



A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

Sensory and Multimodal Narratives From the English 101 to the Ph.D. Classroom

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Abstract

This article features personal narratives that condemn ideologies that work to render invisible the identities of translingual individuals. The author engages members of the language and literacy field, particularly teachers and researchers, in conversations that will not only denounce antiminoritized groups rhetoric but also counter prejudiced standpoints about the validity and appropriateness of their literacies. The author describes and critically analyzes principal contemporary language theories, practices, and pedagogies in the preparation of English as a second language and bilingual education teachers she encountered in her academic journey, as an English teacher and learner. Through autoethnographic and multimodal sensory layered-account methods, she highlights issues of power and linguistic hierarchies entrenched in the language philosophies and pedagogies she experienced, while illustrating how translingual individuals *do* literacy. The author supports her analysis with vignettes, a poem, proverbs, pictures of artifacts, and

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photographs and defies traditional academic expectations about literacy processes, while exemplifying translanguistic writing. Findings are framed around narratives about bridging ideological beliefs into practical realities in the classroom, personal value systems and dispositions regarding language and literacy, turning critical experiences into meaningful research and practice, and the significance of a like-minded and supportive community of practice.

Introduction

As I sit in this well-cushioned chair writing this article, I can hear cars rumble loudly as they rush onto the highway outside the window of my hotel room. This is my hideaway; I come here to escape the disapproving grunts my husband, Roberto,¹ makes when watching political news on EcuadorTV; my mother, Yaye's, explosive laughs as she chats on WhatsApp with one of my sisters in Germany or Belgium; or any of the annoying beeping sounds my son Amadou's social media apps make.

I feel the sweet taste of accomplishment I have been savoring the last few days. I can still hear Yaye's voice drenched in her Wolof and French accents, telling me "Bravo! Yallah bakhna (God is good)" after I told her I was now a doctoral candidate and something they call "ABD, all but dissertation." Seventeen-year-old Amadou's response was "Yeah, that's what's up, Ma! I know you got this!" Roberto, in his proudest tone, said, "Te lo mereces mija. ¡Para atrás, ni para coger impulso! (You deserve it, sweetie. Don't go backward, not even to gain momentum!)" My brother Omar and his wife, Micca, sent messages from Canada; I could hear through them the melody of their French-English tongues: "Fier de toi (proud of you)," "Woow!!! Congrats. C'est super! (It's awesome!)"

This is my family, a diverse group of individuals who evolve within a fusion of cultures, languages, races, and ethnicities. There is my Black multilingual American-born son, whose true value as a student is often overshadowed by issues of racism at his school; my husband, a Spanish-English bilingual Ecuadorian-born immigrant, whose contributions and belonging to our country the last five decades are constantly delegitimized and devalued by anti-Latinx immigrant rhetoric; my mother, a Senegalese-born ex-businesswoman and world traveler who is fluent in six languages and even more fluent in countless cultures around the world; my transnational brother and his French-Canadian family. I omit here my other translingual siblings, extended family, and friends scattered around the world. Then there is I—a teacher educator, language and literacy scholar, and PhD candidate. I was born in Dakar, Senegal, from parents whose professions took me around the globe and exposed me to different people and cultures. I was further immersed in diversity when I moved to the United States as an international student in my early adult years.

In my house, we move in and out, in between, and across Wolof, French, English, Spanish, and Arabic, constantly; this is how we express ourselves. We speak, read, write, listen, draw, dream, love, and argue in these languages. In our home, you will encounter jewelry, tapestry, art, religious symbols, academic work, TV shows, newspapers, cookbooks, magazines, pottery, clothing items, and an array of artifacts that point to our translingual identities.

A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

I always knew that we “sounded” differently from mainstream America, but I believed that this is the beauty of our country—the people who look, act, think, see the world differently, while remaining Americans. Since the 2016 presidential election, it no longer feels like “sounding” different alone; it feels like being different because of the combination of our racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities. This frightens me to my core and makes me reflect on the implications for language and literacy professionals like me, and the students and families with nonmainstream identities like mine whom we serve in our schools and universities.

Identity is difficult to define, as it can be passed on, self-created, imposed, or attributed (Borjian, 2017). It encompasses individual, societal, national, and international layers and constantly evolves like the “seedhead of a dandelion, which travels across time and space, and thus being shaped and reshaped while on the move” (p. 117). For immigrants who travel to new spaces, the complexity of their identity shows in the new cultures, languages, and linguistic practices they continuously construct. Linguistic identities are fluid (Jørgensen, 2010) and not rigid; they flow and change shape as they mesh with new contexts. Their linguistic identities, in particular, are heteroglossic; they point to the presence of nonneutral voices and types of expression within a single individual that underline the cultural perspective within which meaning is made (Bahktin, 1981). In fact, developing identities are based on sociohistorical present and past narratives rooted in a “multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social self-belief systems” (p. 288).

I position myself as a translingual individual who considers language and literacy issues as nonneutral and political. I agree that literacies are multimodal social acts that embed ideological perspectives about the world (Gee, 1989; Street, 2003). It is my position that translingual people skillfully navigate tangled languages and linguistic practices, which they use to make meaning and express their ideological stance. This autoethnographic layered account is situated in the context of a globalized United States, in which English as a second language (ESL) and bilingual education (BE) programs service, among many others, many Latinx students, and ESL/BE professionals from Latinx origins are well represented. I identify as a non-Latina immigrant woman of color from African origins whose native languages are neither English nor Spanish. One of my goals in writing this article is to situate and amplify unheard or rarely heard voices of non-Latinx academics in the field of ESL and BE in the United States.

