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Supporting "Pedagogical" Spanish Language Competencies

Bilingual Teacher Education *en la Frontera*

Christian E. Zúñiga

Abstract

This autoethnography explores my experience as a bilingual teacher educator on the Texas, United States–Mexico border supporting the development of preservice teachers' pedagogical Spanish language competencies through a course that I have been developing over the last few years. To this aim, I look at my positionality and experiences developing my bilingualism in the same border community and my pedagogical Spanish language competence. My goal is to suggest how teacher education can support the development of bilingual teacher candidates' Spanish language competence in ways that recognize the linguistic diversity of border communities, critically unpack hegemonic ideologies, and prepare teacher candidates to feel confident in meeting the linguistic and academic demands and realities of the bilingual classroom.

Introduction

Language matters are complex. This has been especially true in the field of

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bilingual education, where public discourse and ideologies can shift what it means to be bilingual, who gets to claim being bilingual, and whether or not bilingualism is a worthy endeavor. In bilingual education's earliest days, transitional bilingual education was a remedial program solving the "problem" of non-English-speaking communities by moving them toward English (Ruíz, 1984), and in today's growing dual language movement, where students receive instruction in two languages, bilingualism is a highly valued resource (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Yet, even in this current "language as resource" paradigm (Ruíz, 1984), there are students whose language practices effectively remove them from their right to learn in and develop their heritage languages (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Fránquiz & López, 2009; Zúñiga, Henderson, & Palmer, 2018). In the face of shifting language ideologies and policies in bilingual education, how should bilingual teacher education and educators respond to supporting teacher candidates' bilingual competencies?

I have spent the last 10+ years developing my identity, knowledge, and skill set as a bilingual teacher educator. Nearly every class I have taught as a bilingual teacher educator has been in Spanish, a requisite for supporting teacher candidates' Spanish language competence. In Texas, the state uses the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test for bilingual teacher certification, which assesses Spanish language proficiency in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, using questions related to the various content areas and classroom-related scenarios. Statewide, the test has proved difficult for many bilingual preservice teachers to pass, and some note its impact on a growing bilingual teacher shortage (Arroyo-Romano, 2016). Given the challenges in pass rates, course work in Spanish is common in bilingual teacher preparation across the state. For much of my trajectory, Spanish was the language of my instruction, and rarely did I ever think of it as the subject of my instruction. Yet, when I became a bilingual teacher educator in the United States–Mexico borderlands, the place that nurtured my own bilingualism, I noticed a shift in my pedagogy and the ideas I chose to emphasize in my classes. This was most salient when I was assigned to teach courses on biliteracy development. I started to see Spanish, and its relationship to English, as the subject rather than solely the medium. This meant that I had to step outside my comfort zone and reenvision my role in supporting my teacher candidates. That road has not been easy. This has meant nurturing my own professional development and metalinguistic understandings of Spanish and English. I also often find myself negotiating ideological tensions. For example, I value the richness of my community's cultural and linguistic wealth, and the deep connections between language and identity (Anzaldúa, 2007; Yosso, 2005), but am cognizant of the situated nature of language (Gee, 2007) and of the languages of power (Delpit, 2002) that yield cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 2003). With time, I have come to the understanding that these are not binaries or contradictions but rather innate to the complexity of language. The duality of the United States–Mexico border makes it an ideal context to study the dynamic, rich, and complex nature of language.

Using an autoethnographic approach, I describe my journey as a bilingual teacher

educator on the Texas, United States–Mexico border. I use two perspectives—sociolinguistic realities of the border and situated language—as a way to anchor my approach to developing bilingual teachers' Spanish language competence for the bilingual classroom in a given geopolitical space. I detail my bilingual journey and examine themes in a course that I have developed for teacher candidates, and I demonstrate my own shift from Spanish as medium to language as subject. I attempt to unpack what it means to develop bilingual teacher candidates' pedagogical Spanish language competencies (Aquino-Sterling, 2016) in a way that is critical of hegemonic ideologies and cognizant of the linguistic and academic realities of the bilingual classroom, especially on the Texas, United States–Mexico border. I often use quotes by Gloria Anzaldúa that embody the essence of the section. Anzaldúa was born and raised bilingual in the very community where I teach, and together, my students and I read her work to discuss connections between language and identity, border languaging, and the Tex-Mex language variety. Anzaldúa's work has also been inspiring to me as a researcher attempting to understand the bilingualism of the United States–Mexico borderlands from the lenses of both practice and ideology.

