilingual program, she says, “Este año, yo aprendí más matemáticas...Los profesores explican en español porque yo entiendo más español” [This year, I learned more math...the teachers explain in Spanish because I understand better in Spanish] (Lianna, interview transcripts, June 19, 2015). When asked how she felt being able to use her home language specifically during the unit I taught, she added, “Yo me sentí bien porque podía escribir en español si yo quería, y podía hablar español...[Eso me permitió] escribir más y escribir más bien [I felt good because I was able to write in Spanish if I wanted to, and I could speak in Spanish... [It allowed me to] write more and write better] (Lianna, interview transcripts, June 19, 2015).

Mateo, also a first-timer in the bilingual program this year, expresses similar thoughts about the bilingual program. He says, “allí, uno aprende más. Si uno no sabe el español muy bien, aprende el español” [there, we learn more. If we don’t know Spanish very well, we learn Spanish] (Mateo, interview transcripts, June 19, 2015). Mateo believes that he can both learn more of the content, while also strengthening his home language. Later in this chapter, we further explore this idea of “more” and “better,” since it was another concept that students repeatedly expressed, specifically when reflecting on their ability to engage with translanguaging practices.

**Using two languages to draw from, to understand, and learn**

Although she has been in a bilingual program longer than anyone else (since kindergarten), Giselle also attributes her academic success to being in the bilingual program because she is able to use her two languages to draw from. When reflecting on her experience as a student in the bilingual program, she says,
It is easy, since I have the flexibility of using both languages. If I don’t know a word or a sentence…or how to pronounce a sentence in English, I can just switch to Spanish, and [the teachers] can understand me. (Giselle, interview transcript, June 23, 2015)

Giselle attributes her academic success to being in the bilingual program. Giselle states that it is easy for her because of the ability to use both languages flexibly. Giselle articulates the importance of this language practice. When asked what her favorite part of being in the program was, she reiterated that it was, “the flexibility of using both languages” (Giselle, interview transcript, June 23, 2015). The fact that she has been in a bilingual education program since kindergarten, longer than any other student in her cohort, gives Giselle a certain level of expertise.

Giselle exemplifies the academic success that Thomas and Collier (2002) have shown can result from participating in the bilingual program over several years. She has been able to outperform most of her peers by various measures, as shown by her high scores in standardized tests in English and her grades in her classes. There is a noteworthy correlation between Giselle’s longstanding experience with bilingual education at the beginning of her formal education, and her being a top-performing student in her school. At the time of this study, Giselle was ranked 2nd in the entire school in academic performance.

**Bilingualism as an asset**

Still, Orlando, a student who has been in the bilingual program only for two years and is the top-ranking student in the school, also attributes his success to being in a bilingual class. When discussing the benefits of being in the bilingual program, he states, “I could learn both languages at once…because when I get a career, it’ll be better if I know two languages instead of one” (Orlando, interview transcript, June 23, 2015). Orlando also revealed his preference for the
bilingual program compared to his experience in a monolingual program from 2\textsuperscript{nd} to 5\textsuperscript{th} grade. He said that he liked the ability to use both languages because as he stated, “sometimes I don’t know how to say something in English, so I say it in Spanish; and sometimes I don’t know how to say something in Spanish, but I say it in English” (Orlando, interview transcript, June 23, 2015). Orlando also associates his achievement with the flexible language practices afforded to him in this bilingual program. He gives a similar reason as the others in his positive depiction of a bilingual program. When I brought up the fact that he was the top-ranking student in the school, Orlando modestly recognized that he was well informed of it. When asked how he felt regarding a fellow student in his bilingual program cohort, Giselle, occupying the ranking right below him, he promptly associated his own and Giselle’s success to being in the bilingual program, allowing him to further conclude that the bilingual program has been more beneficial to him compared to a monolingual program.

**Bilingual teachers as helpers**

Whether students are new or experiences in the bilingual education program, all seem to point to their bilingual teachers as being most helpful. For example, Edgar articulates that he has been able to attain a higher level of academic achievement while being in a bilingual education program. He started the bilingual program in the 6\textsuperscript{th} grade, just the prior school year. He says, “when I was in 6\textsuperscript{th} grade, I went to bilingual and I did better in bilingual than in the English classes” (Edgar, interview transcript, June 19, 2015). When asked to reflect on why he thought that was, he added:

I think it’s because I understand Spanish…the teachers, they know how to explain things…help me understand better… I can understand Spanish well, and I speak more English; like the Spanish translates into English and I then I can say stuff in English, so
when they’re speaking Spanish, I know what they’re saying in English. (Edgar, interview transcript, June 19, 2015)

According to Edgar, teachers in the bilingual program are able to teach him “better.” In his view, it is because of the flexible languaging practices that are common in his bilingual classroom where the teacher uses two languages and allows him to use two languages to make meaning. His bilingual teachers create translanguage spaces in the classroom that gives access to the various linguistic tools that enable students like Edgar to have more avenues accessible to him to make meaning as a bilingual learner.

Ana, who like Edgar has just joined the bilingual classroom in 6th grade similarly attributes her status as a high-performing student to being in the bilingual program and being able to get the support she needs from her teachers. She says, “because of the bilingual class, I am an honor roll student now” (Ana, interview transcript, June 23, 2015). And she claims her success is directly related to being in a bilingual program: “when I wasn’t in a bilingual class, a dual language class, I wasn’t doing so well.” When asked why she likes the bilingual program, she credits her bilingual teachers for getting the help she needs:

They help me more than the other teachers. Because like in bilingual class, they actually care that you’re learning. The other teachers don’t mind failing you…I get the help I need. And if I don’t know something in English I could transfer it into Spanish. (Ana, interview transcript, June 23, 2015)

In addition to improving her overall academic performance, being in the program has also changed her perspective of teachers. In her experience, the teachers in the bilingual program are more caring and invested in her learning than her previous teachers in a monolingual program in
grades K-5. She attributes her success in school to the support she receives from her teachers, and also to being able to use both of her languages.

Edgar and Ana’s expressed experiences support Collins and Cioé-Peña (2016), Espinosa and Herrera (2016), and Kleyn’s (2016) work with bilingual teachers in bilingual classroom settings. These scholars have shown the importance of bilingual teachers and their crucial role in planning lessons with the strategic use of translinguaging strategies. Additionally, their work highlights the important ability of bilingual teachers to carve out translinguaging spaces in their classrooms during the lesson; specifically, the more spontaneous translinguaging moments that ensure that students reach understanding and can contribute to the class discussions (Collins & Cioé-Peña (2016); Espinosa & Herrera, 2016; & Kleyn, 2016).

**Bilingual Education Porque uno Aprende Más**

As previously said, all six focal students had a deep appreciation of bilingual education. I asked students the same question in different ways, often more than once, and all six had a similar answers to give: they all had a positive response to being in a bilingual program. They attributed their respective academic successes to their ability to utilize their entire language repertoire.

Their classroom environment empowered them to engage in their normal, everyday languaging practice as bilinguals and helped create a positive experience for them. The bilingual program enabled all of these students to use both of their languages to get the help that they need from their teachers and from their classmates, which in turn allowed them to achieve at greater rates. They also felt that their teachers were more invested in their learning, which resulted in motivating students to continue striving towards higher academic achievement. What is more, students expressed that the bilingual program was superior to the others available to them in their
school, and particularly in comparison to their prior experiences having been in a monolingual program.

In particular, students felt that the bilingualism of their teacher was important to help them succeed. They were grateful for the help and care given to them by their bilingual teachers. This is an important finding since it helps us understand the value of the teachers’ bilingualism and solves a long-standing controversy in bilingual education, and especially in DLBE programs. Many believe that a side-by-side model with a teacher who speaks only one language would be important to develop the students’ bilingualism, keeping the two languages always separate. However, the interviews with students revealed that what was important was to have teachers that could use their own bilingualism generatively, to explain, to make meaning, to extend meaning, to discuss with students. Having a monolingual English teacher on one side (or a teacher acting only as monolingual), and a monolingual Spanish teacher on the other side (or a teacher acting only as bilingual) would not provide the students with the linguistic and academic support they need in order to learn. Students over and over discussed the importance of having a bilingual teacher, a teacher who could make meaning for them, but who also valued translanguaging, the topic of the next section.

Views of Translanguaging in the Classroom: Better/more/más

I discussed how students perceive their experience being in the bilingual program in the previous section. As we have seen, students value the bilingual education program not only because they believe that their bilingual teachers can help them more, but also because they can put to use and leverage their own bilingualism in learning. I focus here on students’ specific reflections on translanguaging moments in the classroom and ask the readers to keep in mind that these students’ experiences are unique because they have come to expect translanguaging as part
of their schooling. I continue to draw on the individual interviews with the focal students to
discuss how translanguaging pedagogy impacts student learning. I also discuss some instances
in which I played back a short audio segment of an interaction between selected students and
myself, while I sit at their table cluster during a group discussion. The purpose of these audio
recordings was to capture the language dynamics during the discussion portion of the lesson. As
we will see, when students were asked about my specific use of translanguaging during an
instructional moment, students came up with “better/more/mas.”