In this article, I describe and critically analyze principal contemporary language theories, practices, and pedagogies in the preparation of ESL/BE teachers I experienced in my academic journey from my first year of college to my status of doctoral candidate in a PhD program in language and literacy education. As I reflect on my experiences as a teacher and learner in ESL/BE programs, I highlight issues of power and linguistic hierarchies entrenched in language philosophies and pedagogies. These experiences have shaped me as a teacher educator and scholar who holds critical views about power, language, and education. They have fostered

in me the understanding that preparing future teachers of translingual immigrants must involve a commitment to inclusivity and advocacy for students' rights to *do* language as translinguals, freely, without undermining the need *to do language* in a multiplicity of ways and within varied contexts.

In the following paragraphs, I describe the methodology used in this study. I do this earlier in the article to facilitate the reader's grasp of the autoethnographic and sensory layered-account method I use to conceptualize the layers of intersection between the data I cite, my experiences, and language and literacy scholarship.

Method

This research is an autoethnography written from selective retrospections (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) stemming from my identities as a translingual student and teacher. As required by "the social science publication conventions to analyze experiences" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 276), I analyze data drawn from my personal experiences using a set of theoretical frameworks as well as sensory ethnographical and layered-account methods. As I write this article, I am guided by the question, What are examples of my personal narratives that attest to the marginalization inflicted on translingual individuals that oftentimes work to render our identities invisible?

Sensory narratives go beyond words to develop and enrich accounts of human experiences, to seize emplacement and multisensoriality through multimodal means. Through a conceptualization of (a) the senses, (b) the sensual experience, (c) sensory geographies of emplacement and movement, and (d) sensational learning points and turning points, sensory narrative methods focus particularly on creating field, interim, and research texts that capture and account for our bodily experiences as embodied and emplaced (Hunter & Emerald, 2016). As the object of this research, and following Hunter and Emerald's sensory narrative framework, I incorporate the four elements of sensory narrative in my writing, first by describing sights, sounds and silences, tastes, and smells, wherever appropriate. Second, I include the quality of the senses, by, for example, expressing what induces happiness or disgust, and the meaning of these emotions for me in the context of this research. Third, I describe the entanglement of place, space, and time. Finally, I share critical sense experiences that represent critical incidents in my stories and actions. I simultaneously address current occurrences and retroactively selective memories. The layering aspect of sensory narratives makes it an appropriate method to pair with the layered-account style of autoethnography I use in this work.

Layered accounts combine the author's experiences alongside data, analysis, and relevant literature, favoring the "procedural nature of research" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 278). Ronai (1995, 2005) described layered accounts as a writing format that enables the integration of multiple voices, such as theory and subjective experience. I use various texts, including vignettes, a poem, proverbs, pictures of artifacts, and

A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

photographs, to support my analysis but also to defy traditional academic expectations about literacy processes and to exemplify translinguistic writing.

Following these methods, each section of the article starts with a proverb that I use to illustrate the argument I make in the section. Each proverb is followed by a short sentence explaining how I interpret it. Then, I introduce multimodal data and narratives supported by significant literature.

Schooling Contexts and Translingual Identity Kits

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.

—Nelson Mandela

Language is not just words. It is about people's hearts and souls.

I connect Mandela's saying to language pedagogy. My stance is that translingual students' (TSs') "own language" should not only be their mother's tongue or first language. Understanding how students *do language* is also speaking to their heart. Competence in the student's home or first language (L1) is an added layer to the teacher's ability to better connect with the student. Knowing a student's L1 allows one to teach as a *knower* and possibly a user of the language, thus permitting pedagogical decisions to be made based on firsthand experience. Undoubtedly, a bilingual teacher must also have *pedagogical language competencies* or technical (content-related) language skills to teach the curriculum (Aquino-Sterling, 2016; Aquino-Sterling & Rodríguez-Valls, 2016). However, this is not to say that language competence is the only or even the most important tool that renders a teacher most qualified to teach a TS. Many teachers are *knowers* and users of their TSs' L1s but do not consider how they *language* outside of academic contexts, which is typically different from the continuous attempt to mirror imposed monolingual and so-called standard norms TSs are required to enact at school. Understanding how students *language* in spaces where they can exercise their linguistic freedom is fundamental to understanding their linguistic identity. I have met bilingual teachers who shared similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds with their TSs but were the biggest enforcers of the often oppressive "monoglot standard" (Silverstein, 1996) in their classrooms, not because they wanted to harm their students but because they themselves had been convinced through inadequate teacher training that the only way to support TSs' school success was to wash away their translingual identity and replace it with standard monolingual languaging. Some shared with me that their own families enforced these assumptions in their childhood as a way to integrate into U.S. societies faster and better or as a way to survive and dodge the possible dire consequences of being openly translingual. So even teachers who are competent in their TSs' language(s), those who share similar linguistic identities, and those with the most sincere intentions in supporting their students need adequate teacher training. By adequate, I mean based on balancing the inclusion

Madjiguene Salma Bah Fall

of students’ languaging and teaching language and content necessary to students’ success in the midst of a marginalizing curriculum and exclusionary school practices and policies. I argue that as teacher educators, we must have open conversations with in-service and preservice teachers about the oppressiveness of ignoring or impeding on the ways in which translinguals *language*. To be successful at this, it is crucial that we teach basic understandings of TSs: how they *language*, why they *language* that way, and how to teach them while remaining true to the essence of their linguistic identity and concurrently supporting their attainment of expected language and content in school. I know this is not an easy task. Tools such as literature on culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2015) and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017) may help us achieve this goal. Another tool I use is to utilize my own life experiences to illustrate how a translingual person may enact his or her identity intellectually, as I do in the following poem. The poem demonstrates some of the different personas across “identity kits” that belong to my larger translingual identity. I rewrote it in stanzas to add multimodal evidence that supports the existence of the various identities to which I refer in the poem.

