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The Storied Lives of Fronteriza Bilingual Maestras: Constructing Language and Literacy Ideologies in Nepantla

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**The Storied Lives of Fronteriza Bilingual Maestras: Constructing
Language and Literacy Ideologies in Nepantla**

by

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Dedication

For Mom, Dad, Danny and Evan,
you all inspire more than you will ever know.

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To whom much is given, much is expected.

Luke 12:48

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Abstract

The Storied Lives of Fronteriza Bilingual Maestras: Constructing Language and Literacy Ideologies in Nepantla

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

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Co-Supervisor: Claudia Cervantes-Soon

This dissertation examines the language and literacy ideologies of in-service fronteriza bilingual education maestras utilizing a life story methodology. Drawing on an indigenous research paradigm and three theoretical frameworks that accentuate the lived experiences of fronteriza teachers—nepantla, border thinking, and raciolinguistic perspective—this study addresses how the life stories of fronteriza teachers illuminate their construction of language and literacy ideologies. Findings unsettle the mismatch between articulated and embodied language ideologies and demonstrate that the contradictions that manifest in home, school, and community language ideologies are an aspect of living in nepantla. The findings reveal that bilingual maestras' language and literacy ideologies are influenced by their personal lived experiences, macro-hegemonic discourses, and the history of geopolitical spaces. As bilingual education becomes engrossed in neoliberal logics, implications for utilizing border thinking and anticolonial practices with in-service and pre-service teachers are discussed. In studying fronteriza bilingual teachers that inhabit a unique geopolitical space along the Texas-Mexico border, this dissertation contributes to

the larger debate regarding the multiplicity of embodied and articulated language ideologies in bilingual settings.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	xvii
List of Figures	xviii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
The Purpose of the Dissertation.....	3
The Dissertation.....	4
Background of the Dissertation	5
Significance of the Dissertation.....	8
Organization of the Dissertation.....	11
Concluding Thoughts.....	11
Chapter Two: We Didn't Cross the Border, The Border Crossed Us.....	13
The Coahuiltecas	15
The Colonial Period.....	15
The Mexican War of Independence.....	18
The Mexican-American War & The Republic of the Rio Grande.....	19
The Beginning of Nepantla and Border Thinking	25
The Civil War	26
A New Century	30
The Botas y Guaraches	31
Patron Politics	33
Washington's Birthday	35
NAFTA, the Militarization of the Border, & Drug Violence	40
Border Violence.....	43

Laredo	45
Chapter Three: Literature Review	49
Schooling, Society, and Social Reproduction.....	51
Ideology in Education.....	54
Pedagogies of Liberation	55
Bilingual Education: A History of Contested Ideologies	56
Agency and Resistance in Bilingual and Mexican American Education	59
Language Ideology	62
Bilingual Education & Language Ideologies.....	65
Literacy Ideologies	68
Conceptualizing Literacy.....	70
Borderland Literacies.....	72
Literacy, Biliteracy & Identity.....	73
Who Gets to be Bilingual/Biliterate.....	75
The Context for Today’s Bilingual Teachers	75
The Fronteriza Teacher Perspective	77
Theoretical Framework.....	77
Raciolinguistics.....	79
Nepantla & Border Thinking	82
Concluding Thoughts.....	84
Chapter Four: Methodology.....	86
On Epistemology & Ontology	88
Life Story	90

Why Teachers' Life Histories?	93
Researcher Positionality	94
Participants	98
Nancy	100
Noemí	101
Maria	102
Julia	103
Lorena	104
Guadalupe	104
Site	105
Data Collection	107
Pláticas	108
Convivios	110
Ethnographic Observations.....	112
Analytic Method	113
Ethical and Validity Based Considerations	116
Relational Accountability	116
Member Checking.....	117
Limitations	117
Concluding Thoughts.....	118
Chapter Five: "Taming" a Wild Tongue: Bilingual Maestras' Language Ideologies in Nepantla	120
Theoretical Framework.....	122
Learning a Language	123

Julia.....	124
Maria.....	126
Nancy.....	127
Lorena.....	129
Guadalupe.....	130
Noemí.....	132
Thoughts On Learning a Language.....	133
Living a Language.....	134
Family Language Practices.....	135
Are You Talking to Me?.....	142
Teaching a Language.....	148
Conclusions.....	156
Chapter Six: Bilinguaging Love through Bi/Literacy.....	159
Theoretical Framework.....	160
Traditional Bi/Literacy Practices.....	162
Maria.....	162
Lorena.....	165
Julia.....	167
Nancy.....	169
Noemí.....	171
Guadalupe.....	172
Reading the World.....	173
Teaching Bilanguaging.....	181

The Discursivity of Hegemonic English.....	182
Cracks in the Global Design	188
Speaking Truth to Power	197
Concluding Thoughts.....	199
Chapter Seven: Staring in the Mirror at the Indio Bárbaro: Towards Border Thinking in Bilingual Education	202
Theoretical Frameworks	203
Racial Geography and Language.....	206
Bilanguaging Racial Geography	206
Laredo’s Racial Geography	209
From the Outside Looking In....	216
The Racial Geography of Bilingual education	221
No Quieren Batallar: Discourses of Transition.....	222
I Don’t See this as Dual	225
We are Mexican.....	226
On Border Thinking & Bilingual Education.....	232
Concluding Thoughts.....	236
Chapter Eight: Fin.....	239
Review of Findings	240
Conclusions.....	245
Implications	249
Future Directions	254
Epilogue.....	257

Appendices.....	259
Appendix A: Letter Requesting Photos	259
Appendix B: Sample Powerpoint – Convivio #1	260
Appendix C: Sample Analytic Memo.....	270
References.....	271
Vita.....	289

List of Tables

Table 2.1. City of Laredo Statistics	46
Table 4.1. Overview of Maesrtas	100
Table 4.2. School Demographic Information	106

List of Figures

Figure 2.1. Flag of The Republic of the Rio Grande	21
Figure 2.2. Map of The Republic of the Rio Grande	23
Figure 2.3. Santos Benavides.....	27
Figure 2.4. Juan Cortina.....	28
Figure 2.5. Society of Martha Washington Presentation	37
Figure 2.6. Princess Pocahontas Council Presentation	38
Figure 2.7. Washington’s Birthday Celebration Association Abrazo Ceremony	38
Figure 2.8. Excerpt from Frequently Asked Question on Washington’s Birthday Celebration Association Website.....	39
Figure 2.9. Laredo Industry Composition.....	42
Figure 2.10. Wages by Industry, Laredo, TX	43
Figure 2.11. Facebook Post.....	47
Figure 4.1. David at the Garcia’s Ranch playing school.	95
Figure 4.2. Julia Photo – Family Altar.....	109
Figure 4.3. Convivio Site Garcia Ranch House, La Pitahaya Ranch, Webb County, Texas	112
Figure 4.4. Analytic Method.....	114
Figure: 6.1. Maria’s Picture Books	164
Figure. 6.2. Lorena’s Picture Book.....	166
Figure 6.3. Informational Bulletin Board, Rodriguez Elementary School	183
Figure 6.4. Welcome Signs Soliz Elementary School	184
Figure 6.5. Laredo of Tomorrow Promotional Reading Sign.....	185
Figure 6.6. Bilingual Education Components.....	186
Figure 6.7. Nancy’s Reading Tables.....	187

Figure 6.8. Job's Worksheet	195
Figure 7.1. Map of Laredo	211
Figure 7.2. Detailed map of Laredo neighborhoods, south of U.S. Highway 59.	212

Chapter One: Introduction

“Maestro, puedo hablar contigo?” Mrs. Canales asked.

“Sí, como no,” I responded.

It was the middle of the Fall semester of my third year as a bilingual education teacher in Laredo. While it was common for parents to speak with teachers at the curb when picking up their children, the concerned look on Mrs. Canales’s face—and the anxious look on Marisa’s face—indicated that we were about to have a much more serious conversation than I was accustomed to having with Mrs. Canales. A soft-spoken, well-mannered student, Marisa did well academically, socially, and emotionally in my class. Thus, I was a little taken aback by their somber demeanor.

After all the other students had gone, Mrs. Canales, Marisa, and myself met in my classroom. Mrs. Canales proceeded to tell me how Marisa, on her own accord, decided that she would no longer be speaking Spanish at home with her family. I was shocked and embarrassed to hear that Marisa would tell her family that. This was especially disconcerting for Marisa’s grandmother who did not speak or understand English. Having been Marisa’s teacher in 3rd grade, I knew that obstinate behavior such as this was not in keeping with Marisa’s personality.

Together, we spoke to Marisa about the importance of talking with her family in Spanish. I gave examples of how I, too, talked with my family in Spanish. In fact, the conversation we were having was conducted entirely in Spanish. As I escorted Mrs. Canales and Marisa outside after our discussion, I began to reflect on what had just happened. How could Marisa, at such a young age, determine that speaking her native language had no value, especially considering that, that was the language spoken at home? Certainly, I had never stated to the class that we were not allowed to speak Spanish at

school. I myself would speak Spanish to their parents after school during pick-up times. Clearly, though, students like Marisa figured out the unwritten rule about the privileging of English that pervades our society, communities, and schools.

One year later, while outside on a Spring day in the blazing Laredo heat, Teresa and Jacob—two students in my 5th grade class—approached me. Teresa was on a mission; she clearly had something on her mind. Upon entering the 12 x 12 structure where I was sitting, Teresa asked “Mr. D., why don’t you talk like us?”

“Excuse me? “I asked.

“Yeah, why don’t you talk like us?” Teresa repeated.

Although unexpected, I knew exactly what Teresa was getting at: How could I, someone who looks like them—someone who shares their heritage, language, and culture—be so dissimilar in my language practices? My standardized English vernacular made me a foreigner in my own land, and, more importantly, to my students. Yet, I knew I could *hang* with them if I wanted. After all, I was born, raised, and educated in the same city and public-school system that I now taught in. I was not unaccustomed to using Spanglish, Tex/Mex, “slang” or any linguistic variety outside of school with my colleagues, friends, and family. But at school, in front of my students, I chose not to; I thought, it would be “unprofessional” of me to do so. After all, was I not there to model standardized English for my students?

Not wanting to give in to what Teresa was implying, I probed further, “What do you mean by ‘*I don’t talk like you?*’”

“You know, sir. Why don’t you talk like us? Why do you talk like that?” Teresa said.

“Like how?” I responded.