**Focusing better**

When I asked Edgar during the interview how he felt in class being able to use both
languages flexibly, he responded, “I mean, I understand the work; and I knew what I was doing,
so then I was *focused better*, and like I knew what to do and knew what I needed to find in order
to finish my work” (my italics, Edgar, interview transcript, June 19, 2015). Taking up
translanguaging in the classroom enabled him to “focus better,” as he recalls; furthermore, he
expresses having achieved a clear understanding of the task in order to successfully complete it.

**Doing more**

During my interview with Ana, I played back a short audio recording of an interaction in
class between us in which I pose a question to her in Spanish and she replies in English. After
she listens to the audio segment, I ask her what the flexibility of being able to use either English
or Spanish did for her at that moment. She reflected, “it allow[ed] me to *do more*; it allow[ed]
me to know that I understand perfectly what you were trying to say” (my italics, Ana, interview
transcript, June 23, 2015). Ana shows that translanguaging allowed her to “do more,” a
recurring theme that emerged from other students as well. Not being restricted by language
boundaries enabled her to expand on her contribution in the discussion because she was able to
draw from her entire language repertoire and communicate accordingly. This quote further reveals a level of metacognitive awareness, since she acknowledges that she did in fact understand what I was asking her, even though it was asked in her less dominant language, Spanish. What’s more, it is significant that she recognizes her own abilities and can reflect on the reasons why she makes the kinds of choices that she makes. The two students above are those who prefer English, and they, too, take up translanguaging in ways that benefit them both tremendously.

**Entender más/ayudar más**

Lianna and Mateo are different than Edgar and Ana because they are among the least experienced bilinguals of the cohort, and definitely of the focal students. You may recall they are the two focal students who have been classified as English Language Learner. During Lianna’s interview, I also played back a short audio recording in which I use Spanish to explain a concept to her, since the lesson was primarily in English on that particular day. For that lesson, we had used political cartoons that reflected various responses to Obama’s immigration policy. The speech bubbles in the political cartoons, as well as the lesson itself, were in English, but I used Spanish and I asked Lianna what the effect was. She answered, “Me permitió entender más, lo que estaba pasando con la caricatura” [It allowed me to understand more, what was happening in the cartoon] (Lianna, interview transcripts, June 19, 2015).

Translanguaging for Ana meant, as we said above, being able to “do more.” Similarly, Lianna expressed that it enables her to “entender más” [understand more]. In this context, translanguaging enabled her to grasp the message that the political cartoon was meant to convey in response to Obama’s Executive Order on immigration. The idea of more, más, is a recurring
one. In all of these cases already described, translanguaging allows for más to occur—to give more, to absorb more.

Like Lianna, Mateo is in the emerging stages in his English language development and requires ample home language supports. As with Ana and Lianna, I replayed a short piece of an interaction between Mateo and I, as I sat with his group during their discussion. When I ask Mateo what I’m doing in a recording, he tells me that “usted está hablando los dos idiomas” [you are speaking in both languages] (Mateo, interview transcript, June 19, 2015). And he continues: “Eso me ayudó en muchas cosas, a resolver mi problema. Si alguien me lo explica en inglés, yo no voy a poder entender muy bien” [That helped me in many things, to solve my problem. If someone explains it to me in English, I will not be able to understand it very well]. Mateo adds more. He says that when he heard that I was using Spanish, “como que yo reaccioné y comencé a hablar” [it is as if I reacted and started to talk] (Mateo, interview transcript, June 19, 2015).

As mentioned before, Mateo needs a lot of home language support. As he reveals in the interview, he was only able to understand what was happening, lo que estaba pasando, when I used Spanish to clarify some concepts for him. The consequence of not having done that would be that he would not understand, as he explains, and would consequently be lost and unable to fully participate in the class discussion. Hearing me speak in Spanish, as he describes, made him react, reaccioné; he immediately felt invited to participate and contribute to the discussion knowing that there was a translanguaging space available for him and his classmates to engage in.

The reacción then of all of us should move us to question the strict compartmentalization of languages that often accompany DLBE programs. There is a need for teachers to have a space
dedicated to a specific language. It is important for bilingual students to have a space in which they are receiving comprehensible input in one language and try to have output in that particular language. But without understanding, input is not comprehensible and output is reduced to silence. The translanguage practices in this classroom enabled the students’ voice and engagement, both important for learning.

**Absence of Translanguage: Quiet and aburrido**

Students voiced their thoughts on being in restrictive language environments, which surfaced from two major themes students expressed: Voicelessness (Quiet) and Disengagement (Aburrido). These are the conditions that students themselves correlate to the lack of translanguage spaces in the classroom, or where they have otherwise been immersed in an environment that has a strict separation of languages in the classroom. Furthermore, these are also the consequences of what students view as an outright rejection of their language practices. This is what students expressed as a result of being in environments where language use was restricted, and as a result, could not participate, were bored, and/or felt disengaged from school at some point in their schooling experiences. It also includes students’ perspectives on what would occur to their peers who find themselves in classroom environments that employ restrictive language practices.

**Aburrido y mal**

When asked about his experience in a monolingual setting, in which he was placed during the previous school year, Mateo responded: “[en] el curso, como estaba aburrido [y] me dormía... porque no entendía nada de lo que estaban diciendo” [in class, I was bored and I would fall asleep because I didn’t understand anything that anyone was saying] (Mateo, interview transcript, June 19, 2015). He added, “algunas profesoras querian que uno escriba en
"...y me sentía mal, Miss, porque uno no sabe muy bien" [some teachers wanted me to write in English...[and I would feel] bad, Miss, because I don’t know very well]. In his response, he expresses the level of disengagement and disappointment he experienced in school, when he was in a monolingual class, having had little exposure to English beforehand.

**Quiet**

Similarly, Edgar’s response to my question of what he would have done if I had asked him to stick with the “language of the day” (in this case, Spanish) during class was: “I would just be quiet the whole day” (my italics, Edgar, interview transcript, June 19, 2015). Having a student stay quiet the whole day in response to being asked to only use a specific language is the equivalent of silencing the child. When I asked Edgar what would happen if kids were in a language restrictive classroom environment, he said, “Then they [the kids] wouldn’t participate at all, they would just feel lonely and they would feel like they’re not a part of anything, that they’re not noticed” (Edgar, interview transcript, June 19, 2015). This shows Edgar’s awareness of that silencing and concomitant invisibility which is intricately connected to not being able to speak the language of power. This is also related to not having a voice, because something that is invisible cannot be heard.

**Negotiating Restrictive Language Policies in Classrooms: Solutions Proposed by Students**

In this section, I include excerpts from select group interviews with students. The group interviews, as detailed in the Methodology chapter of this dissertation, focused on students’ language use in various aspects of their lives, including in school. During the interview, I showed students clips from the short film, *Immersion* (2009), which depicts the experiences of a recently arrived Mexican immigrant, Moisés, as he navigates his English-only 5th grade classroom in California. The interviews capture the students’ reactions to Moisés’ struggles and their answers
to my follow-up questions as related to their own schooling experiences. All students had some reaction and opinion on the scenes they viewed. In this section, we hear the voices of new students: Alejandro, Nelsie, Brenda, César, and Naima, students that participated in the group interviews. Alejandro, Nelsie and César were designated as ELLs, whereas Brenda and Naima are considered English proficient.

In one scene that I showed to students, Moisés is taking a test in English. In his imagination, he sees the letters literally scrambling and flying off the page and we, the viewers, can see it, too. The purpose of the scene is to depict Moisés’ inability to make sense of the words in front of him. All students express some sense of being enraged by the unfairness of testing a student who does not understand the language. Students seem to show a common sense approach to assessment and recognize the unfairness of this testing situation.

Not fair

In response to this clip, Ana says, “That’s not fair, they should have put him in a class where they speak both languages, like a dual language class, and they should’ve let him use a dictionary” (Ana, Interview transcript, June 2, 2015). Alejandro agrees and Orlando does, too, adding, “He shouldn’t take the test until he learns English” (Orlando, Interview Transcript, June 2, 2016). In another group interview, and in response to the same scene, Nelsie refers to Moisés as “that poor boy,” empathizing with the frustration he’s experiencing while taking the test (Nelsie, Interview Transcript, June 2, 2016).

Students not only recognize how unfair the testing situation is, they come up with their own solutions. Not only do they understand more than the educational authorities; they also seem to know better what should be done.