**I am from Wolof . . . where I find Senegal, beautiful corniches,
and connections to faraway places.**

A Facebook posting from a Senegalo-Canadian singer, posted in Wolof, French, and English, asking fans to buy his new single” Mandela.” He speaks of social justice and unity.

Identity assumed: Francophone of Wolof-speaking origin, Elage Diouf’s fan, and lover of social justice



I am from French . . . where I find family, friends, and foes—the French colonizers.

A text message to my ex sister-in-law who is Francophone. I am congratulating my niece on her marriage.

Identity assumed: Aunt, acting from a traditional Senegalese perspective. This text message was sent after I received my niece's wedding photos and after having sent money to support her wedding, since she was named after me.



I am from English . . . where I find my home in the United States but still fight to be and remain one of them.

A picture of me after voting last November, wearing my "I voted" pin.

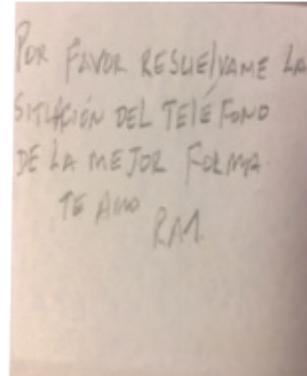
Identity assumed: Proud American citizen, symbolism for belonging and claiming status of translingual American identity



**I am from Spanish . . . where I find love from my hubby,
delicious Ecuadorian ceviche, and secco.**

A note from my husband with whom I exclusively communicate in Spanish. In this note, he is asking me to take care of an issue with the phone company.

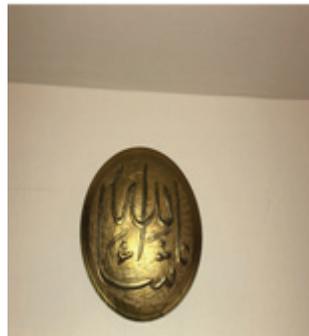
Identity assumed: Translingual individual who mainly speaks Spanish at home, with strong personal ties to the Ecuadorian culture, despite African background.



I am from Arabic . . . where I find Allah, rituals, and colorful hijabs.

Display of Islamic writing found in my home.
It says "God is great."

Identity assumed: Translingual individual whose literacies include religious symbols and artifacts.



**I am from here and from there:
a mosaic of spaces where I hope, dream, persevere,
and belong . . . spaces where I AM.**

A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

Translingual identities are embodied and enacted in various “identity kits.” Recognizing how translinguals are multidimensional linguistically and in the ways in which they process information can improve teachers’ ability to support them academically. A *discourse* is an “identity kit” that comes with prescribed ways to express oneself, act, and be, so specific to the discourse that others will easily identify it (Gee, 1989). As translingual individuals construct and manifest their identities, they personify diverse social identities that adapt to the current discourse in which they are engaged to express themselves through the bodies of these “identity kits.” This is what the preceding poem illustrates for my translingual identity. Translingual identities are best defined by focusing on the prefix *trans-*, which includes languages beyond a single monolithic entity to consider the existence of language beyond and across languages, diverse ways to express language outside of words alone (images, artifacts, symbols), multimodal communication tools (oral, tactile, visual, aural), and ecologies (social and material contexts; Canagarajah, 2013). Schooling experiences focused on Eurocentric monolingual and exclusive practices have marginalized my translingual identity. Consequently, I have decided to become an ESL/BE teacher educator who trains and equips her students with tools to be responsive to the translingualism present in their current and future classrooms.

Influential Theories and Approaches in My Schooling and Practice

Every man’s character is good to his own eyes.

—African proverb

The following theories approach teaching and learning language differently. In the end, the ones that legitimize translingual identities were of most value to my social justice and equity stance (see Figure 1).

In this section, I share a brief overview of some of the important theories that have influenced my teaching and learning at different stages.

Figure 1.
Author’s reflection in a language and literacy course, 2017.

Words have always been important in my life. In my Senegalese culture, they have meant proverbs that share wisdom and evoke reflection; in my American culture, they have represented capital and agency; in the transcultural and translingual world in which I evolve, words have provided me comfort and a way to belong. In my journey as a student and educator, my love for language and literacy has been tainted by the realization that not everyone has equal access to words and that not everyone’s words matter. I have gone through frustration and rebellion against literacy policies and teaching practices that victimized me as a learner and angered me as a practitioner.