"Deslenguadas"

> Deslenguadas: Somos los del español deficiente. We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic mestizaje, the subject of your burla. (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 80)

Hegemonic ideologies have delegitimized the cultural and linguistic identities of communities living in the U.S. borderlands. Historically, subtractive schooling has defined public schools alongside segregation and discriminating practices for the border region's mostly Mexican/Mexican American communities (Anzaldúa, 2007; Richardson & Pisani, 2017; Valenzuela, 1999). In the U.S. Southwest, corporal punishment for speaking Spanish was widespread in K–12 schools focused on "Americanization" agendas throughout the 20th century (González, 1999). Today, schools continue to focus on English acquisition as most important for language minority communities, especially visible in testing policies that eradicate sustainable bilingual development in favor of English academic success (Menken, 2006; Zúñiga, 2016). The regional dialects of border communities, such as Tex-Mex, reflect larger historical developments resulting in language contact through violent processes like colonization. These dialects have been positioned as inferior by colonizing ideologies that normalize monolingualism and purity over the dynamic ways in which language(s) are used by various language communities across contexts (Anzaldúa, 2007; Mignolo, 2000). Likewise, ideologies around bilingualism privilege side-by-side monolingual practices rather than dynamic processes like translanguaging or practices like code-switching (García & Wei, 2014; Zentella, 1997). In schools, such pervasive ideologies inform assessment practices and theoretical understandings of how languages work, which inevitably leads to limited understandings of

bi/multilingual competencies and deficit labels like *semilingual*, or having partial incomplete language competencies in two languages (MacSwan, 2000; Shohamy, 2006). For my teacher candidates and me, this ideological context of English only and language purism shaped our schooling experiences and linguistic identities.

Together, these ideologies impact how border communities value and maintain their linguistic resources. The alienation of one's heritage language in school means no opportunity to employ and develop the language in subject-area content, much less use it across language domains in a variety of contexts; it can also lead to more dramatic outcomes like generational language loss (Wong Fillmore, 2000). Together, language marginalization and loss can have a deep impact on an individual's identity and confidence when using the heritage language. In fact, Latinx bilingual teachers in the U.S. Southwest at both the preservice and in-service levels report feeling insecure over their ability to use Spanish to teach academic content and when engaging with monolingual Spanish speakers (Ek, Sánchez, & Cerecer, 2013; Guerrero, 2003). Amid this reality, it is important that bilingual teacher education allow teacher candidates who are heritage language speakers of Spanish, but educated in mostly English contexts, to heal, unpack, and disrupt hegemonic language ideologies (Murillo, 2017; Sarmiento-Arribalzaga & Murillo, 2009). This is important for teachers' self-healing and their commitment to offering equitable learning opportunities in the classroom. Simultaneously, it is also imperative for student achievement that bilingual teachers be able to employ a variety of Spanish registers and styles for content-area instruction to support bilingual/biliterate student development.

Situated Language: Language and the Bilingual Classroom

Language is situated. To distinguish between language binaries like "academic" and "nonacademic" or "standard" and "nonstandard" oversimplifies the complex ways in which language works and the construction of such labels by hegemonic influences (Gee, 2007; Lippi-Green, 1997; Rolstad, 2005). As Gee (2007) described, meaning is context and domain specific. Therefore, what we often refer to as "academic" language is really the situated language of a particular domain (i.e., content areas, communities, and professions). Classrooms, for example, are defined by certain communicative interactions, lexicons, discourse structures, and registers (Cazden, 2001). In bilingual classrooms, interactions happen in more than one language (and language varieties and registers).

As effective instructional leaders, bilingual teachers must be prepared to engage with students using content-specific terminology, discourse, and materials in both languages, including developing metalinguistic knowledge awareness (Aquino-Sterling, 2015) and understanding of cross-language relationships (Aquino-Sterling, 2016; Aquino-Sterling & Rodríguez-Valls, 2016; Guerrero & Lachance,

2018; Guerrero & Valadez, 2011; Rodríguez & Musanti, 2014). If bilingual teacher educators consider the situated nature of language, then it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge that what our teacher candidates lack is not Spanish as a language. Many of my students engage in a cross section of local Spanish language varieties like Mexican Spanish, northern Mexican Spanish, and Tex-Mex. Rather, they often need support with the content-specific lexicon, registers, and literacy skills appropriate for teaching tasks and interactions. The same can be said of any profession or community with which we identify. There is a socialization process of norms and language as one obtains community membership (Gee, 2007; Ochs, 1993).

Aquino-Sterling (2016) highlighted the term *pedagogical Spanish* as situated "language for specific purposes" in the Spanish–English bilingual classroom while describing an assignment developed to support teacher candidates in this area. Following their qualitative study of preservice bilingual teachers' understanding of teaching language through content, Rodríguez and Musanti (2014) concluded that bilingual teacher preparation needs, among other things, to develop teacher candidates' metalinguistic awareness and ability to move between the various language registers of the classroom. To use "pedagogical Spanish" and meet other linguistic demands of the classroom requires multiple abilities, including communicative and linguistic competences (Hymes, 1972b; Wright, 2010). Just as researchers have argued for the importance of teachers' knowledge of pedagogical English, applied and sociolinguistics, and English language elements, the same is true for Spanish (Bunch, 2013; Palmer & Martínez, 2013; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Zúñiga et al., 2018).