Students as educational leaders: Possible solutions
In another scene I showed the groups, Moisés solves a word problem correctly in his notebook during the practice test, and looks up how to say “forty” in his Spanish-English glossary. He reluctantly raises his hand and says his answer to the teacher, which she commends him on, but then she asks him to explain how he got that answer. Moisés keeps repeating “forty” to the teacher as she keeps insisting that he explains how he got the answer. The class then laughs and makes fun of him, and even calls him “dumb,” even though he was the only one with the correct answer.

When I asked students to respond to this scene, they offered some potential solutions. In one group César, wonders, “Does she [the teacher] even know that Moisés doesn’t know English?” (César, Interview Transcript, June 5, 2016). When I tell him that the teacher does in fact know, he concludes, “She [the teacher] could’ve showed Moisés how to say it [in English]” (César, Interview Transcript, June 5, 2016). In another group, Giselle advises, “Maybe he could’ve said it [the answer] in Spanish, and she [the teacher] could’ve translated it in English, if she knew Spanish.” (Giselle, Interview Transcript, June 5, 2016). Lianna suggests, “o dárselo en español, el examen, porque él es nuevo” [or give it to him in Spanish, the exam, because he is new] (Lianna, Interview Transcript, June 5, 2016). Even though many times teachers do not see themselves as enabling the learning of students who do not know English, these students assume that this is the teacher’s role. For them it is teacher neglect not to help Moisés, not to understand that he speaks Spanish, not to teach him how to say things in English. And in the students’ estimation it is plain wrong to give Moisés an exam in a language he does not know.

Other students offer other solutions. Brenda suggests that the teacher could have “ask[ed] the girl next to Moisés to translate for him” (Brenda, Interview Transcript, June 5, 2016). In a different group, Naima offers a similar solution as Brenda, “She [the teacher]
could’ve asked someone to translate for him” (Naima, Interview Transcript, June 2, 2016). Edgar adds, “She [the teacher] could’ve looked at the paper to see what he did…his friend was next to him [Moisés’ classmate], so she could’ve translated for him” (Edgar, Interview Transcript, June 2, 2016). Responding to the same scene, in another group, Giselle interrupts Lianna when she recalls Moisés’ Spanish-speaking classmate, “oh, oh, you see the girl that [Moisés] was talking to, and she knew Spanish, maybe he could’ve asked her to translate” (Giselle, Interview Transcript, June 5, 2016). When probed, Mateo echoes, “[debería] pedirle a alguien que sepa español que se lo traduzca” [[he should] ask someone that knows Spanish to translate it] (Mateo, Interview Transcript, June 5, 2016). Clearly students see their peers as collaborators in their learning. It seems to them that the teacher is blind to the potential of peer help, something on which they rely all the time.

Students shared valuable and practical solutions that involved the key players in the classroom: the teacher and Moisés’ classmates. Their solutions included having the teacher actually take a look at Moisés’ notebook to see how he solved the math problem, and suggesting that she teach him the tools that he needs to be able to explain the steps he took in solving the problem. Other solutions were to utilize his classmates’ bilingualism as a resource and help translate for Moisés, or to make the work available to him in a language that he understands. The students’ recommendations could have enabled Moisés to participate in the classroom to some degree, and to have a voice.

Students related to Moisés and his struggles; they showed an understanding of the opposing experiences that can result from being in a restrictive language environment versus a language-flexible one. Orlando, reflecting on Moisés’ experience, affirms, “even if you do it [the work] in English or Spanish, you’re still going to be doing your work” (Orlando, Interview
Transcript, June 2, 2015). Orlando’s response perfectly sums up the value in affording a translanguaging space in the classroom. The importance of students’ ability to engage with the academic work meaningfully trumps the language medium through which the students are engaging. Overall, the students’ answers indicated a sharp awareness and empathy towards Moisés’ experiences. Their collective response shows an awareness of the limitations that result from being in a restrictive language environment where teachers only value English and think that learning happens in individual students, without acknowledging the potential of tapping into the classmates, and shaping a community of practice.

What is most important about all the recommendations provided by the students about what should have been done differently for Moisés is how aware students are about the power of translation strategies and translanguaging in a bilingual classroom. All students advocated for translation, either through the teacher herself, a dictionary, or peers. All of them understand the lack of translanguaging possibilities as “not fair.” This is most important for it shows us how translanguaging is connected to educational equity for these students, for the ability to understand and to mean is the basic right of any learner.

**Conclusion**

As stated in the introductory paragraphs of this chapter, translanguaging is a practice that students have become accustomed to in this bilingual program; they are free to draw flexibly from their entire language repertoire irrespective of the target language of the week. In the interviews, I sought to understand how students viewed the use of translanguaging in the classroom. Regardless of where they stood along the bilingual spectrum, all students expressed how they benefitted from it. From the more experienced to the more inexperienced emergent
bilinguals, they all took up translanguaging in a way that enabled them to increase their learning as well as their participation in class.

The findings from the student interviews contain four important lessons for the future:

1) Bilingual programs are essential because of their ability to strengthen students’ home languages.

2) Bilingual teachers are important precisely because of their ability to bilingually make meaning for all students.

3) Translanguaging is important because it allows students to simply do más, and do it more clearly and remain focused.

4) Restrictive and strict language policies in classrooms that do not permit translanguaging lead to silence and disengagement.

5) Bilingual students view translanguaging as a tool for educational equity that enables all students to learn and grow.
Chapter Seven:
Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, I have shown the various ways in which students take up translanguaging in the classroom, and how it enables them to have their rightful access to the content and the learning that takes place. Through translanguaging pedagogy, students were able to position themselves as knowers. Taking up translanguaging enabled them to do and have a voice, expand their repertoires and messages, and clarify and amplify their understanding of the content. I have also shown students’ reflections of themselves as bilingual thinkers and doers, and we hear, in their own voices, the empowering effects of translanguaging practices. Students expressed an appreciation for the bilingual program and the bilingual teachers who help them learn in a language flexible environment. They also reflected on the ability to do better/more/más within this setting, and gave us a glimpse of the silencing that ensues when they are expected to isolate their languages.

In this conclusion, I want to close with something that also came up during my interviews with the focal students, as well as during the group interviews. Many students said some version of the following: “I felt more comfortable saying it in English, because I didn’t know the word(s) in Spanish” or “I felt more comfortable saying it in Spanish, because I didn’t know the word(s) in English.” It wasn’t surprising; we have heard this before. The concept of feeling comfortable, and choosing or using a language that is more “comfortable” can often make educators feel the exact opposite of that word. Educators strive to take our students out of their comfort zones, to take risks, because that is often when real learning begins. But I do not believe it applies here. Some readers may even interpret translanguaging as being a sort of “crutch” for students. Zentella (1997), for instance, describes some cases of code switching as being “crutch-
like” in her research on Puerto Rican languaging practices in New York; and even though she does not take a negative approach to this concept, it nevertheless does carry some unfavorable connotations for educators.

Some may argue that translanguaging enables students to take an “easy” way out when they feel challenged in verbalizing something. However, what students have articulated goes beyond what is “comfortable;” it is not the difference between knowing and not knowing, because they already know what they want to express—they have the content, the knowledge. The predicament surfaces when they have to choose a named language by which to communicate with others. The problem is that the language used in school is standardized and as Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have clearly described, is an invention, a social construction that is necessary, but is not neutral. Standardized monolingual language use runs counter to bilingual students’ everyday, normal bilingual communicative practices. We agree that the standardized language of school is important. But if we start by demanding English only, or Spanish only, we are not leveraging the students’ internal language repertoire, their normal translanguaging. The question for educators is how to extend those fluid bilingual practices so that students acquire the new standardized features that schools require. Bilingual students must learn to select some features from their unitary repertoire, their translanguaging, according to the communicative situation at hand. But to do so, it is counterproductive to demand that students already know how to use language in this way. If schools require students to “have” standardized features in English and Spanish when they enter classrooms, then what schools are doing is excluding those whose language practices do not match those desired in school. Schools must teach students to “do” language according to its linguistic norms, but also must acknowledge how they do language.
We do not forge translinguaging spaces in classrooms in order to make students feel comfortable, but instead, these spaces are crucial in order for students to feel free to contribute without having to worry about language boundaries, as this body of work has attempted to show— to be without limits or restrictions; to focus instead on the how and the what of what they are learning, instead of the medium through which the learning occurs.

One of the students, Orlando, gives us a clue as to why it might be important to allow the flexible use of language in the classroom. He says: “It’s important because I wouldn’t have been able to say it, because I couldn’t say it in Spanish, but I knew how to say it in English” (Interview transcripts, June 23, 2015). Perhaps instead of “comfortable” we can use the word “able” instead, taking a clue from Orlando. If we replace “comfortable” with “able,” we get the following phrase, “I felt more able saying it in English because I didn’t know the words in Spanish.” This second phrase more accurately reflects the students’ experiences, as they exist in translinguaging spaces.