“Pues, like that?” Teresa insisted.

I paused for a moment before I replied. “Well, my job is to teach you. So, I speak the way other people expect you to speak. I speak the way I am expected to teach you to speak. Now, go and play. You’re running out of time.” With that, off Teresa and Jacob went to join their classmates.

As soon as I uttered the words, I knew what I had done. I confirmed that there was something deviant about their language, something wrong about who they were, insinuating that they were in need of fixing and that I was the person who was going to fix them. While I understood that there was nothing wrong with how they spoke, the damage was done. I wronged them. And, there was no going back. For two students who were already distrustful about their teachers’ intentions and the purpose of schooling, I had just validated their worst inclinations.

THE PURPOSE OF THE DISSERTATION

These two anecdotes remain vividly imprinted in my mind. They are reminiscent of a struggle that wages war in the minds and hearts of Mexican Americans who live along the 2,000-mile stretch that is the U.S.-Mexico border. It is a struggle that saturates the minds of all those who have been historically marginalized and told that their language and culture, and thus their identity and very being are aberrant (Acuña, 2005; Anzaldúa, 1987; Baldwin, 1979; Delpit, 2006; González, 2005; Tan, 1999; Zentella, 2005). And yet, while the research tells us, and like I knew then in those moments with my students, that there is nothing inherently wrong with their linguistic and cultural practices, schools continue to be sites of hegemonic language practices that imbue a sense of *othering* among our most vulnerable students (Valencia, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999).

It is important to note that my experience is not that of all *fronteriza* teachers. Yet, having lived and taught in the borderland has shown me that our ideologies regarding bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education, like our identities, are fluid and complex. Mexico is a constant reminder of our past and our heritage (Vila, 2000). The Rio Grande is a constant reminder of the divisions created by physical and figurative borders, what Anzaldúa (1987) refers to as the *herida abierta*, or open wound. It is with these ideas in mind that I take on this study—to reflect about how *fronteriza* bilingual teachers construct language and literacy ideologies that inform their conceptualization of bilingualism and biliteracy in a society that increasingly values bi/multilingualism as a neoliberal logic (Flores, 2013).

THE DISSERTATION

There are some things that are best left unspoken. Knowledge that is best not shared. Yet, in spite of ourselves, we do share secrets. Sometimes it happens slowly—maybe four people, at first, hear a secret that was only supposed to be shared with one. The knowledge is passed; the understanding grows. And the moment to write comes
(Carrillo, 2010, p. 74).

In an essay that articulates the pain of a social justice-oriented educator who is leaving the profession, Carrillo (2010) speaks about the passing on of knowledge that is based in storytelling. He concludes by saying that no matter how painful it might be, secrets must be written down. Following the tradition of passing on knowledge through storytelling (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002), the study taps into the experiences of *fronteriza* teachers who hold the secrets of what it is like to live in the borderlands. This life story study examines the lives of six *fronteriza* teachers: Nancy, Julia, Maria, Guadalupe, Lorena, and Noemí. Their stories must be told so that others might learn how ideologies are constructed. Carrillo (2010) continues:

In writing, the public opens up to you. Pain felt inside and outside of history, ideological arrangements, and the soul—frames the portrait of your existence. Rage and love dance the critical pedagogue’s waltz (p. 74).

Born out of my experiences as a former bilingual education teacher on the border, I drew on indigenous research paradigm (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2013; Wilson, 2008) and life story methodology to study how language and literacy ideologies are constructed on the border. As an anticolonial practice, I focused on the lived experiences of *fronteriza* bilingual maestras. Because reciprocity, responsibility, and respect are central to an indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2008), I conducted this study at home where I was born, raised, educated, and taught. Moreover, the participants in the study are all former colleagues who have chosen to share their life stories so that others might gain knowledge about bilingual education. In going home for this study, there exists the possibility to benefit a community of which I am part.

BACKGROUND OF THE DISSERTATION

“I like Jeb,” Trump told Breitbart News on Wednesday. “He’s a nice man. But he should really set the example by speaking English while in the United States” (Steiger, 2015).

The above quote is taken from then Republican candidate Donald J. Trump in the run up to the 2016 presidential election. At the time, Trump, still only a primary candidate contender for President of the United States, responded to question asked to him by a reporter about an incident involving Jeb Bush. An English-Spanish bilingual and fellow Republican primary challenger, Bush replied in Spanish to a question asked to him by a Spanish speaking constituent. What might have been an innocuous exchange between a constituent and an aspiring president became a hot-button political issue that grappled with what it means to be “American”. When asked about his thoughts regarding Bush’s use of

Spanish, candidate Trump made it clear that Spanish was indeed un-American, exemplifying and amplifying the hegemony of English ideology. Little did we know that the most divisive political figure of our lifetime—who espoused xenophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric—would become the 45th President of the United States.

Trump’s linguistic castigation of Bush typifies a history of hegemonic language practices in the United States (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003). Although Macias (2014) points out that the history of the U.S. is filled with examples of language diversity, he also describes the “schizophrenic” relationship the U.S. has with their land-of-immigrant’s attitude while perpetuating English monolingualism and cultural assimilation. Bilingual education policy in the United States, however, has not been based on any one predetermined ideology, but rather competing ideologies that take hold at particular moments in time (Ovando, 2003; Hurie & Degollado, 2017). Trump’s assertion, therefore, is just another iteration of the how the U.S. views linguistic and cultural diversity. These ideologies permeate U.S. schools which are becoming increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse.

With regards to bilingual education and its effectiveness, the jury is out: empirically we know that bilingual education works and is the best method for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students (Goldenberg, 2008; Unmasky & Reardon, 2014). Time and again, research proves that bilingualism is cognitively, emotionally, and socially, beneficial (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2010; Bialystock, 2011). Of the bilingual education programs offered in U.S. schools, dual language is touted as the most effective (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). In fact, the growing number of dual language programs across the country is evidence not only of its mounting popularity, but of its success in improving academic achievement.

Today—20 years after Valdés’s (1997) prescient piece on the potential pitfalls of dual language—we find ourselves in a contemporary debate concerning additive models of bilingual education for language minoritized students and a neoliberal agenda which seeks to use these students linguistic and cultural repertoires as resources (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Flores, 2013). To combat the neoliberal agenda, critical literature in the field dictates that we reframe how we think about language to include more complex perspectives that center language in relation to structures of power (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017). In short, competing ideologies about bilingual education and what it means to be bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural persist in the planning and implementation of policy, instruction, and research.

Just within the last two years, nearly two-decade-old, English-only policies have been reversed in California and Massachusetts, yet Arizona’s policy lingers (Mathewson, 2017; Ulloa, 2016; Vaznis, 2017). The National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) has endorsed a Seal of Biliteracy that states are taking up to promote bilingual and biliterate proficiency by honoring students with an official seal on their high school diplomas (Davin & Heineke, 2017). States like Utah, for instance, have expanded their world languages program affording native English-speaking children the opportunity to participate in two-way immersion programs (Delavan, Valdez, & Freire, 2017). Thus, we must ask ourselves for whom and for what purpose do we offer bilingual education to children (Freire, Valdez, & Deavan, 2017; Martínez, 2017; Pimentel, Soto, Pimentel, & Urrieta, 2008).

From its inception, however, bilingual education has been fraught with an internal struggle between advocates who want to ensure the utilization of additive linguistic and cultural practices as well as assimilationist ideologies that view the use of native language instruction as a means to an end (Ovando, 2003; Hurie & Degollado, 2017; Flores &

Garcia, 2017). Thus, it is imperative that we examine the relationship between ideology and our purpose for teaching. At the center of the debate, are bilingual educators who are the arbiters between national, state, and local policies and ideologies. It is bilingual teachers who decide what gets taught, how it gets taught, and to what extent. Unfortunately for most emergent bilinguals, this includes a long history of subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). The existing literature on bilingual teacher ideology delves largely into policy implementation and decision making (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Palmer & Henderson, 2017; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Palmer, 2011). These studies highlight the tensions between policy implementation, teacher's conceptions of bilingual education, and bilingualism. In a study of a bilingual classroom, Martínez, Hikida, & Durán (2015) consider teachers' language ideologies and the use of translanguaging. While these studies help us to understand the multifaceted ways teachers think about language, they do not speak to bilingual teachers' constructs of literacy and biliteracy. Given the discourse regarding the benefits of bilingualism for all in the United States, we must consider how teachers make sense of biliteracy and who gets to be bilingual/biliterate.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISSERTATION

In her seminal text, *Borderland/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa (1987) describes the U.S./Mexico border as “una herida abierta,” an open wound, “where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds” (pg. 25). Anzaldúa (1987) explains that *fronterizos* are caught in a state of *nepantla* in which they are caught between two worlds. As such, *fronterizos* navigate and negotiate their identities and subjectivities, being pushed and pulled by hegemonic forces of the old and new world. In this qualitative study, I seek to understand how *fronteriza* teachers navigate the borderland, not only the physical space of living along Texas-Mexico border, but also the borderland between the macro and micro structures and

ideologies that dictate their jobs as bilingual teachers. Fronteriza teachers are called on to teach their own: students with whom they share a history, culture, and language. Fronteriza maestras must teach emergent bilinguals to live in nepantla and achieve academically in a society where hegemonic whiteness pervades.

To address these issues, I asked the following questions:

1. How do the life stories of fronteriza teachers illuminate their language and literacy ideologies?
2. How do these language and literacy ideologies inform their conceptualization of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education?

To carry out this research project I worked with six fronteriza bilingual maestras who were born, raised, educated, and currently work as educators in Laredo, Texas. I choose to conduct my study in this space because it represents the herida abierta of contradictions: being a citizen of the United States while being culturally Mexican. These citizens, like other border residents, live the in-between-ness. The participants in the study have subaltern knowledge (Mignolo, 2000; Spivak, 1988). That is, because of their lived experiences on the margins of society, they are born into a world in which their bodies, culture, and language are racialized. Generation after generation, since the colonization of the Americas, those who have inhabited these spaces have had to change, conform, resist, and transform dominant macro and micro ideologies. According to Mignolo (2000) border thinkers embody the dichotomy thereby “open[ing] up a space for the multiplication of interconnected project at the intersection of local histories and global design” (p.71). Simply put, Mignolo (2000) contends border thinkers learn to think from the polarities rather than sort through the polarity. In this study border thinking emanates from of history of Spanish colonialism and American imperialism mapped onto the indigenous people that have inhabited the geographical space around the Rio Grande and beyond.