Therefore it is not enough for Spanish–English bilingual teacher educators merely to teach in Spanish. They must aim to develop teacher candidates' pedagogical Spanish competencies (Aquino-Sterling, 2016) in preparation for the lexical and discourse structures of bilingual classroom interactions and learning content. Guerrero and Guerrero (2009), pioneers in the field, challenged bilingual teacher educators to consider the ways in which we support preservice teachers' "academic Spanish" competency, including our language choices for materials, instruction, and writing. This autoethnography attempts to respond to that call.

It is in recognizing two realities that bilingual teacher education has an important role. On one hand, many teacher candidates experienced subtractive schooling that hindered their ability to develop their heritage language within the various academic disciplines in the same way they were able to develop English. It was systematically impossible. Ironically, they are punished for struggling to meet the proficiency standards of a language they were denied by the same system in which they were educated. Many have internalized hegemonic discourses that privilege normalized language practices over others, including their own. However, if bilingual teachers cannot meet the language and academic demands of the classroom associated with ways of using language for academic and professional purposes, how does that impact their ability to offer rigorous Spanish/English instruction that supports bilingual/biliterate development to communities who have long been denied such opportunities?

Methodology

Autoethnography aims to describe personal experience as a way to understand larger sociocultural processes (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Traditionally, autoethnography has been useful to praxis in the field of psychology as self-reflective practice supporting critical consciousness (Chapman-Clarke, 2016; Egeli, 2017; McIlveen, 2008). Likewise, in the field of teacher education, a growing number of scholars have used autoethnography to bridge research and practice (Aguilar, 2017; Lapidus, Kaveh, & Hirano, 2013; Park, 2014; Pinner, 2018). Similarly, I use autoethnography as a way to reflect on my experiences as a bilingual teacher educator amid the historical and ideological contexts of the Texas, United States–Mexico border.

The autoethnographic process is about "retroactively and selectively" examining past experiences (Ellis et al., 2011). First, I offer my positionality and describe my journey developing my bilingual/biliterate identity. I looked to epiphanies in my life, or significant moments heightening conflict, conscientization, and bringing about my action or change (Ellis et al., 2011). Drawing from Delgado Bernal's (1998, 2001) tenets of Chicana feminist epistemology and pedagogies, I draw on the "social, political, and cultural conditions of [my history]" as a way to make sense of the ways in which I engage in teaching and learning as a teacher educator. This includes highlighting "pedagogies of the home," people, and contexts that were influential in my language socialization from child to adulthood (Delgado Bernal, 2001).

In the second half, I focus on a course that I have been developing and teaching for seven semesters. The course is a requirement for my bilingual certification teacher candidates and focuses on how young bilingual children learn to read and write in two languages. It has a Spanish instruction requirement, but because of the content and other realities, it is much more a bilingual space. Whole-class discussion led by me is most often in Spanish, and language choice in small-group discussions varies among students. Most readings are in English but discussed in Spanish. For Spanish readings, I often highlight important terminology, especially if referenced throughout the semester, and other vocabulary with which I suspect not all students will be familiar. Assignments are completed in Spanish and include writing and speaking experiences.

For this part, I examined course syllabi, assignment descriptions, and activities created over the seven semesters that I have taught the class. Being the instrument of analysis, I drew on my "cultural intuition" as informed by my personal and professional experiences, existing literature, and the analytical research process (Delgado Bernal, 1998). As I plan a course, I also engage with, negotiate, and resist hegemonic ideologies. My syllabi, therefore, become my own acts of resistance. I can best describe the first half of my course as organized around three important themes: (a) unlearning oppressive discourses (Saavedra & Salazar Pérez, 2012), (b) valuing our and our community's cultural and linguistic wealth (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005), and (c) moving toward ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004;

Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001). Delgado Bernal (2001) described the "mestiza consciousness" of Chicana students, which includes cultural resources like "bilingualism, biculturalism, [and] commitment to communities" (p. 628) as vital to their navigation of academic structures. The building of teacher candidates' pedagogical Spanish competence occurs within these ideological spaces, and then having discussed and unpacked larger issues of ideology, I turn to engaging in the metalinguistic teaching of Spanish and its relationship to English.