Engaging with translinguaging practices is about giving students more access to the content, substantially increasing the access to more educational equity for language-minoritized students. But it is just as important to also consider how engaging in these practices is also about legitimizing student’s bilingual languaging practices, which, borrowing from Anzaldúa (1987, 2007), is neither from here nor there, but comes from a place in between, and has every right to exist without it being deemed as deficient. Additionally, bilingual education is and has always been political, as our earlier review and discussion of its history has shown, and now translanguaging has also been positioned as such (Flores, 2014). Thus, we must not only raise students’ consciousness of their bilingualism, and the role of English and Spanish in the classroom, but we must also teach content that raises their critical consciousness. Education
must develop students’ critical thinking skills for the purposes of their own empowerment and to acquire the tools to resist any attempts against their marginalization. This is especially crucial in the current political climate that has targeted people of color and other minoritized communities whose right to exist has been threatened. Again, because of the wide range of bilinguales that exist in the classroom, whose bilingualism lies along all points of the bilingual spectrum, it is critical to offer translanguageing spaces where students at any level can experience success. If we are committed to educational equity for all students, then a translanguageing practices have to be central in the teaching of emergent bilingual students.

**Recommendations**

In order to achieve greater equity in education and ensure that all students have access to a more meaningful education that allows them to be active participants and contributors in our society, bilingual programs must do the following:

1) The curriculum must be both linguistically and community sustaining, and must be socially conscious in order to teach students about themselves in the context of U.S. society and their role as global citizens.

2) Programs must embed more language flexibility in their programs in order to address the needs of all students with language levels all across the bilingual spectrum; and

3) Programs must harness students’ creativity and encourage collaboration between students.

Additionally, teachers of emergent bilingual learners must do the following:

4) Facilitate translanguageing spaces in their classrooms regardless of the language allocation policy in the school;
5) Utilize the students’ bilingualism as a resource (as well as that of the parents and community) in settings where there are two teachers, each teaching a target language, and they are not bilingual themselves;

6) Always recognize their students’ home languages as an asset in instruction; and

7) Plan instruction that is multimodal, and includes the use of media that students engage with everyday, such as social media platforms, since these have increasingly become a major source for both communication and information.

I believe this last point is critical in the current Trump era. Especially since our social media feeds have raised important questions such as, “What is fake news?” Our youth, a significant number of all social media users and media consumers, must be able to think critically, engage in independent research, draw their own analyses and conclusions, and very importantly, discern between the overflow of facts and “alternative” facts. Young people must learn their important role as change-makers in our society and develop the tools needed to become critical thinkers and doers to resist inequities everywhere.
APPENDIX A

Focal Student Interview Protocol

The following protocol was used with the six focal students:

1. Ask students about themselves (Country of origin, how long they’ve been living in the U.S., NYC, reasons for immigration, current connections to country of origin)
2. Tell me about your family. Siblings.
3. Language use. What language(s) do you use at home? For what purposes? With your friends? At school? Can you tell me how you make the choices that you make?
4. Tell me about your experiences in school. Did you attend school back in ___(country of origin)___? When did you start school in the US? In NYC?
5. Tell me about when you first started school in this country. What stands out to you the most? What was it like coming to a new country into a new school and not understanding English?
6. Tell me how school is for you now. Tell me about being a 7th grader, in a dual language program? Were you in the dual language program last year, in the 6th grade?
7. What are some of your favorite things about being in this program?
8. Tell me about the project we worked on. Can you tell me about some of the things we talked about that were important to you? How did it make you feel to talk about immigration in class?
9. How did you feel in class, during the class discussions and group activities, as a result of being able to use both of your languages? Do you think other bilingual students could benefit from using both languages in the class?
10. Do you feel that (classrooms, teachers, principals) should allow students to use all of their languages to help them learn? How so? Why? Why not?
11. Tell me what happened here: ________. (Playback translanguaging moment this student in particular engaged in). Why do you think you ________? Point out the specific way that the student took up translanguaging.
12. How do you think your education (and the education of others) might be impacted if
other teachers were use language flexibly in their classrooms?
APPENDIX B

Group Interview Protocol


1. Language use: How do you use language at home? At school? When you use social media? Why do you think that is?

2. I’m going to show you a part of a film/movie about a child that is new to the country and goes to a new school and what happens. (Show two parts: 1. Where Moisés is taking a practice math exam, and 2. When he’s taking the “real” exam).
   a. What is happening? What do you think of this part?
   b. What do you think the teacher could’ve done differently to help him?
   c. What do you think his classmates could’ve done differently?

3. How do you imagine how would have felt being in that type of class when you first came to the U.S.?

4. In school, some of the lessons that you learn are either in English only or in Spanish only. Can you think of a time when the use of only Spanish or only English didn’t allow you to complete your work? For example, when a teacher has said, “you can only speak English.”
   a. How did it feel when your teacher said you could only use one language, and not any other? (If applicable)

5. During the unit that we did together, I said you could feel free to write in Spanish or in English, or answer in either language. How did that ability to use any language that you know help you do your work? Can you think of specific examples?
   a. Does this flexibility allow you to participate in the classroom?
   b. Can you think of a time where you were able to learn better/do your work because you were able to have that flexibility in language-use?
   c. How do you think the ability to choose helps students?

6. How do you think using similar strategies (translanguaging) can help bilingual students
learn?
## APPENDIX C
### Codes used in data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Code</th>
<th>Subcode 1</th>
<th>Subcode 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of translanguaging spaces</td>
<td>&quot;Allows me to do more&quot; &quot;able to do more&quot; &quot;able to do better&quot; &quot;able to learn&quot;</td>
<td>Being able to use all languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associating success with being in bilingual program</td>
<td>“Getting more help from teachers” “teachers are more caring”</td>
<td>Feeling lucky to be in bilingual class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive view of bilingual education</td>
<td>Bilingual program is &quot;better&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate meaning to reach understanding</td>
<td>Reading the environment/negotiating language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond language norms and boundaries</td>
<td>Contributing beyond boundaries; expressing oneself fully</td>
<td>Just communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing bilingualism</td>
<td>Utilitarian view of bilingualism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students get a choice? (To be in bilingual class)</td>
<td>No control over program enrollment/choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translanguaging in action</td>
<td>Automaticity of bilingual communicative practices</td>
<td>Ability to express oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translanguaging as a privilege</td>
<td>“Privilege”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translanguaging as a right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening the home language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consciousness of self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiceless; Silencing</td>
<td>Alienated/disengaged from school; “quiet” “aburrido”</td>
<td>Barriers; imagined difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a voice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Spanglish&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling more “comfortable”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Perceived &quot;Latinoness&quot;= speaking Spanish</td>
<td>Feeling alone (in not being able to speak Spanish)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metalinguistic awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
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APPENDIX D

Word Cloud of Codes
APPENDIX E
The Unit Of Study

Title: The Flight of Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors and the Immigration Debate

Grades: Grade 7

Subject Areas: Social Studies/Literacy

Suggested Time: 20-22 sessions, 45 minutes each (10-12 weeks)

Unit Author(s): Luz Herrera*

Theme(s): Unaccompanied minors, immigration, undocumented status, social media, immigration policy, immigration reform


OVERVIEW:

INTRODUCTION:
This project investigates the trajectories of Latino immigrant youth to the United States, particularly the large influx of unaccompanied minors detained at the southern border as they attempted to cross. Students will begin by surveying their own (and their families’) immigrant experience in the United States. Then they will delve deeply to examine the plight of the unaccompanied minors and the legal struggles that ensued. Additionally, they will analyze U.S. immigration policy and explore how it affects the minors as well as the daily lives of immigrants. Students will utilize the media and social media as some of the major lenses by which to examine this topic throughout the unit, primarily in thinking about its role in shaping public opinion on the unaccompanied minors and immigration policy. The unit will utilize translangaging pedagogy, which will facilitate students’ engagement with the topic in the various modalities by maximizing their ability to tap into their entire language resources.

This class alternates target language on a weekly basis. Thus, lessons will be taught in the target language for the week, with the use of translangaging strategies to support student learning regardless of language.

Essential Questions:
Weeks 1-2:  What are different reasons immigrants come to the United States?  
How does the immigrant experience relate to my own identity?  
How has immigration affected my family?  
What are some of the challenges faced by Latino immigrants in the United States?  
What are the lived experiences of undocumented immigrants?