With regards to bilingual education, this study has the potential to inform how communities of color beyond the border that have been historically marginalized navigate a schooling system that perpetuates inequalities. Studies on teachers' language ideologies in bilingual classroom demonstrate that their articulated and embodied ideologies are at time contradictory and complex (Henderson & Palmer, 2015). Many studies have asked teachers about their beliefs and attitudes towards language and literacy the mixing of languages and culture (Martínez, Hikida, & Durán, 2015). In thinking about teaching in general, Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that successful teachers of African American students did not have a set of strategies that made the teachers successful, but rather a set of beliefs and ideologies about teaching, children, and communities that made the teachers successful pedagogues. However, there are no studies that ascertain how these ideologies originate. Acknowledging our ideological disposition and recognizing how those dispositions are generated empower bilingual educators to have ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 1994; Darder, 2012). To that end, the life story methodology allows us to take a glimpse into how these ideologies are constructed in unique geopolitical spaces like the border.

At the same time, as teacher educators read this study, I hope that communities of color can learn from the experiences of *fronteriza* teachers. Like the U.S.-Mexico border is unique to Mexican American history, so too is the South unique to African American history (Mignolo, 2000). Stories of what it was like to live in the Jim Crow south and the history of slavery inform ideologies of the teachers who live there. For example, Dubois (1903) speaks about developing double consciousness as a means of navigating oppressive structures. Similarly, Native Americans who live on reservations have unique historical contexts from which their ideological perspectives derive from. That is, diasporas across the United States are in and of themselves a type of border crossing or double

consciousness. The perils of not understanding these unique histories contribute in perpetuating the systemic inequalities within which bilingual educators operate.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The first chapter introduces the study. I begin with stories of my own that are painful to tell because they are stories in which I was complicit in perpetuating deficit views, assimilationist attitudes, and dominant monoglossic ideologies. The rest of the introductory chapter includes the background, purpose, and significance of study. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature within the field of bilingual education. There I frame the argument for the necessity of the dissertation, specifically outlining how we have not studied the bilingual teachers' language and literacy ideological construction through a life story methodology. Chapter Two concludes with the theoretical frameworks that undergird the study. Chapter Three, outlines the methodology and methodological tools that will be used to carry out the study. There, I delve into the indigenous research paradigm, life story methodology, and thinking with theory analysis. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven reveal the findings of the study. Lastly, Chapter Eight discusses the implication, conclusions, and future directions for research.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The backdrop of a contentious political climate and sweeping bilingual education reform across the country, demands ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 1994) in bilingual education. Thus, the significance of this dissertation lies in the need to better understand how bilingual teachers lived experiences illuminate their language and literacy ideology construction. Critical scholars have long argued that political and ideological clarity are the hallmark of a transformative education, especially if we are working with historically

marginalized students (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Bartolomé, 1994; Del Carmen Salazar, 2013; Apple, 2004; Darder, 2012). While recent research helps to illustrate how we can better prepare bilingual education teachers for the challenges they will face in the field (Palmer & Martínez, 2013, Cervantes-Soon et.al. 2017), how our ideologies help us to realize how we teach remains to be studied.

In using *nepantla* (Anzaldúa, 1987, 2015), border thinking (Mignolo, 2000), & Raciolinguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Flores & Rosa, 2017) as my theoretical frameworks, I attempt to elucidate the nuances of language and literacy ideologies that are affected by time, place, and history. Anzaldúa's (1987) theory of the borderlands, for instance, appropriately describes the location and history where this study is situated. Raciolinguistic perspectives accentuate *nepantla* in that it shows how language is racialized. Therefore, our ideologies about bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism are uniquely shaped by the racialization of bodies that have been constructed, resisted, internalized and inherited over time.

In selecting life stories as a methodological approach for this dissertation, I attempt to honor the lived experiences of others. We each come to know the world through the experiences we have: the good, the bad, and the ugly. We are what our ancestors fought for. We teach the way we understand and know the world. Therefore, we must begin with the story of how these ideologies came to be to augment how bilingual teachers are trained. If we want to prepare them for the challenges they will face as bilingual educators—lack of resources and support, competing ideological factions within, resisting top-down mandates that devalue students' culture and language—then we must first contend with their ideological positioning. To this end, the telling of stories, particularly, life stories, give a starting point for self-reflection as we are always becoming.

Chapter Two: We Didn't Cross the Border, The Border Crossed Us

Growing up in Laredo, *tortillas de harina* were the go-to tortilla for most meals. An afterschool snack at Güela's house was as simple as heating up a tortilla de harina and adding *mantequilla* to it. Or, if there was *aguacate*, we would slice it open, smash it up, and slather it on the tortilla de harina. The flavors, so simple, yet so delicious remain vividly imprinted in my mind and the taste buds of my mouth. In a recent article published in *The New Yorker*, Arellano (2018) considers the significance of the flour tortilla as a staple of the American Southwest and highlights the “controversial” relationship that the flour tortilla has between Mexicans of the southwestern United States and Mexicans from the interior, stating:

Few foods are more contentious among Mexicans than the flour tortilla. People rhapsodize about the earthiness of a corn one *hecho a mano* (freshly handmade); high-end Mexican restaurants in the United States boast on social media about their use of heritage maize to create organic, non-G.M.O. versions. The corn tortilla is an easy symbol of pride, an elemental food that connects Mexicans to our indigenous past and ancestral homeland. Those made *de harina* (of flour), by contrast, are bastard children of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, a hybrid of the corn flatbread that has existed in Mexico for thousands of years and the wheat that the Spanish conquistadors brought over. Recent Mexican immigrants deride flour tortillas as a gringo quirk. (My own mother had never even tasted one until she arrived in Southern California from central Mexico, during the late nineteen-sixties.) Foodie purists dismiss them as not “real” Mexican food. (Arellano, 2018)

I chose to speak about the flour tortilla because I thought it fitting that our food, the one staple item most endearing to Laredo cuisine, is as “contentious” as the geopolitical space where it thrives. (Of course, the contentiousness of the flour tortilla is

unknown to Laredoans. In Laredo, one orders *mariachi*, or breakfast taco, and unless you specifically ask for a *tortilla de maiz*, your breakfast will be brought to you in a tortilla de harina.) This is where our story begins because this is where my story begins—Laredo, Texas, a city along the Texas-Mexico border in the American Southwest—"a historically contested geopolitical space of shifting ideological and physical borders" (Degollado, Bell, & Salinas, In-Press)—where disputes about authenticity continue to this day, even in the food we eat.

Known as the *herida abierta*, or open wound, the border represents a clashing of societies where the third world grates against the first and bleeds. For Anzaldúa (1987, 2015), and other border theorists (Lugo, 2008; Mignolo, 2000; Pratt, 1991; Saldaña-Portillo, 2016), the borderlands represent a space—figuratively and literally—in which one learns to live in two worlds at the same time. In this chapter, I draw on Anzaldúa's theory of *nepantla* and weave in Saldaña-Portillo's (2016) racial geography lens to explore Laredo's genealogical thinking (Grinberg & Saavedra, 2000). According to Saldaña-Portillo (2016) "the ways in which national geographies are perceived, imagined, lived, and mapped are supremely racial, and that these racial produced geographies cannot be understood without a thorough investigation of the colonial modes of governmentality imposed on and engaged by indigenous people" (p. 6). In that sense, this chapter elucidates how different colonial projects—Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism—have convened in this space to influence current modes of thought. Through this history, I argue that living in contradiction and ambivalence is a way of life for Laredoans as they seek to placate a nation-state of which they are part while holding on the land and a cultural heritage to which they feel entitled.

THE COAHUILTECANS

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonizers, the Coahuiltecan lived in the Rio Grande region. For 11,000 years, the people who lived in this part of the world, learned to survive in this arid land with little to no resources (Salinas, 2011). The Coahuiltecan were not one large group of organized people like their Aztec and Mayan brethren to the south, but rather small bands of hunter gatherers that were unified by language and lived in family units. In an article published in the Brownsville Herald Tony Zavaleta states, “They were experts at exploiting and harvesting the environment.... They knew exactly which plants were edible and which were medicinal” (Garcia, 2006). Indeed, their mastery of the land led the Spanish to believe this land was sustainable (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016).

The relationship between the Coahuiltecan and the colonizers was tenuous. At times, the Coahuiltecan allied with the Spanish to combat hostile Apache and Comanche. Other times, the Coahuiltecan resisted the Spaniard’s invasion. The Spaniards evangelized some Coahuiltecan at missions like San Antonio de Valero. Most, however, died of disease transmitted by the Spanish. The remaining Coahuiltecan intermarried with the Spanish or acculturated into Spanish life.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Capitán Don Tomás Sánchez de la Barrera, a rancher and native of Coahuila, founded Villa de San Agustin de Laredo in 1755. The viceroyalty of Nuevo Santander, José de Escandón granted Sanchez the land as part of the Spanish effort to settle the northern frontier of New Spain. Preceding Laredo’s settlement were four villas: Camargo, Revilla, Reynosa, and Mier. Situated halfway between San Antonio de Bejar to the north and Monterrey to the south, Laredo was an optimal location for trade on a route previously used by the Indigenous peoples that inhabited South and Central Texas (Erlichman, 2006).

The Spanish established the Villas to ward off Indian retaliation and impede further French invasion. Unlike the other Villa settlements, Laredo rested on the northern bank of the Rio Grande. In all, Escandón designated six leagues of land for the new settlement, which they laid out using the Spanish grid system.

Early life in the settlement was disorganized and inhospitable. The land was not the suitable for growing crops. Hinojosa (1983) described the land as “threatening and yet promising, this a plain could be settled only by a strong deliberate, and carefully colonizing expedition” (p. 4). Eleven families, including Sánchez and his wife Uribe, settled Laredo. José Tienda de Cuervo wrote the first official report about Laredo in 1757. Tienda noted that raising livestock was the main use of the land and that what the land lacked in fertility for farming, it made up for in game. Tienda’s report also highlighted the need for religious presence, which the townspeople desired. Absent any structure regarding the division of lands and with no leadership from Spain, families came and went that first decade.