My Language Journey

> Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 81)

The borderlands are both literal and figurative spaces that I have traversed my entire life. Yet, throughout my lifetime and career, I have been fortunate to have had various opportunities for bilingual/biliterate development. I was born and raised on the Texas, United States–Mexico border. I am both *pocha*[1] and Mexicana. I grew up in a home where Spanish, English, and Tex-Mex were spoken. With Papí, I speak his *norteño* Mexican Spanish with words like *garra* (cloth), *feria* (change), and *güercos* (children). Mamí and I avidly switch from one language to the next, constructing sentences that merge English and Spanish syntax while defying the normalization of language purity. Exposure to media like television and radio was in both English and Spanish, from Mexico and the United States. Growing up, I spent weekends *del otro lado* in Mexico with Papí's family, walking the plaza and going to the tortilleria, among other activities. As Spanish monolinguals, my family in Mexico would often correct my border languaging practices like code-switching, anglicisms, and calques. "Así no se dice!" my *tías* would say. They still do. Weekly, I would visit Mamí's family, who lived a few miles north of the international bridge on the U.S. side. Sometimes I would watch my *abuelita sobar* (healing massage), listen to her *dichos* and *cuentos*. My family in the United States were more free with their use of two languages, often using both simultaneously and unapologetically. It was under these circumstances and relationships that my borderlands identity and bilingualism flourished.

Border communities are highly transnational, bilingual/biliterate, and bicultural. Therefore my experiences are in many ways reflective of that larger context. Like many daily commuters who bidirectionally travel across international bridges for work and school, so do language and culture. Our bilingualism is situated within these dynamic cultural and linguistic landscapes. Yet, that sociolinguistic reality is rarely acknowledged in local schools, where English remains a priority. Mamí reports that I was in a bilingual classroom in prekindergarten but was transitioned out because, according to my teacher, I had "learned English" and could move on. The remainder of my formal schooling was in English.

I took Spanish for bilinguals and an Advanced Placement Spanish course

in high school; these courses were aimed toward students who spoke Spanish at home and typically had high levels of academic performance in English. My Spanish teacher was Mexicana; she often corrected our Spanish, and the class highly emphasized grammar, verb conjugations, and accents. In college, I was a Spanish major. All course work was literature based, with an emphasis on authors from Latin America and Spain. Every now and then, we studied U.S. Latinx authors like Sandra Cisneros and Tomás Rivera. I do not recall my dialect ever being chastised; on the contrary, my Spanish professors were very supportive and encouraging of me going to graduate school.

My undergraduate course work brought my first experiences with academic writing in Spanish. In one of my first written assignments, I was very surprised with how much I could produce even when I had never really written an essay in Spanish. Yet, I did often find myself thinking in English first and then writing my words in Spanish. "Why can't I think in Spanish?" my frustrated self often wondered. In graduate school, I contributed a piece to the city's Spanish language newspaper. They printed a weekly teacher-led column answering parents' questions about schools and schooling issues. I recall feeling overwhelmed. I knew the topic well but felt anxious about not being able to convey that information in Spanish, especially since this was an important resource of information. Recently, I was invited to coauthor a manuscript in Spanish with a colleague raised in South America. Again, I found myself frustrated as I struggled to name and describe theoretical concepts in Spanish that I understood well but had learned about in English.

As an undergraduate, I had the opportunity to travel a semester abroad to Spain. It was there where I really noticed linguistic variety and connections between language and identity. I was often asked "what I was." My "indigenous features" (as they were often referred to) and Mexican dialect were often brought up in conversation. In the beginning, I would explain that I was from the United States with Mexican heritage. As I did not physically fit European notions of an "American," this often brought about confusion, which I grew tired of, so I decided early on to just be Mexican. Yet, when I met Mexicans or others from Latin America, they were often quick to remark that we were not the same; I was an American.

After graduation, I returned home to the border and became an elementary bilingual teacher. I was assigned to teach an upper elementary, bilingual, mixed-aged classroom for recent immigrant children. As my students came from various regions of Mexico, I often noticed the differences in their regional dialects, and my own. This sometimes led to interesting conversations where they and I learned a new word for an already familiar object. The challenge, however, was that I was teaching subject-area content in Spanish. While I had taken Spanish courses since high school and throughout my undergraduate career, these emphasized grammar and literature. I did not initially have pedagogical, discipline-specific terminology to teach subject areas like math and science. Also, Spanish language materials for these subject areas were scarce at the upper elementary level, since transitional bilingual programs often

ended by third grade. While creating these materials was time consuming, it offered an opportunity for me to learn math and science terminology in Spanish.

After being an elementary bilingual teacher, I began my journey as a teacher educator. Working within bilingual teacher preparation, these experiences have been mostly in Spanish. That has forced me to become more comfortable with pedagogical, discipline-specific terminology and be more conscientious of my consistent use of Spanish for my preservice teachers. I began my teacher educator trajectory at a large research university where my students came from different regions and would later teach in varying geographic locations across the United States. When I retransitioned to the Texas border region, where I had grown up, I began to consider important questions like, What does *bilingual* mean in this border community? What does it mean for how bilingual teachers are prepared to teach and support the development of two languages? Additionally, I began to contemplate questions about "language competency," as many of my students, and I, had experienced subtractive schooling that focused little, if at all, on Spanish language development and maintenance. However, it was also true that my students and I understood and used Spanish, to varying degrees, in our daily lives on the border. These realities further highlighted that my teacher candidates would be teaching in the same contexts where most of them had grown up.