In the Beginning: Starting My Career in Education

It's sometime in late 2009. This was one of those times in life when one is at a crossroads. One can sense that change is lurking but does not know quite yet what it is and when it will happen. It was that kind of time for me. As I entered my living room, I was received with the inviting aroma of the Senegalese incense Yaye was burning. She was sitting near a corner table that featured African dolls overlooked by an Ecuadorian *tapiz* (tapestry) and a wooden frame displaying the picture of a curvy Black woman wearing a headdress. At that time, I didn't know that the picture, tapiz, and ritual of incense burning were part of the extensive list of literacies I own and practice daily, along with my Fulani jewelry and my husband's Ecuadorian ponchos (Gee, 1989; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Street, 2003). I learned that later in my PhD program. As I walked toward Yaye, I was intrigued by the air of excitement that was obvious in her widening eyes. She was so tuned in to President Obama's discussion about federal education initiatives on MSNBC that she hardly noticed me standing next to her. When she realized I was there, she urged me to sit and listen. In a high-pitched voice, she said, "Kaye degeulou loumouye wakhe (Come listen to what he is saying!)" in Wolof. I know my mother was concerned about me. I was ready for a change, but it had been a few months already and I could not find an MBA program to complement my BA in business administration. I sat down on the sofa softly but rapidly. Anything he, our first Black president, said and did mattered to us. I listened and felt a sense of hope as he spoke. I remember him saying the phrases "Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program" and "urban teachers." I frantically googled the key words on the laptop sitting next to the Moroccan prayer rug Yaye left on the coffee table after praying Tisbaar (Wolof for the Arabic word *Dhuhr*, one of the five Muslim daily prayers).

Like many transnational immigrants around the world trapped in spaces of "in-betweenness" (Sarroub, 2002), religious literacies play an important part in our daily negotiation of sociocultural norms and offer us a sense of self (Thompson & Gurney, 2003) that valorizes our self-proclaimed and non-mainstream-imposed identities. My heart was palpating. I was not sure why, but I felt like Obama was addressing me, directly, urging me to look up these words. I found out Willy Pete, Keanan, and Ronald Universities (pseudonyms) had won one of those grants. Their project had several components, but the program in which I was interested was called the Urban Teacher Residency program. My hands were damp with sweat as my keystrokes intensified in speed. I thought to myself that all the delays in finding an MBA program were just so that I could join this one. Less than two months later, I received a letter announcing I was one of five professionals from my region who would be leaving their careers in exchange for a M.Ed. in teacher leadership, a stipend, and several teaching certifications but, most importantly for me, an endorsement in ESL or BE. The grant's goal was to train "highly qualified" teachers in certification areas for which there was a high need in the north, central,

A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

and southern regions of New Jersey. When I read the words “ESL” and “bilingual” on the program flyer (see Figure 2), I knew my life had changed.

I instantly felt connected and envisioned myself doing work that mattered. Like Rodriguez (2011), who asserted that her experiences as a Latina have taught her that “certain dimensions of race are fundamental to Latino life in the U.S.” (p. 43), my everyday experiences had taught me that the same was true for Black people. I was thrilled that there would also be people like me, other teachers devoted to

Figure 2
Flyer advertising the GSPTQ grant from Willy Pete University, 2009.



**Garden State
Partnership for Teacher
Quality Program**

If you hold a bachelor's degree and are interested in becoming a teacher in a high needs urban school, consider University's Garden State Partnership for Teacher Quality (GSPTQ) Program.



Through this rigorous, 18-month program, you have the opportunity to earn:

- your teaching certification in elementary education (may be combined with middle school) or secondary education with an endorsement in special education, bilingual education, or English as a second language (ESL); and
- the M.Ed. in special education with a concentration in Teacher of Students with Disabilities; or
- the M.Ed. in curriculum and learning with a concentration in bilingual/ESL education.

As part of this 18-month program, participants receive a \$30,000 stipend, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, while completing a one-year residency in a professional development school.

Madjiguene Salma Bah Fall

this kind of work, and that I would have them as colleagues and maybe even as friends! This was my opportunity to work with translingual children who, like my son Amadou, are marginalized in our schools (García & Wei, 2014) because of their race (Norton Grubb & Leonardo, 2013) and immigration status. I assumed that this program would address such issues.

Education Courses and Judging Schools From Outside Their Walls

I learned a lot in this program, especially about the bureaucracy and politics of schooling and schools (Hunter, 1994). I eventually learned in my PhD program about educational pipeline theories that address the types of concerns I had as a parent and new teacher. Even though not all of these were direct language and literacy concerns, they were concerns for TSs and their families. Some of these theories were social reproduction theory (Labaree, 2012; McDonough, 1997; Walpole, 2003, 2008), early literacy (Farkas & Breon, 2004; Lucas & Schecter, 1992), social capital (Li, 2011), Chicana feminist epistemology and Latino critical theory (Bernal, 2002), Black feminist thought and racial microaggressions (Huber & Solórzano, 2015), and critical race theory (Delpit, 2006; Kozol, 1991; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). I teach online courses that are predesigned, but I have assigned extra readings based on these theories in my ESL/BE courses, to ground the course content in the important history of oppression against nonmainstream students in our educational system. These theories are well represented in readings and activities I assigned in a diversity course I taught to future content area teachers.