Laredo’s censuses show that there were stark social and class divisions. Españoles or Spaniards was a distinct category from mestizos, mulatos, and Indians. To be an Indian meant to have cultural unity with your tribe. To be an español was a marker of status in which people were referred to as Don and Doña. The family unit played a central role in early life; Hinojosa (1983) noted that españoles had higher percentages of marriages and less children out of wedlock that may have been the result of the Catholic Church not recognizing intermarriage between races. According to Hinojosa (1983), “enumerators in Laredo continued recording racial and ethnic designations in the unofficial census drafts long after superior authorities no longer required them to do so” (p.18), thus indicating an ideology of racialized superiority amongst the Españoles.

Contradictory reports about relations with the Indigenous peoples exists in Laredo’s early records. At the time of Tienda’s report, Sánchez stated that no Indigenous people

lived within the confines of the town and that in general there was a friendly demeanor between the townspeople and the Indigenous people. Wood (2004) posits that “When asked about them [the Indigenous people], Sánchez replied that there were so many they could not be counted but that all of them, including the Apaches who showed up from time to time, were peaceful and had not caused any problems” (p. 20). Carrizo, Borado, and Lipan people lived in the area (Cuéllar, 2019). Additionally, Coahuiltexans inhabited the area around Laredo and the Apache and Comanche frequented the area. Included in the first official census were 110 Lipan (Wood, 2004). While the Spanish’s goal was to evangelize the Indigenous populations, Laredo did not have a formal mission like San Antonio. As such, Laredo’s settlers did not go about evangelizing the Indigenous population.

Saldaña-Portillo paints a nuanced portrait of the relationship between the Spanish and the Coahuiltecan of Nuevo Santander. In her review of the Spanish archives Saldana-Portillo (2016) elucidates that:

on first read, it appears as if there is an easy differentiation in accordance with the terms of Spanish racial geography: indios gentiles are the heathens who allow the Spaniards to live amongst them and are open to conversion, whereas indios bárbaros are those who attack Spanish missions and settlements. (p. 92)

The Spanish, Saldana Portillo (2016) goes on to say, were driven by their fascination “to know the other intimately, in a manner akin to love” (p. 93). The indios assisted in settling Nuevo Santander as the Spanish relied on Indigenous sensemaking and knowledge. The indios “were often more allies and even co-conspirators” against the French and indio bárbaros (p. 94).

Thus, the relationship between the settlers in Laredo and the Indigenous peoples was complicated. Wood (2004) states that “the greatest threat came from the Comanche” (p.78). And that despite “a constant plea running through the documents of the frontier

settlers asking the government for help to defend and protect themselves and their property,” little to none was provided by the Spanish, nor the Mexican government after that. Local leaders sought to fight for Spain calling everyone to arms, including settled Indians who were tasked with making bows and 50 arrows each to defend the town from rebellious activity. Thus, the colonists and settled Indigenous peoples were largely left to fend for themselves.

By all accounts colonial life was rough. The settlers petitioned, time and again, for resources to grow the settlement and protect it from Apache and Comanche, which were being driven south by the U.S. There is little in the historical record from this time to fully engage in ideological positioning of the citizens of Laredo. However, of this time Piñon (1985) explains:

The settlers had proved themselves. They had survived. In their isolation, they had grown close to each other, developing a special kinship that was to continue for generations. The land grants gave the settlers the resolve to remain their indefinitely. This land, so rough and unyielding so distant from the centers of culture and social life, was not their language. As such, a certain resilience in the people had to be adopted in order to survive this barren land that was good for little. (p. 43)

Tensions existed between New Spain and the Spanish Crown because of the lack of resources and leadership provided, leaving Laredoans to figure ways to survive. Meanwhile, in the interior of New Spain, political upheaval was brewing, precipitating a desire for independence from Spain.

THE MEXICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

On September 16, 1810, Father Manuel Hidalgo y Costilla rang the bells in what is now known as the Grito de Dolores, commencing the Mexican War of Independence. Tired

of the lack of representation in the Spanish government, the class and race divisions, wanting to distance themselves from the turmoil in Spain, and part of the series of independence movements happening worldwide, the Criollos of New Spain sought severities with the Spanish crown. While mixed feelings existed nationally between the Peninsulares who wanted to remain loyal to the Spanish crown and Criollos, who were the insurgents, the Mexican War of Independence concluded after 11 years in 1821 with the insurgents gaining independence.

During this time, Laredoans remained indifferent to the war. Although town leaders signed a formal decree asserting their allegiance to the Crown, no action was taken to subvert the insurgency (Wood, 2004). Laredoans went about their business more worried about fending off attacks from the Apache and Comanche than fighting for or against the Spanish. Concerned with their survival, Laredoans turned inward, becoming their *modus operandi*.

With Mexico's independence, Laredoans experienced some prosperity and tranquility. However, in Mexico the two government factions did not get along. The centralists desired more control from the federal government while the federalists preferred to have more state control. The inner turmoil instigated disorder throughout the country. Laredoans' allegiances alternated as needed. Not much changed in Laredo; their basic concerns for safety and resources persisted. Again, little aid was provided by the Mexican government. To the north, in Tejas, Anglos from the U.S. began to settle and Laredo remained an important trade route.

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR & THE REPUBLIC OF THE RIO GRANDE

By 1824, Anglos had moved in to the northern parts of Tejas y Coahuila in an effort to settle and colonize the farthest reaches of Mexico. The Mexican government

welcomed the Anglo's efforts as the government attempted to maintain control of the land. The settlers, in exchange for land, agreed to learn Spanish and follow the Mexican constitution of 1824. When Antonio López de Santa Anna ascended to power and centralized the government—overthrowing the federalist Constitution of 1824—the Anglos and Tejanos revolted. In 1835, war broke out between the Texian insurgents and the Mexicans, precipitating the Texas Revolution and a 12-year battle for control of Tejas y Coahuila.

Laredo was caught in the middle in the midst of the war between the Texians and the Mexicans. Located outside the bounds of Tejas y Coahuila, well into the Mexican province of Tamaulipas, Laredo was not concerned with the disputes from either side. Again, it was their own interests that took precedent. According to Wood (2004), “the people of Laredo might not have cared too much about what was going on at either end of the road, but their world was influence what was happening in both places” (p. 90). The turmoil in Mexico exhausted Laredoans whose allegiances oscillated between Mexico's political parties. The Anglos brought money and an increase in business. Nonetheless, few Anglos decided to settle south of the Nueces. Additionally, the Anglos held prejudices and racism towards the native Tejanos and Mexicans. Even if Laredoans opted to be oblivious to the plight of the Texians or the changes in the Centralist Mexican government, their lives were about to undergo a drastic change.



Figure 2.1. Flag of The Republic of the Rio Grande

Amidst the unrest, tired of Mexico's inability to defend its citizens and not wanting to concede land to the Texians, leaders from the surrounding area established the Republic of the Rio Grande. In their angst with the Santa Ana's Centralist government, Antonio Canales Rosillo and Antonio Zapata spearheaded the Federalist effort to establish the Republic of the Rio Grande. Antonio Canales traversed the borderlands regions looking for men to join his cause. According to De la Garza (2013) "the insurgent area encompassed the northern Mexican state of Tamaulipas (the former province of Nuevo Santander, which had included Texas, south of the Nueces River), Nuevo Leon and Coahuila" (p. 1). The Republic of the Rio Grande reinstated Mexico's federalist Constitution of 1824. For all of 250 days, from January 17 to November 6, 1840, Laredo was the capital of the Republic. Neither side recognized the Republic of the Rio Grande and Canales's rebellion was squashed. The fact, however, that they sought to establish a new government in the midst of the war is telling as it shows that this area never fully considered itself to be fully Mexican nor fully Texas or American at this point. De la Garza (2013) claims that:

This psychological attachment to the land was the legacy of the promise of Don José de Escandón had held out to the settlers who followed him to the banks of the Rio Bravo del Norte—the promise that they would have their own land. (p.)

As such, what the Laredoan's and their northern Mexico compatriots yearned for was not to be associated with either faction but to rule for themselves as they felt entitled to the land that had been granted to them almost 100 years ago by the king of Spain. Up to this point, neither Spain nor the Mexicans had furnished them with resources and protection. Furthermore, the northern Mexicans did not feel connected to the plight of the Anglos from Tejas. (Figure 2.2 depicts the map of the Republic of the Rio Grande with the current borders. Coahuila and Tamaulipas reached as far north as the Medina and Nueces Rivers, respectively.)

The Treaty of Velasco (1836) ostensibly ended the Texas Revolution. However, it was never fully ratified by either side. James K. Polk, the 11th President of the United States, viewed the annexation of Texas as part of the manifest destiny doctrine. Thus, the Mexican-American War ensued.



Figure 2.2. Map of The Republic of the Rio Grande

In July 1846, under the auspices of the United States war effort against Mexico, Captain Richard A. Gillespie planted the U.S. flag in Laredo. By this time, Zachary Taylor¹—a General in the U.S. Army—had already taken control of Matamoros, effectively making the Rio Grande the unofficial Texas border. With the assistance of the United States, Laredoans had protection for the first time against the Apache and Comanche that beleaguered them.

¹ Zachary Taylor became the 12th President of the United States

Whether the Laredoans wanted the Anglos in Laredo or not is unknown. That said, prior to the signing of the Treaty, the people of Laredo petitioned to remain part of Mexico as they had been severed from the other Villas del Norte (Camargo, Reynosa, Mier, and Revilla) and their Mexican counterparts. Piñon (1985) notes that Stephen F. Austin², on his way to Mexico City in 1822 wrote:

from the Medina river to Laredo, the country is the poorest I ever saw in my life. It is generally nothing but sand, entirely void of timber, covered with prickly pear. Laredo as poor as sand banks, droughts and indolence can make it. (as cited in Piñon, 1985, p. 47)

Considering Austin's remarks, why would they want the land? Mirabeau B. Lamar³, however, thought the request to remain part of Mexico an insult to the defenses that had been provided to Laredo during the war against the Comanche and Apache attacks. With the signing of the Treaty, Laredo was now on United States soil.

Not all Laredoans elected to remain in the United States. As previously mentioned, Laredo was the only of Escandón's villas to be settled north of the Rio Grande. However, at one point, early on in Laredo's history, several families departed to the south side of the Rio Grande. Tomas Sánchez decreed these families to return to the northern bank of the Rio Grande. Thus, reuniting all Laredoans on northern bank. In 1848, however, with the signing of the Treaty, several families elected to remain on Mexican soil and relocated to the south bank of the Rio Grande, thereby founding Nuevo Laredo on June 15, 1848.