Unpacking and (Un)learning: Language, Ideology, and Linguistics

> Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 81)

This Anzaldúa quote best exemplifies the first half of my course. Topics, readings, and discussion are about the "unlearning of oppressive" discourse necessary for bi/multilingual and cultural spaces (Saavedra & Salazar Pérez, 2012). As other researchers in bilingual teacher education have argued, teacher candidates need opportunities to heal, unpack, and disrupt hegemonic language ideologies as part of their course work (Murillo, 2017; Sarmiento-Arribalzaga & Murillo, 2009). Likewise, bilingual teachers must be prepared to engage with content-specific terminology, discourse, and materials in both languages, including developing metalinguistic awareness and understanding cross-language relationships (Aquino-Sterling, 2016; Aquino-Sterling & Rodríguez-Valls, 2016; Guerrero & Lachance, 2018; Guerrero & Valadez, 2011; Rodríguez & Musanti, 2014). I argue that supporting "pedagogical" Spanish language development requires simultaneous attention to the hegemonic forces of ideology. For until I can take pride in myself (including my family and community language practices), can I really take on new professional identities? My own experiences growing up and teaching on the border have made me privy to pervasive language ideologies that both circulate within and are internalized by border communities. Therefore my first task is to bring these out front and center. As we engage with topics around applied and sociolinguistics, we slowly start to

unpack and challenge their hegemonic hold on our understandings of language. However, as my students and I engage in the critical activities of unpacking and unlearning, we also engage in the building of "pedagogical" Spanish through areas of oracy, reading/writing, and metalinguistic awareness (Escamilla et al., 2014). To this end, I explore course activities related to two important areas: understandings of bilingualism/biculturalism and recognizing and valuing community cultural and linguistic wealth. These are aligned with areas of Delgado Bernal's (2001) "mestiza consciousness," which is crucial to Latinx students' successful navigation of academic institutions. Then, I write about an assignment that I developed to support teacher candidates with metalinguistic awareness and language elements of Spanish and English. More than anything, I consider this assignment a culmination, not because it is the end or there is no room for growth and change but because it embodies my recognition of my role in using Spanish not only as a medium of instruction but also as the subject of instruction itself.

Bilingualism/biculturalism. Context is everything. Since I began developing the course, I have forefronted important sociocultural elements that influence the ways in which language and literacy are understood.

I begin the course by highlighting, through readings and dialogue, that language is impacted by sociopolitical and historical contexts and ideology. Language contact, for example, has a strong influence on language variation and stems from the historical interactions of conquest, colonization, and more recent trends of globalization. Together, we read Anzaldúa's (2007) "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." Anzaldúa grew up in our local community, attended our university, and challenged the boundaries of two colonizing languages. Valuing and legitimizing the diverse language practices of bilingual communities can offer an important healing process for my future bilingual teachers and their pedagogy. Last year, I started to give more attention to Anzaldúa's (2007) section on Chicano Spanish (which the class recognizes as Tex-Mex). She describes the dialect's phonetic and lexical features as born out of a particular geopolitical and historical context. I have subsequently continued this practice, as the dialogue is rich in epiphanies and healing. Learning that words we use daily and pronunciations innate to the community have a historical and linguistic "why" (the influence of Andalusian and Extremadura dialects brought into the region by Spanish colonizing agents) rather than simply dismissing them as "broken" Spanish is powerful to my students and me!

"¡Habla bien!" (Speak correctly!). "¡No hables mocho!" (Don't speak broken English or Spanish!). These are (ideologically informed) phrases I sarcastically revoice in class as students giggle and nod that they've definitely heard them before. Having grown up on the border, I have found that many in the community support bilingualism, so long as the two languages remain separate. Bilingualism is often characterized by monolingual ideologies, grammar rules, and politics derived from colonial structures using language as a vehicle to establish nation-state identities

and maintain hierarchy between the powerful and the powerless (Memmi, 1965; Mignolo, 2000; Mignolo & Schiwy, 2003). In class, we explore multiple perspectives of what it means to be bilingual, including an understanding of bilingualism as a process connecting language, identity, and history.

Mignolo (2000) defined "languaging" as a process for communicating, "interacting in language" (p. 499) and community membership. Such (bi)languaging practices dissolve the grammar—syntactic and lexical—structures of two-world (and colonizing) languages. This perspective makes it necessary to look at the dynamic ways in which bilingualism manifests, including processes like translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014). I agree with Rodríguez and Musanti (2014), who identified engaging in translanguaging processes as imperative to supporting bilingual teacher candidates' abilities in content-area instruction. When I first arrived at my institution, I found that most of my students were familiar with the term. They were, however, less confident in defining or describing the concept. I decided that, rather than telling them about translanguaging, I would show them.