Weeks 3-5  Who are the unaccompanied minors? Where are they from?  
What are the push/pull factors that led minors to flee their countries?  
What are the experiences of the minors detained at the border?  
What are some of the challenges faced by the unaccompanied minors during and after detainment?

Weeks 6-8  What are some of the challenges and opportunities faced by undocumented immigrants?  
How do immigration policies affect the daily lives of immigrants in the United States?  
How have immigration policies affected the lives of the detained minors?

Weeks 9-12  What role has social media played during the plight of the unaccompanied minors?  
What is the role of social media on the immigration debate?  
How can the current immigration trends influence future immigration policy?

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:
- examine the experiences of different immigrant groups and their reasons for immigrating
- assess how immigration has shaped their own lives and the lives of their families
- examine the experiences of Latino immigrants in the US
- understand the plight of the unaccompanied minors detained at the US border
- examine the push and pull factors that contributed to the migration of unaccompanied minors
- make meaningful personal connections to the contemporary story of immigration in the U.S.
- understand the particular challenges of undocumented immigrants to the U.S.
- understand how immigration policies affect the daily lives of immigrants
- understand the role of social media on shaping the public opinion on immigration
- express their understanding of the immigrant experience in oral, written, and visual formats through the use of their entire linguistic resources

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FOCUS:

- Domain-specific vocabulary in English and in Spanish
- Compare and contrast strategies and vocabulary in writing and orally
- Using words and phrases, textual evidence, to support claims/argument and the vocabulary associated with it (i.e. according to the author…, based on…, in the article…)
• Use words and phrases to explain inferences drawn from the text (e.g., this means that… ; the author thinks that,… ; this makes me reach the conclusion that…).
• Utilizing cause and effect in writing and when presenting orally
• Presenting findings orally, utilizing entire linguistic repertoire, and be able to identify facts and evidence.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies:

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3
Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9
Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

Reading Informational Texts:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.6
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.7
Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.9
Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

WRITING:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1
Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7
Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

Speaking & Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SPEAKING & LISTENING:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2
Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.5
Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

LANGUAGE:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.3
Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.4
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.6
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

PREPARATION

PREPARING TO TEACH THIS UNIT:

The effects that an often arduous journey and transplantation has on newcomers, such as separation from family and known surroundings, environmental hazards, health risks, economic strain, the process of becoming a foreigner and ceasing to belong, are significant to the lived experiences and narratives of immigrants and children of immigrants. The various venues explored in this unit (newspaper articles, news clips, video clips, texts, social media trending topics, etc.) will allow students to examine the dynamics of immigration.

Through the project, students will be prompted to refer back to the essential questions before, during, or after engagement with the selected readings and other material in order to reflect on different points of view and establish a framework for understanding.

Texts & Translanguaging Strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Translanguaging Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles:</td>
<td>• Provide firsthand accounts of immigrant experiences in students’ home languages and cultures where relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 'Border child' tells of path from Honduras to Tennessee (Tenneasean.com)</td>
<td>• Videos with subtitles in home language, if not available in the home language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Testimonio: Hermanitos migrantes relatan su trauma por 'la hielera' (La Opinión).</td>
<td>• Encourage students to find videos and articles online in their home language and English to enrich vocabulary &amp; place into context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Protestadores bloquean autobuses migratorios en California (BBC):</td>
<td>• Choose texts/articles at a variety of reading levels and with visual aids.</td>
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<td>• Flood of Illegal Immigrants to pour into NYC schools (NY Post);</td>
<td>• Students use bilingual content glossaries for reading support.</td>
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<td>• Guide to Obama’s immigration</td>
<td>• Use the Internet to translate shorter texts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use bilingual primary source documents from various sources (newsletters, websites, blogs, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students interview family members in their home languages.</td>
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<td>executive action (Washington Post); Restraining Presidential Power - Executive Orders (The Clarion-Ledger) Media/Videos/Images:</td>
<td>Students discuss and collaborate with classmates in any language or bilingually. Students annotate the texts in any language or bilingually Students stare out in any language or bilingually Students write journal entries in any language or bilingually. Students are free to draw from their entire language repertoire throughout the unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• News segment on unaccompanied minors, Primer Impacto U.S. Customs and Border Protection Dangers Awareness Campaign Posters, PSA Videos</td>
<td>• Images of unaccompanied minors during journey and at detainment centers Tweets Political Cartoons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Links to articles and other useful information for unit/preparation:**

• Immigrant kids squeezing budgets. NY Daily news.  
• U.S. Schools Gear Up for Surge of Young Immigrants. Education Week.  
  http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/06/27/36unaccompanied.h33.html
• 'Border child' tells of path from Honduras to Tennessee. The Tennessean.  
Title: Family Histories  
Subject: Social Studies  
Grade Level: 7th  
Duration: 4 sessions  


**Overview:**

Students will explore the relationship between their family history and immigration. Students will also examine immigration trends in their community and across the United States, with attention to the immigration of Latinos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big Ideas:</th>
<th>Essential Question(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • The United States has a long history of immigration and is a nation of immigrants. Immigrants come here from all over the world and have different reasons for migrating. They all have stories to tell about their journey.  
• We (the students), also have our unique stories to share and contribute. And in thinking about our families’ own experiences, we can recognize and value their sacrifice and hard work. | • What are different reasons immigrants come to the United States?  
• How does the immigrant experience relate to my own identity?  
• How has immigration affected my family?  
• What are some of the challenges faced by Latino immigrants in the United States?  
• What are the lived experiences of undocumented immigrants? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will know:</th>
<th>Students will be able to:</th>
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</table>
| • Immigrants in the United States are a diverse population.  
• There are various reasons why people have immigrated and continue to immigrate to the United States.  
• Their own families have unique experiences to share and learn from.  
• Undocumented immigrants face a | • Plan an interview with relevant questions  
• Analyze and discuss different immigrant experiences, including their challenges  
• Analyze and discuss the experiences of undocumented immigrants |

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unique set of challenges.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Common Core Standards:</th>
<th>Performance Task(s):</th>
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</table>
| CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.8, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.1.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W6-8.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.3 | - Family interview questions  
- Written reflection |
| Other Evidence: | - Student discussions, oral presentations  
- Interview questions |

**Materials:** Computer with internet access, projector, blackboard, space for group discussions, sticky notes, interview protocol (handout is provided below Session 2), student journals.

**Reading:** Chapter 2, *Immigration Stories*

**Linguistic Demands to be Addressed:** Past tense, formulating questions (question words: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?), sentence starters for students to write their own entries (When I..., During..., I was...)

**Translanguaging Strategies:** Provide books/articles in students’ home language, Students interview family members in their home languages, Students collaborate with classmates in any language or bilingually, Students write journal entries in any language or bilingually, Students are free to draw from their entire language repertoire throughout the unit.

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**Session 1: Immigration Stories**

**Aim:** Students will learn about the immigration stories from people form all over the world and share their own/families’.

**Opening:** Introduction to immigration stories

*The instructor shares her/his own family’s immigration experience.*

*This will help students learn about who the instructor is and why she or he is interested in exploring this topic with them. Also, it will perhaps make them feel more at ease about sharing their own and their families’ experiences.*

**Focus Question:** Who am I? What is my experience?

Luz Herrera’s points to cover:

- My father’s journey alone to find work and start making a way for my mother, siblings and me.
- Family separation.
- Reuniting with my father.
• Most memorable experiences shortly after arriving in the US, including those memories from starting a new school, in a new language.

During this session, the goal is to share and learn about all of our immigration experiences. But first, we will learn about some of the experiences of immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as from different parts of the world.

**Group Activity:** Group Discussion

- In small groups of 4-6 students, assign each group one of the testimonies in Chapter 2: *Immigration Stories*.
- Give students time to read through their assigned story. These stories are in English, but can be translated into Spanish and students may read either in Spanish or English.
- Ask students to discuss how each account might be similar or different from other immigrant experiences they may already be familiar with.

**Closing:** Group Discussion

These questions will be available in both Spanish and English. Written and orally presented also in both languages. Students will be encouraged to share (orally) in either English and Spanish, or both.

**Focus Questions**

1. What did you learn from the immigrant stories presented (and others you may be aware of)? What were the major similarities and differences?
2. What are some of the reasons people decide to leave their country of origin?
3. What are the different challenges one might experience coming to the United States as a child, teenager, and young adult? Is there an age at which it might be easier or more difficult to make such a life change?
4. How does immigration affect family structures? In what ways are families reunited and separated?
5. What are the greatest challenges for newly arrived immigrants? What are the surprises they face as they get to know their new surroundings?

Ask each group to share some of their ideas and discussion points with the rest of the class.

Students will also write a short reflection about the discussion, in a language of their choice. Students should write in the past tense. Provide a few examples in English and in Spanish, including sentence starters to help them begin their entries.