² Known as the "Father of Texas," Stephen F. Austin facilitated the colonization of Texas by the Anglos.

³ Mirabeau B. Lamar, a native of Georgia, was the second President of the Republic of Texas. Lamar is also known for instigating wars against Cherokee and Comanche.

THE BEGINNING OF NEPANTLA AND BORDER THINKING

Historians disagree about Laredo's disposition towards becoming part of the United States. Wood (2004) states that "the final change of allegiance came when the Americans entered Laredo and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed." Wood then goes on to speculate "Though many Laredoans moved across the Rio Grande into Mexico, perhaps those who remained were glad to have finally found a form of federalism which promised some permanence" (p. 74). Piñon notes that, "the Spanish families of Laredo had developed, in over 100 years of ruling themselves, a cohesive class structure a well-established consciousness in government that they were not about to relinquish to anyone." (p. 60). Laredoans saw themselves as a self-ruling people. Not having had any real protection or guidance from the Spanish nor the Mexican in their inability to maintain a cohesive government in their early years, Laredoans became loyal to themselves. As such, they went into the late 20th century with the mindset that nothing existed outside Laredo—and the surrounding area. Piñon (1985) went on to say

Their loyalties always had been more towards one another than towards Spain or Mexico, or now towards Texas—even though many Laredoans welcomed the inclusion of Laredo as part of the United States. In their long history of being alone, they had nurtured a sense of unity amongst themselves, one that was not about to be easily destroyed. (p. 60).

Other scholars contend that Laredo yearned for stability and they thought that being part of the United States would bring them just that. The United States—in their quest to rid the land of the natives and in acquiring land—was willing to defend Laredo to assert the Rio Grande as the true border of Texas by establishing Fort Macintosh in 1849. Even so, that they were the true owners and rulers of the land was ingrained in the psyche of Laredoans—especially that of the landed families. I argue that this is especially important

in the thinking of Laredoans that exists to this day. What goes on outside this space, on either side of the border, is of little importance to the day-to-day happenings in the city. Because of the wealth and status of prominent landowners, unlike other parts of Texas and California, Laredoans maintained social, political, and cultural control of the area for many years after its annexation. The maestras encapsulate their language and literacy ideologies in their ownership of Laredo. Like the land grant families, the maestras feel entitled to their culture and land and employ both as they see fit.

THE CIVIL WAR

Not long after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), Laredo found itself caught in another battle. This time, it was the Civil War in the United States. Again, Laredoans saw themselves so far removed from the center of power that they did not really think to themselves that they should take sides and had little opinion either way in the matter of the North vs. South. In an official vote taken by city leaders, they came to the conclusion that it would be best to side with whatever Texas decided; Texas opted for secession. Laredo's loyalties, therefore, rested with the Confederates. For the seventh time in Laredo's history, another flag would be raised at the town center.



Figure 2.3. Santos Benavides

Santos Benavides—a member of Laredo’s prominent propertied families and descendent of the founder of Laredo—led Laredo’s involvement in the Civil War. Santos was himself a rancher, in the mercantile business, and Webb County’s county judge at the time the Civil War broke out. He kept close relationships with his Mexican counterparts and was a dear friend of Santiago Vidaurri, the governor of Nuevo Leon. Santos was a dignified man, and many thought highly of his leadership skills. Santos accepted Laredo’s fate as part of the United States. He was someone who wanted to work within the confines of the laws of the new nation which they were now a part.



Figure 2.4. Juan Cortina

Another prominent figure from that era was Juan Cortina. Like Santos, Cortina was born into a family of wealth and status. Unlike Santos, however, he was considered a rebel and a bandit. Historians debate Cortina's place in history. Thompson tells us that Dobie, the noted folklorist thought Cortina nothing more than a Cortina's reputation stemmed from his disdain for the Anglos of south Texas—especially those in Brownsville—who had come into town thinking less of the Mexicans who owned the land. Cortina sought retribution for his brethren who lost so much in land and rights when the Anglos came to South Texas.

Cortina and Benavides crossed paths in Zapata County during the Civil War. There Benavides, fighting for the Confederacy and Cortina for the Unionist rebellion in South Texas, battled. Both Cortina and Benavides thought the end justified the means, thinking they would acquire concessions from the Confederacy and Union respectively.

The battle between Cortina and Benavides was pivotal in cementing his legacy amongst the Texas political elite. Thompson (1991) writes

Their victory over Cortina in the Battle of Carrizo on 21 May 1861 left no doubt in the minds of Confederate authorities in Austin and Richmond as to the position of the brothers Benavides. Santos was hailed a hero by newspapers across Texas.... his courage was cheered and commended by the state legislature.... With the Civil War a month old, Benavides had already become a legend on the Rio Grande frontier. (p. 23).

In the end, the Union won, and the Confederacy lost. Despite this, Benavides, because of his stature in Texas went on to become a beloved leader who played a role in state politics for many years; he was the only Tejano legislator in his time. In his role as a diplomat, Benavides continued to mediate between the United States and Mexico, seeking to repair the relationships until his death in 1891. Benavides, the highest-ranking Tejano in the confederate Army, still has a school named after him Laredo. Cortina retreated to his beloved Mexico and his fate was left to Texas historians who considered him a Mexican bandit.

It is said that the Civil War turned brother against brother. I juxtapose these competing characters from Texas's history to illustrate the impact of how two brothers born in Tamaulipas could be turned against one another. Laredoans decided early on that they would play the game to get ahead in a world where there were no good choices; Benavides embodied that. Had Laredo sided with the Unionists, Texas politicians might have otherwise overlooked Benavides in the Reconstruction Era. Cortina, who experienced racism in the Brownsville area knew the capability of the Anglo to divide and conquer. Benavides's tactic was to extend olive branches to ensure prosperity for himself and his community.

Cortina and Benavides should have sided together because as they were born into families of prominence just after Mexico won their independence—both in the state of Tamaulipas. Their lives were defined the by an arbitrary boundary that did not exist when they were born. cut their homeland in half. Although there is little to go on in terms of what Benavides really thought of the Anglo invasion, his rise in politics and his diplomacy with Mexico illustrate what might be considered an inchoate border thinking that began to emerge. I have indicated that Laredoans saw themselves as the true heirs of the land, and Benavides, for the first time demonstrated, for others how one might navigate the borderlands to survive and thrive.

A NEW CENTURY

In the time after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), Laredo had for the first time in a long time some peace and prosperity. Before this, there was a Mexican war of independence that lasted 11 years. Then, a decade of peace ensued before war broke out again in the Texas independence and the signing of the treaty which lasted 12 years. Unlike other cities in the American Southwest, Laredo for the most part avoided Anglo control. All around Laredo, in Brownsville or in Los Angeles there were quick take overs of Anglo control. The Anglo looked down on Mexican in Brownsville and saw them as inferior. In Laredo the landed families for the most part remained in control of their land and the city. Mayors and city alderman were of Spanish surnames and came from the elite who had already held land grants prior to the wars. In doing so historians argue that this changed the way Laredo viewed the world.

According to Hinojosa (1983) “sharp divisions among the townspeople along ethnic lines seem to have been avoided.” He went on to say that

“interaction between Mexican Americans and Anglo-Americans was to a great extent characterized by cooperation, blending, and mixing. Gestures toward along included publication of ordinances in both English and Spanish, celebration of American and Mexican national holidays, and division of political offices more or less equally. Anglo-Americans and Europeans in Laredo, according to local tradition, learned Spanish, mixed socially with the Mexican-American upper class, and intermarried with them. they often appeared more mexicanied than mexicanos appeared Americanized.” (p.)

Immigrants did settle in the area. Two notable immigrants that came to Laredo in the 19th Century were Antonio Bruni from Italy and Raymond Martin from France. One historian noted that in Laredo immigrants to the United States got a long better with the Spanish elite who controlled the area than the Anglos who were born in the United States. Immigrants were calculating and intermarried with the wealthy Spanish families who maintained control of the government and land. The Spanish class structures remained and were reinforced even after the U.S.’s annexation of Texas.

THE BOTAS Y GUARACHES

Control of Laredo politics became a point of contention at the end of the 1800s. On one side Santos Benavides who took up the cause of the Guaraches, or sandals, to represent the working class. On the other end, Raymond Martin—a French immigrant to Laredo who had married into the prominent Garcia family—represented the Botas, or boots, and wanted to maintain the old way of running the city. On Election Day, April 6, 1886 the Botas won a narrow victory. The next day, in celebration, the Botas took to the streets for a parade. According to the New York Times (1886):

The Botas posted notices this morning that they would bury the Huaraches party in the Public Plaza this afternoon and invited the Huaraches to be there. The Huaraches were there with a vengeance and took a very active part in the funeral ceremonies. While no further outbreak is feared, the end is not yet.

Gun fire broke out between the two factions. The New York Times reported a total of five men killed that day: three huaraches and two botas.

The New York Times described the battle as fighting between the democrats (Botas) versus republicans (Guaraches). However, like all politics this was local. Elite local families—the Garcías and Benavides were competing for political control of the city. By the next election in 1886, they had buried the hatchet and formed the Independent Club, run by Martin.

‘We are a band of brothers,’ was the appropriate air for the election yesterday all day long. Botas and Guaraches fraternized, in some instances the latter voting the only ticket in the field, simply snatching off the head, ‘Democratic Ticket.’ That’s the good new way. (as cited in Wilcox, 1941, p. 23).

In other words, these competing factions had more similarities than differences. With that Wilcox (1941) writes, “peace reigned on the Rio Grande once more” (p. 23). This ushered in a new era in local politics known as the patron system that would control Laredo until 1978 with the Martin family at the helm. In this sense, the Laredo “elite” propagated the casta system left by the Spanish into their politics. While the Laredo “elite” prospered politically and financially, the other Laredo residents remained poor and uneducated.

PATRON POLITICS

The founding of the Independent Club, also known as the Old Party or el Partido Viejo, solidified power of Laredo politics for almost a century. After the Election Riot in 1886, elite Laredo families consolidated dominance in Webb County and Laredo, becoming a solid Democratic voting bloc. Local offices passed from father to son. The patron of Laredo politics, J.C. “Pepe” Martin, became the longest serving Mayor in Laredo’s history, holding office from 1954-1978.

Unfortunately for Laredoans, although the city continued to grow in size, little changed. The infrastructure was dilapidated. The illiteracy rate and poverty remained high. At the time, almost 50% of Laredoans lived in poverty, one in three received government assistance, and the unemployment rate was about 15% (Moyers, 1978). The city depended on the Laredo Air Force Base for jobs, but it closed in 1973.