Using an excerpt of transcript from a bilingual classroom English read-aloud, we dissect the interaction by speaker (Who is speaking? What language choices have they made?), purpose (What is the task they are engaged in? For what purpose?), language domain (Which language domains [listening, speaking, reading, and writing] are being activated?), and language (Which languages and/or varieties are present?). This process is akin to a discourse analysis (Hymes, 1972a). We see that the speakers (teacher and students who vary in their language choices) are engaging in book talk, which includes reading, listening, and speaking, using English, Spanish, and also lexical switching. We ultimately find that all actors were drawing on their linguistic repertoires to engage in a larger meaning-making process. Furthermore, we dissect utterances where lexical switching occurred to showcase how code-switching instances integrate two syntactic and semantic systems (Toribio, 2004; Urciuoli, 1985). Consequently, we are forced to engage in metalinguistic conversations about the ways in which Spanish and English syntax work (e.g., word order—adjective-noun for English, *sustantivo-adjetivo en español*). Again, the purpose of this activity is to counter hegemonic discourses that define such practices as signs of brokenness and to learn, from a linguistics perspective and using its domain-specific terminology, the dynamic ways in which language works for bilingual speakers.

Together, the experiences explored in the preceding section are about unlearning oppressive discourses and opening up "ideological clarity" (Bartolomé, 2004; Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001; Saavedra & Salazar Pérez, 2012). It is not enough simply to state that bilingualism is good or that hegemonic discourses exist. I believe that in navigating particular readings and theories, my students and I also explore with critical depth our (linguistic) experiences. As we move through the first half of the course, I often hear my students reconsider their language ideologies, especially as they pertain to labels like "correct Spanish," and occasionally challenge classmates who

may inadvertently reinforce hegemonic discourses of language purism. Simultaneously, the unlearning of oppressive discourses also impulses critical conversations about the communities with which they will work as future teachers.

Home pedagogies and community wealth. Referring again to the quote at the beginning of the section, a great deal of power stems from rediscovering the wealth of our homes and communities. It is hard to imagine someone taking full ownership of his or her identity as a "bilingual" teacher when that person has doubts as to whether his or her bilingualism is enough for the task at hand. Research has shown that many bilingual teachers have doubts whether their bilingualism is developed enough for their professional duties (Ek et al., 2013; Guerrero, 2003). In my class, we look to *home pedagogies* as spaces with a host of knowledges and skills that enrich our lives, including our bilingualism (Delgado Bernal, 2001). In this section, I look at theoretical concepts covered in class and assignments that not only support my teacher candidates' exploration of home pedagogies but also contribute to their development of "pedagogical" Spanish through oracy and metalinguistic awareness.

As we study theoretical concepts like *funds of knowledge* (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 2005) and language socialization (Ochs, 1993; Rogoff, 1993), my teacher candidates survey the community's and their families' literacy practices. I ask them to bring artifacts to showcase their noticings. This activity yields a wide range of environmental print items like advertising fliers for local businesses, pictures of billboards and other public signs, and home literacy artifacts like religious texts and iconography, family recipes, music, and so on. As we examine the wide range of artifacts, we begin to piece together the linguistic diversity of the border region. Some items are in English, some are in Spanish, and others are in Tex-Mex. We have even noticed linguistic variety within the region where students from one town may have another name for the same object as those from another town. When we encounter Tex-Mex artifacts, we sometimes analyze the sample. What elements of Spanish and English do we recognize (i.e., phonology and syntax)? How have these come together? Does the language sample make sense pragmatically? What can we learn about the community where the artifact is to be found? The idea of this is to continue conversations around Tex-Mex as a legitimate language with its own characteristics and history and used by the community to make meaning and sense of the world (Anzaldúa, 2007). It also requires use of linguistic terminology (i.e., phonology, syntax, pragmatics) and attention to metalinguistic awareness.

During their presentation of artifacts and a host of small- and whole-group activities, teacher candidates engage in oracy-developing tasks (Escamilla et al., 2014). Considering the two objectives of understanding home pedagogies and participating in oral language development, my teacher candidates are tasked with interviewing an immigrant parent with an elementary-aged child and learning more about the family's language and literacy practices, experiences with issues of language loss, and home–school relationships. Given the current anti-immigrant

political context, it is imperative for me that my students have experiences reaching out and working with immigrant communities. I developed this assignment with a colleague at another university who specializes in Latinx immigrant families. Despite living on the United States–Mexico border, for some teacher candidates, interactions with the immigrant community have been limited. This assignment eases them into these collaborations.