Judging schools from outside their walls as a parent, schools felt unwelcoming, judgmental, and unnecessarily guarded—and I was not the only parent to feel this way. In fact, Delpit (2006) found that White educators often have stereotypes of African American students due to a lack of understanding of their cultural backgrounds. As a Black mother whose child spoke African American English as one of his languages, I experienced what Lareau and Horvat (1999) described in their work: Black parents conscious of the historical marginalization of Black students and their families in American schools often clash with schools' expectations of parental involvement based on a set of mainstream cultural perspectives. I was yearning for tough conversations about the oppressive school policies directed at minoritized children, school culture and lack of inclusivity, and racial and social class exclusion. However, even well-meaning school faculty and staff often ignored the constricted lens through which schools epistemologically omitted, disqualified, and ignored nonmainstream students—they pretended that or were ignorant to the fact that teaching is not neutral (Freire, 1968). Additionally, I realized that TSs faced issues beyond their race: The “co-naturalization” (Rosa, 2016) of race and language makes them more vulnerable to marginalization. Therefore, in my courses, I embed in readings (when I have professional autonomy within the curriculum) or in my discussion question responses (in my online courses, which are predesigned)

A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

topics about the lives and experiences of immigrant parents such as I; this is to awaken my students to their biases and privileges. For example, I have used videos and short films featuring the lives of immigrant youths at school and testimonies from family members to encourage us as a classroom community to discuss the privileges rooted in our status in the school system, education level, race, gender, culture, language, ability, religion, or sexual preference. Guided discussions help us transition into hands-on activities, such as games that entice tough conversations about how our privileges can allow us to impose our implicit biases. We eventually focus our activities and talks around specific language issues. Throughout these exchanges, students find themselves as both the inflictors and the victims of bias, and it helps them connect more with what TSs might go through. This is also why I start with addressing an array of issues before focusing solely on language.

My Preservice ESL/BE Training and Its Consequences

My ESL/BE program filled in the gaps in the areas my education courses came up short of being critical. This program was founded on theories such as language acquisition and social theories. Some program goals were for students to become proficient in applying theories of L1 and L2 acquisition (Bialystok, 2001; Cummins, 2000; Krashen, 2013; Tomasello, 2000), BE theory (Hornberger, 2003), and the theory and practice of integrating language and content in K-12 ESL (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2016; Zwiers, 2014). I thought of some of these theories as amazing philosophies that would save translingual children by training teachers in “the right way to think about language.” However, they appeared patronizing and to come from a stance of superiority. My concerns were validated when I graduated and started working in an elementary ESL/BE program. There I worked with Michelle, from Puerto Rican origins, and Robin, a White American teacher who was the veteran of our team. We were trained in very similar programs and did not have the critical training or the freedom or know-how to address critical issues of justice on behalf of our students. We wanted to, though, badly. I taught world cultures and Spanish to Grade 1–3 students part of the day and taught ESL push-in and pull-out classes the rest of the day. After Michelle and I joined the team, immigrant parental involvement became a priority. Robin always wanted to increase collaboration with immigrant families but didn’t want to “push the administration too much” and risk losing her job by appearing to be an ally of “these people,” as our supervisor called them. As Anzaldúa (1987) has reported, migrant immigrant workers have a history of being viewed in a humiliating light. To our supervisor, these parents and guardians were just a bunch of ignorant farmworkers who “would only show up to our activities if we feed them.”

While teaching in this ESL/BE program, I became an ESL/BE adjunct faculty at Ronald University. This is when I realized why I was hesitant about some of the language theories I had learned about, especially SLA; I was teaching in the

Madjiguene Salma Bah Fall

same program from which I had graduated, and now I had a better understanding of the literature. I found a disconnect between the underlying belief that TSs came to school with one well-defined home language and that it was our job to “give” them an additional language. This line of thinking has been the target of pushback from scholars who may reject binary views of bilingualism and adopt more pluralist perspectives on language and literacy in the context of globalization and immigration (García, 2015). My Latinx students came to school with an array of languages and literacy practices, stemming mostly from Spanish, English, and Zapotec, and they were at diverse levels of the spectrum of what the school system labeled English proficiency. Owing to language marginalization or linguisticism (Liggett, 2014); a combination of racial, ethnic, and linguistic oppression (Alim, 2016); inadequate school resources; and weak relationships with teachers (Schneider, Martinez, & Ownes, 2006), their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) was possibly not always considered in school pedagogies. Knowing this, the clinical practice course work I teach with preservice teachers includes the introduction of topics to address educational inequities based on race and language. The candidates are in the internship phase of their education degree in an elementary education or content area program. In most cases, my interns have been White monolingual women who are open to discussions about race and language but typically become resistant to the idea that it is their responsibility as teachers to address them in the classroom. Modeling after my ESL/BE program, I infuse topics such as federal and state ESL policy, issues of civil rights in the field, genre-based and functional linguistics, technology and instructional techniques, language pedagogy and assessment, advocacy, differentiating instruction, cultural groups and identity, sociocultural contexts, students with interrupted schooling, newcomer students, multiple literacies in and out schools, and immigration. I appreciate the comprehensive and inclusive tendency of my ESL/BE program, but it missed a stronger stance on social justice and equity, and that is why I joined my PhD program.

Then, I Became Woke!