**Translanguaging:** Students will write and discuss in any language.

**Lesson adapted from:** Aragón, M.J., Bittencourt, T., Johnson, K., & Kleyn, T. (2011). *Immigration: Stories, Struggles and Debates.* Available at
Session 2: Family Immigration Stories Interview Planning

Aim: Students will discuss and plan their family interview to gather their immigration stories.

Opening: Introduction to activity

Inform students that for homework, they will be interviewing a family member about their family’s immigration history. We will be spending this session discussing the interview questions and formulating questions to include in their interviews with their family members.

Hand out the Interview Questions Handout. It contains guiding questions in both English and Spanish.

Give students time to review the questions and discuss as a whole class.

Group Activity: Discussing and generating additional interview questions

Ask students to come up with their own additional questions after discussing them in their groups. They should plan their interview questions around whom they plan on interviewing and what they may already know about that person’s experience with immigration.

Closing: Group Share and Recording their Interview Questions

Students will share with the larger group some of the questions they plan on adding to their interview protocol. They will write down their own questions onto the protocol document provided.

Translanguaging: Students will share, write, and discuss in any language.

Homework: Conduct family interview. Remind students that they should write down the answers of the interviewees and to conduct the interview in the language that makes sense, or both.

Handout: Interview Protocol - Family Stories
Interview Questions / Preguntas para la Entrevista

Name of person being interviewed: _______________________ Date: __________
Interviewer: ______________________

1. Who immigrated to the United States in our family first?
2. Who made the decision to move to the United States and why?
3. What kind of work did they do when they arrived in the United States?
4. Who in the family stayed behind? Do you maintain contact with them?
5. What were some of the challenges our family faced when they first arrived in the United States?

1. ¿Quién emigró a los Estados Unidos en nuestra familia por primera vez?
2. ¿Quién tomó la decisión de trasladarse a los Estados Unidos y por qué?
3. ¿Qué tipo de trabajo lo hicieron cuando llegaron a los Estados Unidos?
4. ¿Quién en la familia se quedaron? ¿Mantiene contacto con ellos?
5. ¿Cuáles fueron algunos de los desafíos que enfrenta nuestra familia cuando llegaron por primera vez en los Estados Unidos?

Student Questions: Write your own questions. Escribe tus propias preguntas.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

**Sessions 3-4:** What can we learn form our families’ stories?

**Aim:** Students will share and discuss the important moments learned from their families’ stories.

**Opening:** Interview Discussion

Explain to students that they will be spending this session discussing their experiences interviewing their family member.

**Activity:** Group Discussion

Students will share their experiences interviewing their family members with their group in their table clusters. Students are able to share in English and/or Spanish.

Focus questions provided and discussed:

1. What did you learn about your family that you did not know before?
2. Why did your family decide to move to the United States?
3. How do you think your family’s experience compares to those of other immigrants? What are some similarities and differences?

Students will write the name of the person they interviewed on a sticky note or note card and a sentence describing an event that was important to the person’s immigration experience.

Groups will take turns going up to the class immigration timeline and sticking their notes onto a chart paper. Students are able to write their notes and discuss in English and/or Spanish.

**Closing:** Share out and reflection writing activity

As a class, discuss the distribution of notes on the class timeline and discuss the events that were relevant to the experiences of the students’ family members.

Students will write a reflection on the following question: Why do immigrants choose to come to the United States? Students should draw on examples from the book and ideas discussed in class. They can write in either English or Spanish.

**Translanguaging:** Students will write and discuss in any language.

**Additional Resources:**

**Websites:** Learning about U.S. Immigration with the New York Times
Immigration Stories, Constitutional Rights Foundation

StoryCorps Historias http://www.storycorps.org/historias-en

My Immigration Story.com http://www.myimmigrationstory.com

Independent Lens: The New Americans, PBS.org
http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans

Spanish: StoryCorps Historias http://storycorps.org/espanol/

Title: Los Niños, la Bestia, y la Migra (The Kids, the Beast, and la Migra)
Subject: Social Studies
Grade Level: 7th
Duration: 5-6 sessions
Relevant Readings: “‘Border child' tells of path from Honduras to Tennessee,” from The Tennessean (Tennessean.com), “Testimonio: Hermanitos migrantes relatan su trauma por 'la hielera,’” from La Opinión.

Overview:
Students will learn the stories of several children (the unaccompanied minors) and their trajectories. They will learn about Gerardo’s journey to Tennessee, and the story of two siblings detained at the border, including the traumatic events they experiences in the detention center. They will view images of children crossing and during detainment to get a larger view of the situation. Also, they will see some images and videos that form a part of a government campaign to discourage the youth from taking this type of journey.

Understanding(s) / Big Ideas:
• Unaccompanied minors are children and youth who have undertaken the long journey to the US on their own.
• Unaccompanied minors have different reasons for leaving their countries and have unique stories about their journey, most prominently to get away from the crime and economic uncertainties faced in their countries.
• We (students), also have our unique stories to share and contribute. And in thinking about our families’ own experiences, we can recognize and value unaccompanied minors sacrifice and hard work.

Essential Questions:
• Who are the unaccompanied minors? Where are they from?
• What are the push/pull factors that led the minors to flee their countries?
• What are the experiences of the minors that have been detained at the border?
• What are some of the challenges faced by the unaccompanied minors during and after detainment?

Students will know:
• Why people have immigrated and continue to immigrate to the United States.
• Immigrant children face unique challenges
• There are many efforts to stop/discourage the journey across the border

Students will be able to:
• Form an opinion about the unaccompanied minors plight
• Discuss ways in which immigrants are being treated in the detention centers
• Write a short reflection on the treatment of children
• Reflect on the government-led
Common Core Standards:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.3 Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.7 Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium’s portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Performance Task(s):
- Written reflections
- Student posters (on Dangers Campaign)

Other Evidence:
- Student discussions, oral presentations

Learning Activities

Materials:
Article from The Tennessean, “‘Border child' tells of path from Honduras to Tennessee;”
Article from La Opinión, “Testimonio: Hermanitos migrantes relatan su trauma por 'la hielera;”
U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) “Dangers Campaign” posters and PSA videos; slide show of photos of children during the journey; computer with internet access; projector; chalkboard; chart paper; student journals

Linguistic Demands to be Addressed: using sentence frames for oral presentations, such as Las imagines me hicieron sentir…El video hará que un joven…Pienso que los niños deberian…, Los posters harán que los jóvenes…

Translanguaging Strategies: Students annotate the reading to get the gist in a language of their choice, students write and discuss in the language of their choice. Provide books/articles in students’ home language, Students collaborate with classmates in any language or bilingually, Students write journal entries in any language or bilingually, Students are free to draw from their entire language repertoire throughout the unit.
Session 1: Gerardo’s story

Aim: Students will learn about Gerardo’s journey and the legal struggles he faced as an unaccompanied minor.

Opening: Introduce Gerardo’s Story
Students will learn about Gerardo’s journey to the US. With this story, students will get a first-hand account of a young migrant who experienced detainment, but was finally able to reunite with his aunt in Tennessee as he waited for his court date to determine his fate.

Activity: Shared reading and group discussion
• Students read the article in English about Gerardo’s story
• Students will annotate their texts, writing some of the main ideas on the margins.
• Students will discuss Gerardo’s experiences with their groups

Closing: Journal Reflection Writing

Translanguaging: Students will discuss and annotate the reading in the language of their choice. They will also write in the language of their choice.
**Session 2: Los Hermanitos en la Hielera**

**Aim:** Students will learn about the experiences of two children in a detention center from a first-hand account.

**Opening:** Students will learn of the plight of a young brother and sister that migrated from Guatemala and their experiences in a Texas detention center. As a class, students will watch a short video report from *Primer Impacto* (Spanish-language news program) on the unaccompanied minors.

**Activity:** Group Discussion
- Students will discuss what they heard in the video.
- Students will read an article from *La Opinión* (a Spanish-language newspaper based in Los Angeles, CA), *Testimonio: Hermanitos migrantes relatan su trauma por 'la hielera'* available at laopinion.com
- Students will annotate the reading and discuss the main points with their groups.

*Primer Impacto* videos: “Obama recibió a presidentes de Centroamérica por crisis de niños en la frontera” retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uldpzyBahY or “Oleada de inmigrantes menores de edad va tras el sueño Americano,” retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GO5qvLkQoP8

**Closing:** Journal Reflection Writing:

(Guiding questions)
- What was the most difficult part of their journey?
- What is something they are still afraid of?
- How do you think this will affect them later in life?

**Translanguaging:** Students will discuss and annotate the reading in the language of their choice. They will also write in the language of their choice.
Session 3: The Journey on La Bestia

Aim: Students will get a clear idea of the journey to the U.S. through images of youth traveling aboard La Bestia, as the freight train has become known, and their detainment and the U.S. Border.