Additionally, the interview is completed in the language with which the parent is most comfortable, which is typically Spanish but can be English or bilingual. This is an added opportunity for preservice teachers to engage in pedagogical Spanish practices where they discuss issues of language and home–school relationships with a parent. They must also transcribe the interview and write a reflective essay in Spanish about their experience. As a class, we encounter a wide range of experiences within the immigrant community, including differences in social class, years of living in the United States, and language ideologies and practices. Consequently, we interrupt notions that immigrant communities are a monolithic group. As we engage in explorations about valuable community wealth and home pedagogies, teacher candidates also have opportunities to develop their pedagogical language competencies across domains like speaking, listening, reading, and writing. As they transcribe, they must pay close attention to the parent and transfer the words to a written format. They must also engage in reflexive writing that incorporates our course's theoretical underpinnings. Therefore the unlearning of oppressive discourse occurs in conjunction with engagement in "pedagogical" Spanish development toward the larger goal of building ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004; Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001).

As we move along the semester, my teacher candidates reconstruct their considerations of what it means to be bilingual, now having a stronger understanding of the ways in which sociocultural, political, historical, and ideological factors shape language, identity, and socialization. At the same time, they engage in several informal, guided activities around metalinguistic awareness and using "pedagogical" Spanish across a host of literacy areas like oracy, reading, and writing. Out of the seven semesters that I have taught this class, it really was not until the last three semesters that I was most proactive about teaching and supporting (pedagogical) language alongside content and theoretical learning. That is, I had not been engaged in considering how assigned learning experiences would also be useful in preparing teacher candidates for the linguistic demands of the bilingual classroom. The most noticeable shift came with the development of an assignment that required examination of language elements and metalinguistic awareness as the main task.

"Pedagogical Spanish" application: Thinking and learning about language. As stated earlier, I was not always fully aware of my role in supporting teacher candidates' Spanish language development beyond teaching in Spanish, offering opportunities to use Spanish, and giving feedback when appropriate. These are all important, and I continue to do them. However, over the semesters, the importance of metalinguistic awareness has become more salient. Metalanguage is about "think-

ing about and talking about language" (Escamilla et al., 2014, p. 67). Since I began teaching the course, metalanguage has been a course topic. Over the semesters, I have found that as I model metalinguistic strategies, I am also contributing to my teacher candidates' "pedagogical" Spanish language competence (Aquino-Sterling, 2016). In the last two semesters, I have really paid closer attention to this concept with the development of an assignment that asks teacher candidates to engage in a metalinguistic analysis of a bilingual children's book.

From the beginnings of my career as a teacher educator, I have placed great importance on the use of Latinx children's literature, or literature written by Latinx authors in English, Spanish, and bilingually about a variety of topics, but often focused on important sociopolitical themes impacting Latinx communities (Lachance, 2017; Medina & Enciso, 2002). I use these to emphasize theoretical concepts like funds of knowledge, pedagogical concepts like scaffolding, and literary concepts like print awareness. These are often bilingual books with side-by-side translations, making them useful tools to scrutinize each language (Escamilla et al., 2014). As I guide teacher candidates through the assignment, I begin with a Spanish read-aloud of *Prietita and the Ghost Woman*/*Prietita y la Llorona* (Anzaldúa, 1995). The book is situated in South Texas and includes multiple references to the local community, such as folklore, natural medicine, wildlife, and plants. Teacher candidates are able to discuss the cultural relevance of the book to our community and their experiences.

On another day, we do an analysis of the English and Spanish text. Each student receives a copy of one page, and in groups, the students scan each language version for manifestations of four language subsystems—phonology (*fonología*), morphology (*morfología*), semantics (*sistema semántico*), syntax (*sistema sintáctico*)—and language variety (Wright, 2010). Prior to this task, my students have read about and studied these subsystems. Most have encountered these terms in other classes.

As we scan the text, the class finds stylistic choices, such as code-switching, and highlights differences in discourse features, such as the use of quotation marks in English versus a *guión* in Spanish to signal dialogue. They note the silence of the /h/ in Spanish as juxtaposed to its sound in English. They notice the presence of homophones in both languages, how intonation and accent marks can change the meaning of a word, and cognates. As they notice these elements, they begin to use words related to grammar, such as *sustantivo* (noun), *adjetivo* (adjective), *verbo* (verb), and *predicado* (predicate). Preservice teachers who did not have the opportunity to take Spanish language arts in their K–12 schooling are learning Spanish language arts terminology and explicitly seeing the differences and similarities between the two languages. Therefore this activity is also about their professional language socialization as bilingual teachers.

The purpose of the class activity is to prepare preservice teachers to do their own analysis of a bilingual, Latinx children's book of their choosing with a small group of classmates. Together, they offer an oral presentation with a poster display discussing examples of the various language subsystems they noticed in their book.