“Access, Success, and Equity”—it was the umpteenth time I had read this phrase in publications about the College of Education (COE). I was still an adjunct professor for the Language and Literacy and Sociocultural Education department at Ronald University. As an adjunct, I was not aware of many COE happenings, but I was aware this phrase came about with a new phenomenon in the COE. She was a pretty, petite African American woman, always nicely dressed, not uptight professional but more trendy and stylish. When I first heard her speak in public, I thought to myself, “What a ball of fire!” Her beautiful smile was shockingly complemented by a firm stance on inclusivity, quality teaching, and collaboration with the community. All of this was sprinkled with her tact in delivering artful, diplomatic, yet powerful speeches. She was our new dean, Dr. Simon. I had never

A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

seen an African American woman in a leadership position in higher education; I was impressed and inspired. “Access, success, and equity” was our new COE tag line. I guess it was the source of Dr. Simon’s inspiration for Ronald University’s first PhD in education, a program I joined in 2016. Our program administrators spoke of activism and advocacy, especially Dr. Zane. She was a powerhouse, another woman who spoke of freedom from oppression in the context of education. Just like all my peers in the first cohort of the program, I joined it because it called for social justice and equity. In its language and literacy specialization, I was met with the types of theories that I now understand were missing from my preservice teacher training.

I viewed the critical theories I learned in my PhD program as instruments to prepare teachers whose consciousness recognizes the value in their TSS’ abilities and who respond to TSS’ academic needs while legitimizing their identities. Critical pedagogy (Freire, 1968), for instance, became a tool to show my students how to empower their future and utilize their literacies as an asset in the classroom. With the help of multicultural education, I demonstrate how mainstream culture can appreciate the uniqueness and richness of ethnic cultures (Banks, 2008) but also how placing all nonmainstream identities under the same umbrella and considering them equal can be racist and oppressive. Lectures on the evolution of language policies awakened me to their oppressiveness and reminded me that teaching philosophies and practices can negatively impact a student’s social and academic experiences. These lectures also brought flashbacks about how immigrant students were treated at my old elementary school and how I was marginalized in my English 101 class my first year in college. In that class, my professor imposed his “monoglossic language ideologies” (Flores & Rosa, 2015) by commanding I use standard English speaking and writing processes, which he presented as superior to whatever language skills and literacy practices I had brought into his classroom. He complained about the many descriptive details I used to speak and write; the way I enunciated some words; and the fact that I did not look people in the eyes when speaking to them, thus making them feel like I wasn’t truthful. He viewed me as someone who contradicted everything he deemed American, comfortable, and “normal.” If he had used strategies such as meshing languages and practices or seeking nontraditional texts (Machado, 2017), he would have allowed me to demonstrate my high literacy skills in multiple languages and modes of communication. A more sensitive approach to my status of newly arrived immigrant who was still adapting to a new home would have allowed him to discover important facts about my life that could have helped him design a more appropriate pedagogical plan for students like me. For instance, through informal interviews, games, or community-building activities, he might have found out that I was not shy when I seemed distant and looked away during interactions; he would have found out that I had lost my father right before coming to the United States that semester. He might have also discovered I did not need “schooling” about how to write “American”; what I needed was a professor who looked beyond my skin color and heard past my accent.

In contrast, frameworks such as translanguaging (García, 2009) offer ways to maximize the potential for communication for TSs. Translanguaging describes complex languaging practices that do not represent the addition of diverse languages or a hybrid mixture. Rather, it includes code-switching, but goes beyond it to characterize how multilingual individuals make and express meaning with others while conveying more profound understandings (Creese & Blackledge, 2015). García and Wei (2014) argued that it is an “epistemological change that is the product of acting and languaging in our highly technological globalized world” (p. 21). I offer the following recontextualization exercise as an example of translanguaging in writing in my PhD program. Dr. Michaels, a professor from Canadian origins who experienced bilingualism herself, asked us to write about a topic of our choice four times, changing the style of writing to fit a different audience each time. I opted for the topic of police brutality for this assignment. I visualized real conversations Roberto and I had had with Amadou the previous year (see Figure 3).

I took this course with Shamira, a translingual student of Indian heritage whom I viewed as our writing expert, and David, a White American student whom I considered our in-house African American language and literature expert. The two of them, along with our counselor educator friend, Neema, have been an important part of my doctoral candidate experience support group. Despite the diversity of our research interests and language identities, this recontextualization exercise allowed all of us to demonstrate our individual writing skills, which could have included text, images, videos, different languages, various genres, or anything we felt would help us express ourselves. Furthermore, in my case, this assignment allowed me to speak about a social issue that interests me. The three of us experienced from Dr. Michaels and other language and literacy professors opportunities to practice empowering and inclusive models of pedagogy we hoped to share with our students in the teacher education programs in which we taught.

My interactions with the aforementioned theories and practices have formed my philosophy on preparing ESL/BE teachers. I strive to foster in my students respect for diversity and a critical understanding of the complex historical, social, and political underpinnings of language and literacy learning and teaching in the United States. I support the creation of an evolving repertoire of research-based language teaching strategies that will help them prepare to be highly skilled educators capable of applying various language paradigms in classrooms where students are characterized by multimodal, multicultural, and multilingual literacies. I teach from the critical epistemological stance that knowledge is both socially constructed and influenced by power relations; I hope this helps them recognize inequity and marginalization in their practice. I also work to create a learning community where students from different sociopolitical perspectives and personal backgrounds feel safe to express their opinions. These approaches guide my methodology, student assessment, curriculum choices, and pedagogical decisions. For example, I choose diverse texts that mirror students’ diverse abilities, backgrounds, and interests (I

Figure 3
Author's recontextualization assignment, 2017.