Although many Laredoans could vote, little progress occurred because no one could mount a serious challenge to the Old Party rule. Piñon (1985) writes that the

The lower “class” Mexican did not have an open access to the political process. The Spanish never taught him democracy, the Mexicans never practiced it and the Anglo Saxons didn’t share it. The poor Laredoan lived in dependency both politically and economically. (p. 183)

This very deficit view of Laredoans does not account for the party boss rule that kept many people dependent on government jobs. For example, “it was the Martin faction who determined who would be school superintendent, who in turn would determine who would be school principals and who could teach” (Piñon, 1985, p. 101). Piñon went on to say “those who opposed them feared for their jobs. Those who helped them were rewarded” (p. 101). In short, confronting the status quo was not a viable option.

By 1978, nationally and locally, the Civil Rights Movement spurred political upheaval. One author writes that as the middle class grew, people became less dependent on party bosses. As such, the time was ripe for a new leader to enter the fray.

One outsider, Aldo Tatangelo was a native of Providence, Rhode Island, the son of Italian immigrant to the United States whose entrepreneurial spirit led him to Laredo. He found good fortune in Laredo, where he started small manufacturing businesses on both sides of the border. He came to prominence in the city by voicing his opinions at every city council meeting.

Another outsider, Lawrence Berry, aided Tatangelo in dismantling the patron system. Berry led Taxpayers Organized for Public Service (TOPS), which was a group of citizens who demanded accountability for the city budget. TOPS noted discrepancies between city's budget and the services being offered. For instance, Tatangelo noticed that his sister lived in a city of comparable size to Laredo that had a 1-million-dollar budget for road maintenance and improvement where all the streets were paved. By contrast, in the early 1970s 75% of Laredo's streets remained unpaved despite its 3-million-dollar allotment.

Exposing this corruption altered political opinion. In 1978, more people ran for office from a variety of economic and social backgrounds. Only one elected official, Oscar Lural, remained from the Old Party as he was beloved by many. Tatangelo became the Mayor and served three terms in office. In his tenure, his administration paved the streets of Laredo, rewrote the city charter, and built daycare centers among other serves for Laredo's poor. My Güela, worked at one of the city's daycare centers for 20 years. She fondly remembered Aldo Tatangelo for being a benevolent public servant.

This anecdote reveals two things: First, the old families only interest was to preserve their financial and political security. Second, and unfortunately, it took outsiders

to contest the pecking order that dominated local politics. Whether it is true that Mexicans who arrived in Laredo at the beginning of the 20th century were uninformed in the ways of democracy or not, this anecdote tells us that Laredo's insular thinking can be self-defeating.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

On the morning of February 22, 1898, men dressed as Indigenous people and white men engaged in a mock battle for control of City Hall. This mock battle would become what is now known as the Washington's Birthday Celebration Association. On the mock battle, the Laredo Times wrote:

In the end, the defenders fell and the mayor presented the key of the city to the Great Chief Sachem as a sign of unconditional surrender. The Great Chief in turn presented the key to the lovely Princess Pocahontas, who represented a lost tradition, "a vanishing race." The ensuing celebration among neighbors lasted for two days, culminating with the reenactment of the "Boston Tea Party." Thus, was born the annual celebration of George Washington's Birthday in Laredo, Texas.

Young (1998) asserts that the Indigenous people provided a common enemy that was begin memorialized in other parts of the country—the cowboy vs. Indian. The indio bárbaro as the was known by the Spanish also afflicted the Anglos as both sought to rid the land of indigenous peoples. That said, although the Texas Mexicans has indigenous ancestry, one could be White by associating with Spanish heritage and ridding him/herself of an indigenous heritage. Moreover, and most importantly, the celebration sought to Americanize the Mexican American population whose loyalty, customs, and traditions, were largely Mexican and Spanish. Realizing that many of the locals identified with their Mexican heritage, the celebration purported to educate the population in U.S. history and traditions.

While the celebration was entirely conceived of by Anglos in a predominantly Mexican American city, the elite families were always aware of the bicultural nature of the city and thus, had to incorporate modes of celebrating that would make the celebration a uniquely Laredo event. For example, the Order of the Red Men added events like reenacting George Washington crossing the Delaware using the Rio Grande as the backdrop. Upon crossing, Manuel Hidalgo greeted George Washington.

During the 1920 there was some resistance to these celebrations. Jovita Idar—a teacher, journalist, and activist—along with others began an effort to celebrate Mexican holidays (i.e 16 de Septiembre). The celebration lasted several years but did not ever attain the same amount of attention as Washington’s Birthday Celebration.

The elite families also used the event as a way to show their prominence. The Society of Martha Washington (SMW), for example, was set up as a debutante ball. One man and woman, whose families are part of the organization, are selected yearly to represent George and Martha Washington. The daughters of the women in this organization dress up in ornate colonial regalia representing prominent Virginians and U.S. dignitaries invited to the first inauguration of George Washington. Participation in this event is exclusive; most are descendants of the original members. Applications to participate in the event are taken, but nothing is guaranteed.



Figure 2.5. Society of Martha Washington Presentation

In 1980, women with wealth and status—but represented new money and were not included in the SMW—established the Princess Pocahontas Council. This celebration replaced the original battle between the Indigenous people and the Anglos. According to Young, “The myth of [Pocahontas] was particularly apropos in Laredo because her marriage to the white colonist John Rolfe echoed the friendly and benign model of miscegenation that characterized relations between Anglo men and Texas Mexican women” (p. 82). Now, the key of the city is handed to Princess Pocahontas—portrayed by a high school senior who competed for the title and whose mother is a longstanding member of the Council.



Figure 2.6. Princess Pocahontas Council Presentation

The celebration has evolved over time to include a bicultural feel. One example is the abrazo celebration whereby dignitaries from both sides of the border meet at the middle of the bridge to exchange an abrazo. Children from both sides dress up in colonial regalia. George Washington and Father Hidalgo also meet at the middle of the bridge. Most recently, Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, attended the Abrazo ceremony and the Society of Martha Washington presentation. Additionally, since 1983 the WBCA established the Jalapeno Festival where there is a Jalapeno eating contest and a Tejano music concert, emphasizing highlight a history that bicultural and binational.



Figure 2.7. Washington's Birthday Celebration Association Abrazo Ceremony

While the history and purpose of the celebration is hardly ever discussed locally, journalists (Hennessy-Fiske, 2016; Swartz, 2006; Ibarra & Ploss-Campoamor, 2014) have become fascinated by the celebration and most especially, Las Marthas. Time and again, articles are written about Las Marthas and the juxtaposition between showcasing immense wealth in a community where 30 percent of the people live below poverty. Journalists also question the need for such an elaborate celebration for the founder of the country in a community where 95 percent of the population is Latinx. In speaking about the Laredo Swartz (2006) writes, “because this is the border, there is something just a bit zany about the celebration.” She adds “When you combine the psyche of wealthy Mexico with that of wealthy Texas, more is always going to be more. Indeed, the celebration is a mix of old/new, Anglo/Latino, Mexican/U.S. history. According to the WBCA website,

Q. The granddaddy of all questions that we get “Why do you celebrate George Washington in Laredo, TX.”?

A. Well, besides being proud citizens of this great nation and there being many deserving men and women in our history -- The WBCA™ decided that Celebrating George Washington was as good a cause as any. Also, with the unique geographical location of Laredo and its predominantly Hispanic community, the city wanted to do something to remind the nation, just how proud the citizens of South Texas are to be a part of the United States of America.

Figure 2.8. Excerpt from Frequently Asked Question on Washington’s Birthday Celebration Association Website

Young (1998) asserts that "Ironically, it has been the image of the Indian, hunted down and killed by both Mexican and Anglo pioneers, that continues to provide the glue to symbolically unite Laredo's highly diverse and unequal society." The people of Laredo are always mesmerized by las Marthas’ and Princess Pocahontas’s Council’s dress, which go on display at the local mall and at the Grand Parade. Even so, the most attended event in town is the Jalapeño Festival where Miss Jalapeño is crowned, there is a jalapeño eating contest, and a Tejano music concert.

Swartz (2006) hypothesizes that “the ability to take a leap of faith into another world is what the border has always been about. Those who make the place their home know how to live in at least two worlds, accepting both and judging neither.” For Young, (1998) the WBCA is a celebration of whiteness; in its own way ridding the scene/seen of the indio bárbaro (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016). Growing up in Laredo, this was the one time a year that the carnival was in town and that we attended a parade. The journalists, in their fascination with Las Marthas, have never sought the opinion of Laredoans who partake in the month-long festivities. This topic did not come up at the convivios with my participants. Most have taken these events as a natural way of life in Laredo. It is well known that Laredo’s wealthy families make up the SMW debutants and Princess Pocahontas council.

NAFTA, THE MILITARIZATION OF THE BORDER, & DRUG VIOLENCE

The signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (1994) solidified the economic bond between Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Though NAFTA was signed by Bill Clinton, it was a work in progress of the two previous administrations: Regan and George H.W. Bush. At the time, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gotari. Laredo would become one of the central players of NAFTA as it quickly became the largest inland port in the country. During the 1990s and 2000s Laredo consistently ranked amongst the fastest growing cities in the United States.

Though many consider NAFTA a boon, there is data to suggest that socioeconomic growth of the border communities did not materialize at the rate other hoped (Peach & Adkisson, 2000). Yoskowitz, Giermanski, and Peña-Sanchez (2002) for example found that while trade increased almost 113% since the signing of NAFTA, that socioeconomic increase for border communities lagged. The two of the indicators that demonstrated this pre and post NAFTA difference were per capita income and employment rates which

decreased in the post-NAFTA years. Yoskowitz, Giermanski, and Peña-Sanchez, (2002) contend that this could be in part because the Mexican benefited from the opening of maquiladoras, manufacturing industry, as industry exploited lower wages on the Mexican side of the border. They go on to say, that the benefits of NAFTA may not have supported the region considering the border is a “host or conduit for trade” as industry leaves to bigger cities on either side of the border. They argue that NAFTA helped but did not have the intended affect others thought it would have on border communities specifically.