Opening: Play a slide show containing images of children during the journey, aboard the freight train nicknamed La Bestia, the beast, and in detention centers.

Some images can be found in the following:
https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/humanitarian-challenges

Activity: Group Discussion

Pose the following discussion questions to be addressed within student groups:
- What are some things you can tell about some of the images, what about La Bestia?
- What do you think it is like to be in these detention centers?
- How do you think children feel?

Closing: Journal Reflection Writing:

Give students some sentence frames to help them get started in their writing response to the images:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Las imagines me hicieron sentir…</th>
<th>The images made me feel…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La vida en un centro de detención ha de ser…</td>
<td>Life in a detention center…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si yo fuera uno de esos niños, …</td>
<td>If I were one of the detained children, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pienso que los niños deberían…</td>
<td>I think the children should…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yo pienso que los niños sienten…</td>
<td>I think the children feel…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remind students that they can complete these in English or Spanish; whichever allows them to express themselves on a deeper level.

Translanguaging: Students will discuss and write in the language of their choice.
Session 4-5: Government Response - Dangers Awareness Campaign

**Aim:** Students will learn about and analyze the government efforts to dissuade young migrants from taking the journey north.

**Opening:** Introduce the topic of the session.

Tell students that the government, specifically the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), has taken action to try to get children and young people from taking this journey. One of those was the launching of the Dangers Awareness Campaign. Something they have done is distributed posters, TV ads/videos, and radio announcements (PSAs) in their countries and in Spanish, to show the population that it is very dangerous to make the journey.

Tell students they will be viewing some videos and posters that the government created and posted/passed out in the different countries where a lot of these children come from.

Show the different PSA videos from the campaign: [https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/humanitarian-challenges](https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/humanitarian-challenges).

Discuss as a class the implications of the videos.

**Activity:** Group Work

Break students into four groups.
Two groups will have poster 1, the other two will have poster 2. Attach image to a chart paper and divide chart into three sections:

1. **Describe.** Have students write some descriptions about what they "see"
2. **Thoughts.** What can students conclude about this image? What is the intention of this image?
3. **Questions.** What questions do you have about this image or its intention?

Dangers awareness Campaign Posters:

- Poster 1 and 2 can be found at: [https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/humanitarian-challenges](https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/humanitarian-challenges)

**Discussion:** Have students share their posters. Each group will take turns sharing what they wrote in their posters. They are encouraged to write in Spanish or English and present in Spanish, using English when they feel they could express their thoughts better. Students can also see a few of the videos that formed part of the campaign and were aired in the local channels.
The posters and videos are in Spanish.

**Closing**: Write a short reflection. Use sentence frames to aid in your writing, if necessary.

If you were the parents of these young children and you saw these posters, what would you think?
Si yo fuera la mamá/papá/hermana/hermano de un niño o joven migrante...
Qué es más peligroso: Tomar el viaje largo y difícil o quedarse en su país natal?

If I were the young migrant’s parent, brother or sister, I would…. What is more dangerous: Taking the journey or staying in their country?

**Translanguaging**: Students will discuss and write in the language of their choice.
Session 6: Dangers Awareness Campaign (continued)

Aim: Students will orally present their responses on the campaign posters. They will present their analysis on the intent of the posters.

Opening:

Students will review the government efforts to dissuade the young migrants from taking the journey. They will orally present in groups their collaborative responses to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection “Dangers Awareness” Campaign posters.

Students will use these sentence starters when writing their thoughts on the posters:

1. En el cartel, se ve/nosotros vemos… (In this poster, we see…)
2. Nostros pensamos que… (We think…)
3. Nuestras preguntas son… (We wonder…)

Also, students can use the following sentence frames when presenting their posters to the rest of the class: Las imagines me hicieron sentir…El video hará que un joven….Pienso que los niños deberian…., Los posters harán que los jóvenes… (The images made me feel…, The images/videos will make a young person…, I think the children should…)

Translanguaging: Students will be able to use language flexibly during oral presentations.

Closing: Write a journal entry/reflection
What is more dangerous? Taking the journey or staying in their country? (give three reasons to defend your position)
Yo pienso que ____________ es más peligroso que _____________ porque….
I think ____________ is more dangerous than ____________ because…
Da por los menos tres razones para defender tu posición. (Give at least three reasons to defend your position)
*Remind students to support their statements with evidence. Provide this mini-review:

For example:
Statement: The detention centers at the border are very cold.
Evidence:
1. People referred to it as la hielera.
2. Children were getting sick.
3. Children are seen in photos covered from head to toe in blankets and huddled closely to one another.

Translanguaging: Students will be able to use language flexibly in their writing.
**Title:** Unaccompanied Minors: The Opposition and Obama’s Executive Action on Immigration  
**Subject:** Social Studies  
**Grade Level:** 7th  
**Duration:** 5 sessions  

**Overview:**  
Students will learn the different sides of the debate on the unaccompanied minors. They will learn about the ongoing efforts against unauthorized immigration and the protests driven by the migrants’ presence. They will also be introduced to Obama’s immigration executive action and learn the different perspectives on this controversial order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding(s) / Big Ideas:</th>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
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| • Unaccompanied minors are children and youth who have undertaken the long journey to the US on their own.  
• Unaccompanied minors have different reasons for leaving their countries and have unique stories about their journey, most prominently to get away from the crime and economic uncertainties faced in their countries.  
• Obama’s immigration executive action expands opportunities for many undocumented immigrants  
• Authors have an audience and a purpose when writing.  
• There are many efforts against unauthorized immigration | • What are some of the challenges and opportunities faced by undocumented immigrants?  
• How do immigration policies affect the daily lives of immigrants in the United States?  
• What has been the response of more conservative citizens against unauthorized immigration?  
• What has been the response to Obama’s immigration executive action? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will know:</th>
<th>Students will be able to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Undocumented immigrants face many challenges.  
• Many people are in need of immigration reform.  
• There are opposing viewpoints on immigration policies. | • Understand some of the major challenges faced by undocumented immigrants  
• Understand the benefits of the presidential executive order on immigration  
• Examine the opposing positions on the executive order |

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<tr>
<th>Common Core Standards:</th>
<th>Performance Task(s):</th>
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| CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.6 Determine an author's point of view or | • Written reflections  
• Annotation of readings |
purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.9. Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

A. Use their experience and their knowledge of language and logic, as well as culture, to think analytically, address problems creatively, and advocate persuasively.

Other Evidence:
- Student discussions, oral presentations
- Letter to migrant or protestor

Learning Activities

Materials:
**Linguistic Demands to be Addressed:** Writing arguments to support claims:
Introduce claims (The author thinks ____________, because ___________.)
Use language that explains claims and counterclaims (On the other hand, __________ believes ___________; An opposing argument/view is ___________).

**Translanguaging Strategies:** Students annotate the reading to get the gist in a language of their choice, students write and discuss in the language of their choice. Provide books/articles in students’ home language, Students collaborate with classmates in any language or bilingually, Students write journal entries in any language or bilingually, Students are free to draw from their entire language repertoire throughout the unit.

**Sessions 1-2: Opposing View Points**

**Aim:** Students will read about the different points of views when it comes to the detainment of the unaccompanied minors.

**Opening:** Tell students that many people, particularly politically conservative people, have protested the presence of the unaccompanied minors, citing that it takes away from the state or city’s resources. Students will read about protesters who successfully blocked the movement of the minors form one detention center to another, with the intention to unburden detention centers that are over-capacity.

Shared reading in Spanish from *Univision:* “Manifestantes bloquean autobuses con migrantes en California,” and class discussion.

**Translanguaging:** Students will discuss and annotate the reading in the language of their choice.

**Activity:**

Briefly review the different parts of a letter.

I. Date
II. Greeting (Who will you be writing this letter to?)
III. Body (What will you be telling this person?)
   a. Use details, vivid verbs, adjectives to describe nouns. Don’t forget to indent.
IV. Closing (How you want to say good-bye to your reader)
V. Signature

After the shared reading and class discussion, write a letter to protesters to appeal to their humanity or to a child on the bus, to make them feel at ease about what they are seeing out the bus windows.

**Closing:**

Share your letter with your group. Discuss. Some students will also volunteer to share with the rest of the class.

**Translanguaging:** Students will annotate, discuss, and write in the language of their choice.
Session 2: Unaccompanied Minors: Authors’ Purpose

Aim: Students will analyze the author’s purpose and the tone of the article.

Opening: Students will be able to read the perspective of one author on the presence of the unaccompanied minors in NYC schools.

Activity:

Shared reading from the NY Post: “Flood of Illegal Immigrants to pour into NYC schools.”