Then, they write a mini lesson plan adapted from Escamilla et al.'s (2014) Dictado lesson and identify how what they learned might be used for supporting areas like writing, spelling, and grammar in both languages. The main idea of the assignment is to heighten awareness of the ways in which each language works and how the languages relate to one another.

Research in bilingual teacher education has emphasized the importance of supporting teacher candidates' "pedagogical Spanish" with Spanish instruction that includes activities that are teaching specific, useful to their instruction, and builds their confidence with discipline-specific content (Aquino-Sterling, 2016; Aquino-Sterling & Rodríguez-Valls, 2016; Guerrero & Valadez, 2011; Rodríguez & Musanti, 2014). I have noticed that this assignment can be frustrating for teacher candidates during the process of completion; it can expose knowledge gaps regarding Spanish linguistic competence in particular. Ironically, this is also the assignment's key feature. It allows teacher candidates to note the difference between acquiring a language and learning its mechanics, rules, and structures. The latter must be directly taught, and that is the bilingual teacher's role, which can only really be appreciated after going through the process oneself.

Also, it requires teacher candidates to have embodied experiences with the situated language of linguistics as they learn and identify examples of the various language subsystems (Gee, 2007). Across its components of analyzing text, creating a poster, presenting orally, and drafting a lesson plan, the assignment offers opportunities for teacher candidates to experience "pedagogical" language within a variety of literacy elements. I also undergo my own growing process for this assignment. This is an assignment that I have to scaffold carefully and for which I must develop mini-lessons. I have to engage in my own, self-guided professional development of Spanish and English language elements to better support my students and answer their questions. Guerrero and Valadez (2011) noted that little is discussed about the Spanish language proficiency of bilingual teacher educators who are tasked with supporting this same ability in teacher candidates. I give credit to my course work in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, and the span of my personal and professional opportunities to develop my bilingualism/biliteracy, as pivotal to my ability to engage my teacher candidates in metalinguistic conversations about language and support their "pedagogical" Spanish language development. Yet, I acknowledge that my professional development in this area is not over and must be a continuous process for all bilingual teacher educators.

Author Noticings and Final Thoughts

> A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither español ni inglés, but both. (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 77)

My identities have been shaped by and in the Texas, United States–Mexico

border. In more ways than one, my personal and professional experiences, "home pedagogies," and community's cultural and linguistic wealth have prepared me for my role as a bilingual teacher educator (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005) . I am highly aware of the language ideologies that can negatively frame bilingualism and bilanguaging practices. Such ideologies have contributed to stunted opportunities for many to fully experience bilingual development. Yet, against the odds, they were able to maintain a sense of cultural and linguistic heritage connected to a bilingual identity. That has value, and bilingual teacher candidates should be guided in unlearning oppressive discourses that keep them from honoring their cultural and linguistic resources, especially as they prepare to work in bi/multilingual and cultural contexts and move toward ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004; Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001; Saavedra & Salazar Pérez, 2012). Yet, in recognizing the violence of subtractive schooling, we must also support continued "pedagogical" language development. For it is also true that our bilingual children need teachers who understand and can effectively use two languages to offer enriching instruction. This is where bilingual teacher educators have an important role. How do our syllabi and course materials support bilingual teacher candidates in unlearning oppressive ideologies, gaining ideological clarity, and developing the "pedagogical language competencies" (Aquino-Sterling, 2016) they need to meet the linguistic and content demands of the classroom? Also, is there a more systematic way to extend professional development for bilingual teacher educators beyond their graduate school experiences? I find it incumbent on colleges of education and departments across the United States that offer bilingual teacher certification programs to question how they might effectively support teacher educators to professionally grow with their "pedagogical" Spanish language competences.

As a bilingual teacher educator, I have found understanding language as situated, naming and unpacking hegemonic ideologies, and exploring one's own language and literacy practices as crucial to a healing process for both teacher candidates and teacher educators. The healing process is crucial to fully developing one's professional identity and confidence; healing must be synchronized with continued development. We teacher educators must challenge and support our teacher candidates as they identify their linguistic knowledge gaps and move forward. We must also do this for ourselves. In other words, rather than chastise, support; rather than pity and complacency, develop and foster their and our "pedagogical" Spanish language competence, all the while remembering, of course, that supporting the learning of "pedagogical" Spanish is really about engaging teacher candidates and ourselves in a larger professional socialization where we can all learn to embody a professional identity, its lexicon, and its discourse structures—and also critique its hegemonic failings. This will be important to their and our professional confidence and to bilingual students' academic achievement.

Note

[1] *Pocha* is a term commonly used on the United States–Mexico border to refer to U.S.-born Latinxs of Mexican descent. For some, this is a pejorative term likened to the idea of being a cultural traitor for being culturally and linguistically Americanized. For me, this term speaks to my linguistic, cultural, and historical identity.

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