Even so, locally the growth was visible. For example, the population of Laredo doubled in the 1990s and 2000s. The swell in population landed Laredo behind Las Vegas as the second fastest growing metropolitan area during the 1990s in which Laredo saw a 41.2% increase in its population (Wallace, 1999). In an interview with the Washington Post, Laredo’s mayor at the time—Betty Flores—lamented that the city was coping with growing pains as the influx of tractor trailers strained the streets of Laredo (Duggan, 1999).

Current figures illustrate the extent to which Laredo’s economy is entwined with trade between the two countries. According to López and Phillips (2006) “Laredo is leading the cargo flow to and from Mexico, accounting for roughly half the value of land-borne U.S.-Mexico trade.” Figure 2.9 reveals that trade and transportation comprise 30% of Laredo’s industry, with the government coming in a close second at 22%. Figure 2.10 depicts that the bulk of wages does not come from the trade industry but rather the federal government. To this day, politicians on both sides of the border laude the benefits of NAFTA as progress for border communities despite little evidence to show that it has aided in alleviating the poverty on either side of border.

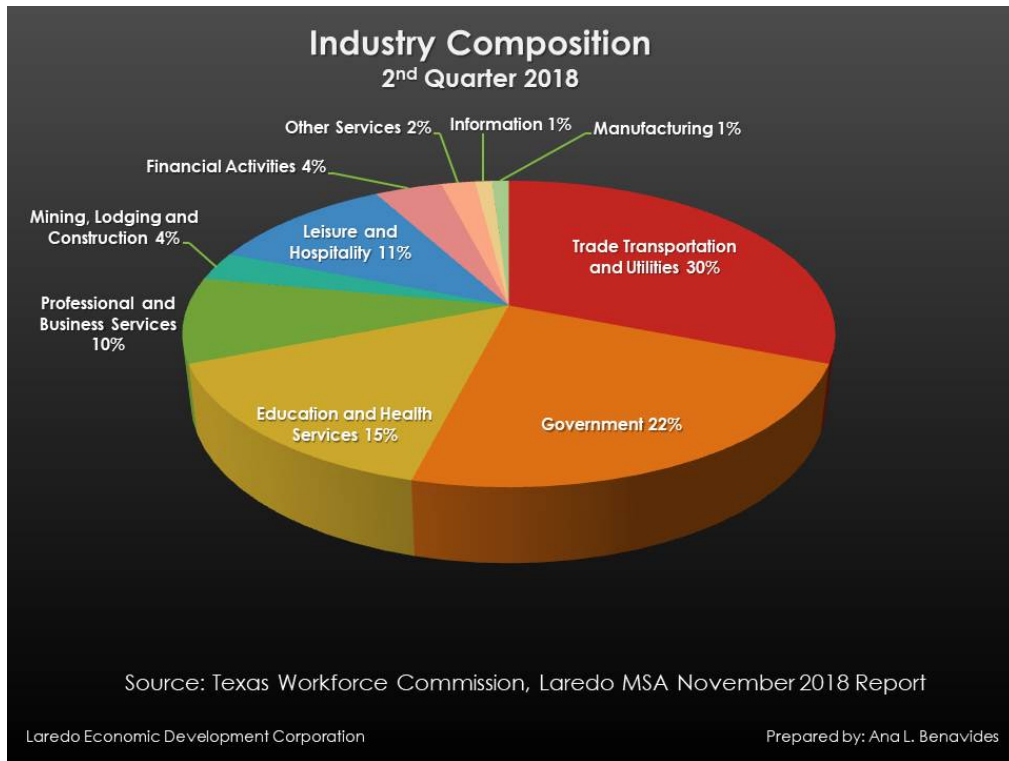


Figure 2.9. Laredo Industry Composition

Because of the exponential growth of the import/exporting business, Laredo also saw an increase in new money. The distinction between old and new money rests with the generational wealth of the land grant families whose fortunes were made during oil and gas booms the 1900s. Obtaining a customs broker’s license and/or owning 18-wheeler tractor trailers became lucrative businesses in Laredo during the 1990s. These data also represent the dependency of Laredo and Nuevo Laredo on the import/export industry. On the Mexican side of the border, maquiladoras manufacture products that are then sent to the United States and Canada. The cheap labor provided by the Mexicans contributed to the loss of more than 850,000 job in the U.S. (Scott, 2014), yet Canadians and U.S. citizens remain the chief beneficiaries of NAFTA (Diaz González, 2005).

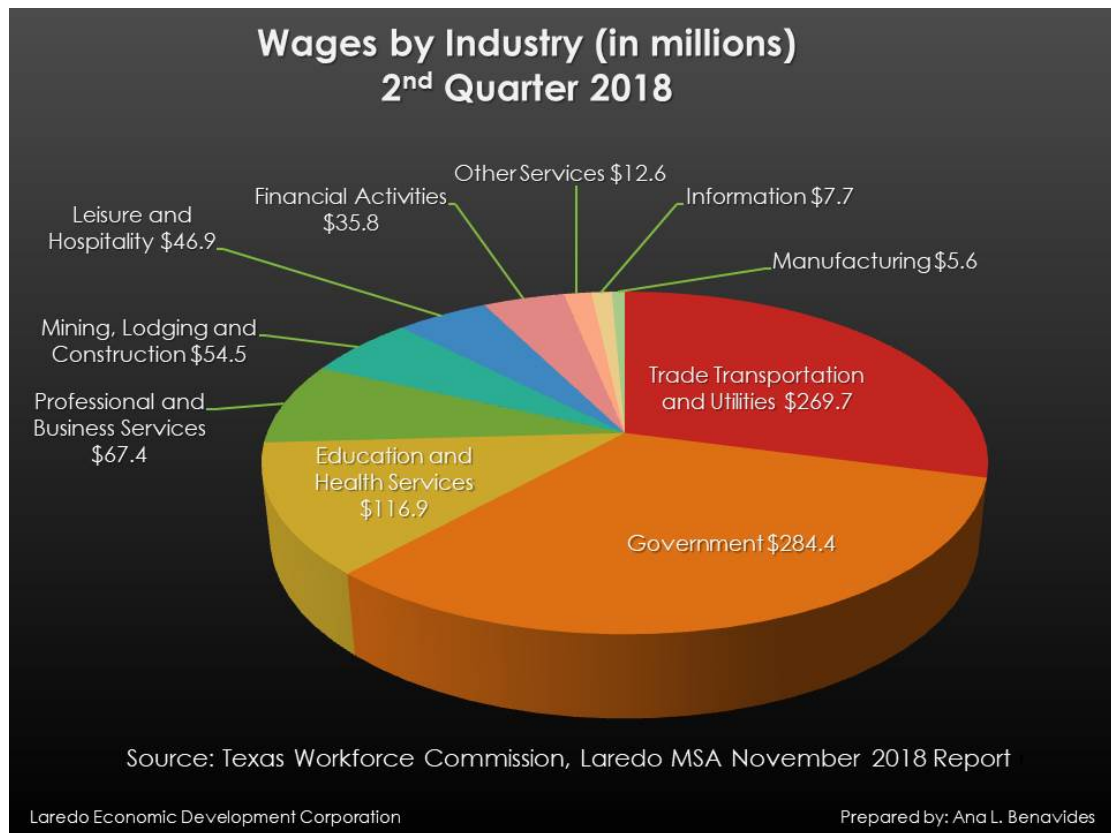


Figure 2.10. Wages by Industry, Laredo, TX

Border Violence

Pobre de México, tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de los Estados Unidos.

(Porfirio Díaz)

The relationship between Mexico and United States has always been on of imbalance between the two countries by which the U.S. takes advantage of Mexico. The Treat of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) and NAFTA are emblematic of the imbalance of power of the two countries. The War on Drugs in the United States and Mexico is another one. Life changed between Los Dos Laredos in the mid 2000s when shootouts on the streets of Nuevo Laredo commenced (Pruneda, 2003). A dramatic increase in violence along the Mexican side of the border during the last part of the decade was the result of competing

drug cartels, the Gulf and Sinaloa cartels, seeking control of the land along the border; Laredo and Nuevo Laredo as the number one inland port became ground zero. Between 2006 and 2012 there were 34,500 killings linked to the drug violence in Mexico. With the increase in violence happened in Nuevo Laredo, Laredoans commonly spoke of the dangers of going to Nuevo Laredo (Thompson, 2005).

As a child I remember crossing the border to go to *el otro lado* for a number of reasons: food, shopping, doctors' appointments, and even to see some of my dad's family who still lived there. I remember going to have dinner at restaurants after wedding rehearsals or just walking across so that adults could buy liquor at reduced prices. Going to Nuevo Laredo was a common occurrence, especially if you wanted fresh avocado and tortillas, or around the holidays when out-of-towners would come visit and wanted to enjoy some shopping. In the post 2004-2005 era, all that came to an end. Laredo and Nuevo Laredo are so close to each other that in certain parts of the city one could hear the shooting or the bombs going off across the river. You could see smoke plums. It was like a war zone. Stories in the newspapers abounded of the violence: shootouts on the streets, people hanging from bridge, mass graves being found, people being stewed in bins, etc. People from Nuevo Laredo still continued to cross the border into Laredo. For them there was no option as many of them worked in Laredo. Despite the violence in Nuevo Laredo, Laredo continued to grow.

This also had an effect on the psyche of Laredoans in that distancing oneself from that. In college when people found out I was from Laredo, they would often ask, "is it dangerous there?" I would have to explain the difference between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo. This was unfortunate because people would often say we used to take drives down to the border and spend the day in nuevo Laredo. And now we had to explain to people that nuevo Laredo, our sister city, was dangerous and Mexico in general was a place of

lawlessness, we were on the U.S. side, and in the U.S. that does not happen. This distinction that has to be made between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo effectively turned the idea of Los dos Laredo on its head. The racial geography of the border changed. Now people have to bought into the idea that Mexico is lawless in order to not distance oneself from Mexican identity (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016).

LAREDO

Growing up in Laredo, I was always aware of the differences between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo. Los dos Laredo it is often said, are two cities that beat with one heart. We share a cultural, historical, and linguistic heritage, yet we are also very much aware that people in Nuevo Laredo live vastly different lives than Laredoans. Even not well off Laredoans live in abundance compared to the working-class population in Nuevo Laredo. The current Drug War has made it that much clearer to Laredoans that Nuevo Laredo, is not like Laredo. Often time, we find ourselves having to make the distinction for those who have heard news reports about that violence that has engulfed the region. “Yes, that is Mexico. I’m from Laredo. We are in the United States. The violence does not cross the border.” And yet we are proud to be Laredoans.