Group Discussion: Students will discuss the author’s purpose in writing this article. They will also use evidence to support their statement by writing the different quotes that exemplify their author’s position on Obama’s executive order and the migrant’s presence in NYC schools.

Students will write in their journals some quotes from the reading and write their analysis of that quote, specifically analyzing the author’s intent. Students will use text-based evidentiary support for their statements with the aid of the following sentence frame:

“I can tell that this author believes/feels that ______________ because she/he said _____________.”

Closing:

Students will discuss their analysis with their group and then several will share out with the larger class. There will be a class discussion on this particular author’s purpose stress the importance of thinking critically and differentiate fact from opinion in journalism.

Translanguaging: Students will annotate the reading, discuss, and written in the language of their choice.
Session 4-5: Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration

AIM: Students will learn important details on Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration announced on November 2014. They will also analyze two different perspectives on this issue.

Opening: Discuss some major points that Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration hopes to accomplish. Shared some of the things that this executive action will do and mean to undocumented immigrants. Remind the students that this order doesn’t affect the undocumented minors we have been learning about, but many undocumented immigrants that have been here for years can benefit from this executive action.


Activity:

After discussing what Obama’s executive action will do and what it will mean for undocumented immigrants, students will do a shared reading of two articles with opposing opinions on this order:

1. “Obama's immigration move is a win,” from CNN written by political commentator, by Maria Cardona (2014).

Translanguaging: Students will discuss and annotate the reading in the language of their choice. Students will use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the different viewpoints on Obama’s Executive Order on Immigration.

Model how to fill in one line per side, then give each student a hand out to complete independently.

Closing:

Students will discuss the content of their Venn diagrams with their groups, then some students will share and content to the larger class discussion on the topic.

Translanguaging: Students will write, discuss, and share out in the language of their choice.
**Weeks 9-10**

**Title:** The Impact of the Media/Social Media on Shaping the Public Narrative  
**Subject:** Social Studies  
**Grade Level:** 7th  
**Duration:** 3 sessions

**Overview:** Students will discuss how the media and social media are responsible for driving the conversation on the most significant or controversial topics. In this part of the unit, students will discuss how the media and social media have steered the conversation on Obama’s Executive Action on Immigration. Students will assess each entity’s responsibility in shaping the conversation around this topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding(s) / Big Ideas:</th>
<th>Essential Question(s):</th>
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</table>
| • The media has an important role in the shaping of a public narrative on important issues.  
• Social media is becoming increasingly important in the spreading of news, including fake news.  
• It is important to be critical of the source and purpose of a message. | • What role has the media and social media, played during the plight of the unaccompanied minors?  
• What is the role of media/social media on the immigration debate?  
• How can the current immigration trends influence future immigration policy? |

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<th>Students will know…</th>
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| • Why it is important to consider the intent of a publication  
• A variety of perspectives usually exist in controversial issues, such as immigration  
• How different people/entities use media/social media. | • Discuss ways in which the media and social media help shape the public opinion  
• Analyze and write reflections on the role of the media and social media on shaping the public narrative on immigration and immigration policy  
• Form an opinion about the public narrative on immigration and immigration policy based on evidence. |

**Common Core Standards:**  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1  
Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.3  
Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas)

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<tr>
<th>Performance Task(s):</th>
<th>Other Evidence:</th>
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| • Written reflections  
• Writing on posters during gallery walks | • Student discussions, oral presentation |
Learning Activities

Materials:
Screen shots of tweets, predetermined images of Political Cartoons from various sources, chart paper, tape, markers.
**Session 1: #executiveaction on Twitter**

**Aim:** Students will analyze the impact of social media on shaping the conversation on immigration

**Opening:** Introduce the topic asking students about the types of social media they use and what they use it for. Ask them who they follow and what they usually use social media for. Students will analyze tweets from various politicians and entities. State that people often use social media to convey their position on a policy or event, and that the President’s order on immigration garnered a lot of attention from many people, thus inciting a reaction expressed through social media.

Use one of the tweets as an example for the whole class to contribute to a discussion. Some questions can include: What is this tweet saying? What position is it taking? What are the implications of the tweet? How do you think their followers will react? They will discuss what the tweet is about and what it means.

**Activity:**
- Students will analyze tweets with #executiveaction or #immigrationaction and other related hashtags
- Each group will analyze one tweet in their group.

**Materials:** tweet cutouts (take screen shots of tweets)

Students will choose a tweet that they thought was the most interesting and will write an analysis pointing out the message that it sends and the position it takes on the topic: Obama’s executive action on immigration. They will write their analysis in their journals and discuss their thoughts with their groups.

**Closing:** The session will close by having a whole class discussion about the messages these tweets hope to convey and a conversation about how social media helps shape public opinion.

**Translanguaging:** Students will write, discuss, and share out in the language of their choice.
Sessions 2-3: Political Cartoons on Obama’s Executive Action

**Aim:** Students will examine how the media helps shape the public opinion.

**Part 1:**

**Opening:** Introduce the historical purpose of political cartoons. Students will analyze political cartoons. They will write on a chart paper what the cartoon is about and what it means. Use one example to show students what to do during the activity. Post a cartoon cutout on chart paper for students to see. Together with the class, deconstruct the message the cartoon is sending. Write down student responses onto the chart board.

**Activity:**

Students will conduct a gallery walk. Post each cartoon cut out on a piece of chart paper and post them around the classroom walls. They will walk around the room with markers and write their interpretations of the message the cartoon is meant to convey. They will rotate around the room.

- Paste different political cartoons on chart paper around the room to students to respond to.
- Focus question for discussion: How can a political cartoon affect the public’s opinion on an issue?

**Materials:** Cartoon cutouts, chart paper, and markers.

**Closing:** Students will choose a poster that they thought was the most interesting and will discuss some of their thoughts on it with the larger class. The session will close by having a group discussion about the messages these cartoons hopes to convey.

**Translanguaging:** Students will write, discuss, and share out in the language of their choice.

**Part 2**

**Opening:** Students will continue analyzing the political cartoons from the previous session, which they became acquainted with during a gallery walk. In this session, students will choose one cartoon to further examine through a written journal entry.

**Activity:** In a journal entry, students will answer and reflect on the following three questions:

4. What message is it sending?
5. How might it make you feel about President Obama?
6. If you were an immigrant that has benefitted from the executive order, how would this make you feel?

Students will be working independently in their table clusters.

**Closing:** Students will share and discuss with their groups, then we will have a whole class discussion on what students discussed and on the larger implications on the role of the media on influencing public opinion.

**Translanguaging:** Students will write, discuss, and share out in the language of their choice.
Title: Final Essay: How do social media and the media shape the public narrative on important topics?
Subject: Social Studies
Grade Level: 7th
Duration: Approximately 5 sessions

Overview: Students will spend several sessions barnstorming, developing, writing, revising, editing, and rewriting their final essays. They will rely on peer support for feedback on their writing and confer with the instructor to improve on their writing.

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<td>• The impact of the media can be immeasurable, but we can find and use different evidence to show just how important it can be in shaping people’s views, including some from our own experiences with social media.</td>
<td>• Brainstorm their ideas on the role of the media and social media through the use of a spider organizer.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students will develop their ideas on an essay organizer</td>
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<td>• Students will write, revise, edit, and rewrite their essays with support from peers and instructor.</td>
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<td>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</td>
<td>• Graphic organizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</td>
<td>• Draft</td>
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<td>• Final draft</td>
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<td>• Oral presentation</td>
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Translanguaging: Students may write on their graphic organizers and compose their essays in a language of their choice, or bilingually.

Session 4-8: The Culminating Project*

Over the course of approximately five sessions, students will develop and present their writing.

Aim: Students will write an essay as part of their culmination project. They will also present their papers to their classmates.

Focal Question: How does social media and the media shape the public narrative on important topics?

Day 1: Discuss the focus question. Distribute a spider graphic organizer that students will use to develop independently ideas on the impact of both the media and social media on shaping public opinion. They should also discuss these with their groups.

Day 2: Students will further develop their ideas on an essay organizer with specific parts for the introduction, body and conclusion of the paper.

Day 3: Students will confer with a peer or peers and with the instructor, write their first draft. Students will receive sentence frames to support them in their writing.

Day 4: Students will revise their drafts. After conferring with peers and the instructor, students will re-write a final draft of their paper.

Day 5: Students will give an oral presentation their papers.

Points to discuss: Main ideas, arguments, and conclusions.

*Students will develop and write their drafts and present on a language of their choice.
References


*Childhood Literacy, (6)*3, 323–354.


Umansky, I. M., & Reardon, S. F. (2014). Reclassification patterns among Latino
English learner students in bilingual, dual Immersion, and English immersion classrooms. 