Style 1: Recalling of Events

We thought about having this conversation with him many times before. It all started when we saw on TV that young man being shot by a police officer. I had heard on the news speculations that he was killed because of the color of his skin, but I did not quite understand how that could be true. Then, he entered the room . . . all six feet of him, sweat shining on his dark-brown forehead, from the exercise he just did and from the hood that covered his head. "How was it?" I asked. He replied in his innocent voice that contrasted his impressive tall figure: "Great, Mom, thanks!"

I looked at him again and he reminded me of that young man they killed. His dad was right: When he went to Aikido, he was just another Black boy with his hood up, riding his bike in the streets of America. He didn't know it, but he was just another Black boy, stripped from the values of goodness and love for all that his parents instilled in him, stripped from his honor roll certificate, his love for languages and foreign places, his respect for authority, and his beautiful charismatic self. He was just another Black boy. I looked at Roberto and he looked back at me, nodding his head. It was time we had the conversation. In unison, we said, "Amadou, sit down, we need to talk."

Style 2: Free Write

Issues of racism had long been discussed in my multiracial immigrant family. However, we never thought we would have to discuss them with our son. I guess we assumed that our family's middle-class status, our son's private school attendance, our safe neighborhood, and the fact that we had integrated America so well would be enough for our son to escape America's biggest demon. Its racist culture and racist habits. Like everyone else, we had heard stories of young Black men being shot by police officers. However, we didn't think our Black boy would ever be "mistaken" for one of those boys, right? I mean any officer would see that Amadou was different, right? They would see him for who he truly is . . . an A student who is kind, respects authority, and even admires police officers. Then we realized that we might have been wrong all along. We were like those racist people, looking at other Black boys as if they were less than our own. Racism does not discriminate, contrary to what we thought; we thought racism discriminated Black boys from private schools and "good families" from the others. Well, it doesn't. Amadou is a Black boy, period, and we needed to make him see that.

Style 3: Poem

You are . . .	You shed . . .
Tall, dark, and handsome	Light, love, and goodness
Scary, bad, and ugly	Darkness, hate, and evil
You represent	You are . .
Greatness, hope, and a bright future	My son, my friend, and everything for me
Powerlessness, hopelessness, and a gloomy present	Her son, my enemy, and nothing.

Style 4: Anger and Profanity

Ils ne sont pas qualifiés (They are not qualified). To these asxxxxxx, he is just another ignorant, rowdy, scary, nasty, unruly, and disobedient one. They think he is threatening. How can they not see what I see in him? Like that hijo de la gran (profanity in Spanish) teacher who pushed him during a basketball game. This son of a bxxxx made my blood boil. I had become the angry Black woman he imagined I was under my sweet teacher smile. "Your son is a big boy, you know. I apologize if I play with him like I do with grown men." Well, I reminded him I view my son like he views his sweet four-year-old daughter that he worships. It was not about my son's size. You don't like my baby boy because he is not as you expect him; you take that as an insult, you ignore him in class, accusing him of talking back when he simply answers your questions, and you rough him up on the playground. Newsflash, you are a racist and you do not deserve to teach my child. As I don't think you are qualified.

survey them). Multimodal texts are critical in the way they push against normative ways of *doing literacy* and in the ways their content denounces linguistic and cultural inequities in education.

Other Impactful Experiences

The aforementioned theories were not alone in influencing my conceptualization about race, immigration, translanguaging, issues of power and privilege in education, and diverse other issues that inform my research and practice. As an instructor and researcher, my experiences now guide my research and practice. For example, an incident from an ESL/BE methods course opened my eyes to how raciolinguistic ideologies impact teachers' practice even during teacher training. Sometime in 2017, I was chatting with a Roland University professor after a roundtable presentation at a conference. She shared about work focusing on candidates' negative behaviors toward minoritized professors in online contexts. I challenged the idea that my candidates would change their attitude toward my teaching or me once they saw my face. I displayed my picture instead of an avatar and added more details to my instructor bio. Well, the experiment proved me wrong; several students increasingly defied my knowledge and even my grading. These students were mainly White and Latinx in-service content teachers obtaining an ESL certification and BE endorsement. For the White group, I noticed a common hesitancy about the intellectual capability of people of color—I was, unfortunately, familiar with this. In most places I had worked and studied before, I had experienced having to prove myself more than most to defray the suspicion that I was ineligible for the intellectual task at hand. I had, surprisingly, experienced even more resistance from the Latinx group, whose majority was from immigrant families and grew up with labels such as “English language learner” and “bilingual student.” Many of them advocated for monoglossic practices. They claimed that assimilating students was the best way to help them “make it in this country.” Negative schooling experiences and inadequate teacher training philosophies may have influenced their thinking. As a researcher, I experienced resistance from adult participants in my PDS community. Some of these folks are undocumented immigrants who had lived oppressive encounters with racist school representatives, neighbors, and even governmental agencies such as the Immigration Enforcement Agency; I understood their distrust. What was striking to me, though, in many cases, was that once they found out I have strong personal and professional ties to the Latinx community, they accepted me as an honorary Latina. I discuss this topic in more detail in a previous publication (Fall, 2018) and in the analytic memo in Figure 4.

Implications

As I have demonstrated, narratives about bridging ideological beliefs into

Figure 4
Author's analytic memo, 2017

The fact that I positioned myself as a Black woman who is not from African American origins made the participant comfortable to speak freely about her thoughts on the African American community. The fact that I speak Spanish, could pass for a Latina in some cases, and my immersion and knowledge of the Latina culture in general and Mexican culture in particular have been so helpful. I must continue putting forth my immigrant identity and proximity to the participants' culture and status in the US; it is helping me get closer and obtain insider information, I think. I doubt these participants would ever speak this way about African Americans if they viewed me as one, and I don't think a person they view as a "gringa/o" or White American would get the type of information I am getting; not unless they know them for a long period of time and really trust them.

About the content of the interview . . . maybe I should consider another concept here, the possible role of exported racism. I am not sure if the participants' view of Americans (Blacks are lazy and involved in drugs, Whites feel that they are above the jobs Latinos do) is a result of what they learned about Americans before moving to this country, or is it because of the experiences they have had while leaving here? Could then their experiences have been grounded in opinions of Americans they formed before moving here or by the proximity to certain types of Americans in southern New Jersey? That would take this research into an unexpected direction; maybe they do not have negative experiences because they are being marginalized by Americans who oppress them because of their identities and literacies; maybe they isolate themselves and create barriers with Americans because of their own assumptions about them? Not sure, but I must look further into this.

practical realities in the classroom, narratives about personal value systems and disposition regarding language and literacy, narratives about turning critical experiences into meaningful research and practice, and narratives about the significance of a like-minded and supportive community of practice constitute the principal topics underlining the theories and approaches that influenced my experiences as a teacher and learner of ESL and BE. These four fundamental narratives have significant implications in elementary, secondary, and higher education classrooms where ESL/BE education takes place or where adult or child TSs are present.

I advocate for teacher educators to include in their lessons ways to convey that translingualism does not operate in a binary world where people enact their languages and embody the cultures and practices connected to those languages separately. Bi- and multilingual individuals operate within multiple languages and practices all the time. This very notion challenges the premise of this special issue, concerned with the Spanish proficiency of future bilingual teachers; this is important, but it should not be the only priority in training our future bilingual teachers. Should having a certain proficiency in students' L1 be the only requirement to improve and sustain the quality and effectiveness of teaching? Does proficiency in students' L1 mean automatically understanding their ways of languaging? I believe not. My research

Madjiguene Salma Bah Fall

work and experiences reveal that heritage, familial influence, social interactions, and experiences shape translanguingual identities. In my personal case, as I demonstrate in this article, when teachers denied me the right to embody this identity, I felt unfit, angry, and discouraged. This understanding forged my current stance on preparing ESL/BE teachers. Despite some teachers' ability to communicate with their students in their L1, they must also be "proficient in translanguingualism." I believe it is my responsibility as a teacher educator to share this argument.

So, how do I address these topics with my students? I teach about the sociopolitical implications of translanguingualism in the United States and how to support TSS' social and academic success at school without stripping them of their translanguingual ways of being and languaging. I prioritize an understanding of translanguingualism as primordial rather than proficiency in the students' L1 alone (in the case of bilingual teachers), although the latter is necessary for BE and improves teacher effectiveness. I teach about the complexity of translanguingualism and the identities in which they develop. I train my students to comprehend the circumstances in which these identities are formed and the challenges these identities endure in our current sociopolitical situation, where immigrants from a Latinx background are attacked because of how they look and sound (Guerrero & Lachance, 2018; Rosa, 2016). It is worth noting that translanguingualism is no longer a trait personified by foreigners or immigrants alone; it is a trait common to most youths in current American society. It will be interesting to see how future education research continues to investigate translanguingualism in mainstream youths considered "monolinguals" and how teacher education research and practice can measure teacher candidates' introspective development as *knowers* of translanguingualism in teacher education programs and early in their careers.

In our current sociopolitical context, nationalist ideologies fight to define being American as English speaking only, thus undermining the value of translanguinguals' funds of knowledge and contributions to society. ESL/BE professionals must collectively and urgently address issues of race, ethnicity, and power in education if we want to offer decisive counternarratives to adverse propaganda and politics against the equitable education of all. This work cannot be done without self-criticism and tough conversations about our positionality when we prepare ESL/BE educators. It cannot be done without model educators like Dr. Simon and Dr. Zane; it cannot be done without professors like Dr. Michaels and my other two language and literacy professors, Drs. Abba and Brew, who have modeled social justice teaching to me; and it cannot be done without David and Shamira, who stay strong when faced with doubtful audiences as they teach about the beauty of TSS' literacies, regardless of their race and home language.

Come into my dream . . .

In my house, we move in and out, in between, and across Wolof, French, English, Spanish, and Arabic, constantly; this is how we express ourselves. I know

A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

we sound different, but since this contributes to the beauty of our America—all types of people, who look, act, think, and see the world differently—all is well. Children from families like ours have teachers who value translingual identities. These teachers were trained by teacher educators who legitimize our ways of being in the world. These teacher educators work in colleges of education in which social justice and equity topics are prioritized. These colleges of education exist in a sociopolitical climate where monoglossic, linguistic, and racist ideologies do not exist. In my house, we move in and out, in between, and across Wolof, French, English, Spanish, and Arabic, constantly, and that's OK.

Note

¹ All names are pseudonyms.

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A Layered Account of Translingual Invisible Tongues

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Madjiguene Salma Bah Fall

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