Today, Laredo is not without its problems. The table below shows the education and poverty rate in comparison to the state and country. Only 67.8 percent of Laredoans have a high school diploma compared with 82.8 percent of Texas and 87.3 of the U.S. population. The bachelor’s degree attainment also lags compared to the state and country. Only 17.9 percent of Laredoans have a bachelor’s degree compared to 28.7 percent of Texans and 30.9 percent across the United States. Laredo’s poverty rate (30.6 percent) is double that of Texas (14.7 %).

	Laredo	Texas	United States
High School Diploma	67.8 %	82.8 %	87.3 %
Bachelor's Degree	17.9 %	28.7 %	30.9 %
Poverty	30.6 %	14.7 %	12.3 %

Table 2.1. City of Laredo Statistics

Even with the considerable disparity between Laredo's high school diploma and bachelor's degree attainment in comparison to the state and country, for Laredoans this is home. In the following Facebook post a local resident reminds outsiders that Laredoans are unique and love their city. In the post, the person compared Laredo to Wakanda, talks about pushing people out who have disdain for the city, and how we have shielded ourselves from the rest of the United States.

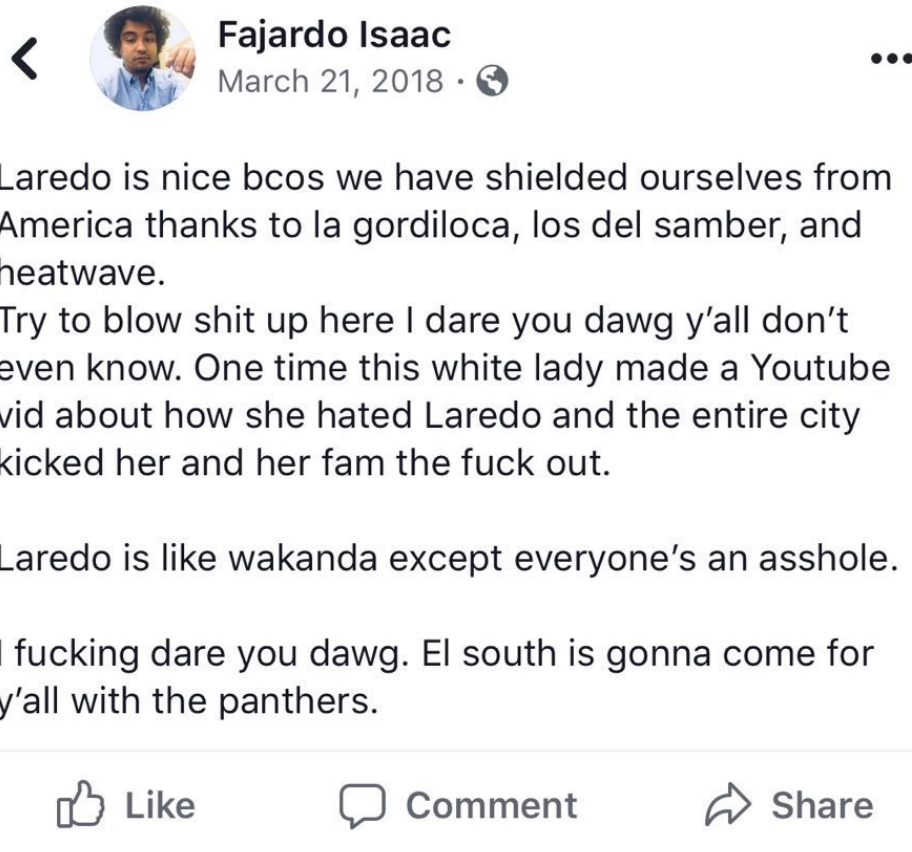


Figure 2.11. Facebook Post

Wakanda is a fictional place that comes from the Marvel Universe Comics (Lee & Kirby, 1966). Located somewhere deep in Africa, Wakanda is a utopian society shielded from the effects of colonialism. The irony of course, is that Laredo, and its culture and ideologies was made possible because of colonialism. While the data in this chapters reveals Laredo's persistent inequalities between the rich and poor, this social media user articulates the bond shared by Laredoans and known only by those who live in Laredo. Cultural markers such as knowing who La Gordiloca, Heatwave, and where San Ber⁴ is

⁴ La Gordiloca is a freelance journalist who began reporting about local events on social media. She has been the subject of much controversy for her misrepresentation of events but also locally acclaimed for being charitable (Registad, 2018). Richard "heatwave" Berler is a local meteorologist who has lived and

unifies Laredoans. The unity amongst Laredo manifested in backlash to a viral video in which Sarah Walls—who moved to Laredo because of her husband’s job—excoriated the citizens of Laredo and stated “the entire city is ghetto.” This prompted a response from Laredo. The Dallas Morning News quoted someone as saying “People define themselves in the city by being from the city. Call it a Mexican heritage idea about being deeply connected with their "tierra" or land. That's how I feel, at least.” Sara’s husband publicly apologized on the local news. Some may say that the social media user lives in ambivalence and contradicts his own position by not owning up to the inequality and that exist on the border. As this chapter has proven, trying to pin down Laredo ideological is not an easy task. It could be that Laredoans today are uniquely tied to their land as the original settlers were.

reported the weather in Laredo for more than three decades (KGNS, 2019). San Ber—officially named San Bernardo Avenue—is the old main drag of the city where people still cruise in their vehicles.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

In the middle of my first semester as a third-grade bilingual teacher Mrs. Castro, our attendance clerk, showed up at my door with Mrs. Dominguez and her son, Evan. After welcoming Evan into my classroom and pulling up a desk for him, I proceeded with my lesson in English.

A recent arrival from Mexico, my first task was to take inventory of what Evan *did* and *did not* “know.” According to records provided by Mrs. Dominguez, Evan had been enrolled in a school in Nuevo Laredo where he was passing all his classes. However, it was difficult to read Evan as he said little. Not only did Evan not speak much, but he would plop his head on the desk and stare at me as if he did not know what to do at school.

The school’s LPAC⁵ clerk, Ms. Salinas, was the first person to give Evan some form of language assessment. Because Evan said little during his assessment, Ms. Salinas determined that he did not know how to read in English or Spanish. (*Certainly, if Evan had gone to school in Nuevo Laredo, this could not be the case*). I asked my vice principal for a Tejas LEE reading inventor kit—a Spanish reading inventory assessment administered to Spanish speaking students in grades K-2. Again, nothing. Based on Evan’s results, he did not even know his alphabet. To assuage my doubts, I sent Evan to Mrs. Camarillo, our reading intervention teacher. After arriving at the same conclusion, Mrs. Camarillo declared that Evan would need intervention and that she would be grouping him with the 1st grade students with whom she worked. My colleagues and I speculated that Evan had not gone to school in Mexico. Although, there really was no way for us to know. Certainly, this supposition was based on our deficit views of Mexico’s school system. My colleagues, administrators, and I had all deduced that even if Evan had attended school, it had not made much of a difference.

⁵ LPAC is an acronym for Language Proficiency Assessment Committee

At a loss for what to do with Evan, I lobbied to get him placed in a second-grade classroom. Based on Evan's age and report cards from Mexico, we could not demote him. My next proposition was to get Evan in the Dual Language program because at least there he would hear Spanish for half the day. The dual language teachers and administrators resisted this idea and reasoned that dual language was *too rigorous* a program for a student *like* Evan. My job, I was directed, was to get him to read in Spanish *as quickly as possible* so that we could transition Evan to English.

So, it was back to basics for Evan: reading intervention with 1st graders; a kindergarten reading curriculum; and after school tutoring with the Spanish dual language students. With his head plopped on the desk, Evan waited for me to finish teaching a lesson so that I could conduct mini-lessons with him. He spent time on the computer and at the listening center. Then one day in February, unexpectedly, Evan cracked the code. All of a sudden, Evan breezed through stories and passages with fluency and comprehension. As the TAKS got closer, I requested to have Evan's assessment be counted towards my scores; after all, he was a "passer." Even though Evan progressed tremendously, he was held back in third grade to facilitate his transition to English.

Evan's story is not unique. Countless students come from Mexico or other Latin American countries—or any foreign country for that matter—and decisions are made for them, not in consultation with or by them, or their families. To this day I do not know if Evan knew how to read, write, or do math when he arrived in my classroom. Collectively, my colleagues, administrators, and I made a lot of assumptions about him because he was from Mexico. For the most part, we figured because he was "purportedly" educated in Mexican schools whatever he did know was limited. We also figured that maybe his parents were not being quite truthful with us. (I even asked Mrs. Dominguez a couple of times

whether it was true if Evan had gone to school.) Nonetheless, Evan proved to be a math whiz and excellent reader.

In this chapter I attempt to ascertain how we as teachers make sense of emergent bilingual students like Evan, Marisa, and Teresa by reviewing the relevant literature regarding the connections between social reproduction, deficit thinking, and schooling and language and literacy ideologies. I begin with a discussion on ideology, education, and social reproduction form critical frameworks to guide our understanding on how schools function as hegemonic spaces. I follow this with a discussion on how bilingual education is an ideologically contested endeavor and link it to the broader struggle of agency and resistance of Mexican American education in the United States. After, I focus on language ideologies that relate to language as a social practice. Then I detail how language ideologies have been studied and discussed in bilingual education. The next part defines literacy and make the connection to language ideologies. I briefly review the literature pertaining to how literacy has been defined and finish with the connection between literacy and biliteracy. I present a summary of how these aspects of the literature fit together and relate to the purpose of this study. Finally, the end of the chapter examines the theoretical frameworks and how they will be used to analyze the methods.

SCHOOLING, SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Nos quisieron enterrar. No sabían que éramos semillas.

- Mexican Proverb

The Mexican proverb stated above translates to, “They tried to bury us. They didn’t know we were seeds.” The proverb speaks to the will of a people to *sobrevivir*, or survive, when those in power try to subvert any agency to resist hegemonic structures. This is where our story begins: hegemony, agency, and resistance in schooling. The history of U.S.

schooling has always supported the ideals, values, and morals of those in power (Oakes, Lipton, Anderson, & Stillman, 2013; Tyack, 1974). It stands to reason then, that schooling as a vehicle of meritocracy in America has always been a myth. Yet, it is widely accepted that schools are equal playing fields for students to be lifted out of poverty. Indeed, research demonstrates that educational attainment is correlated to future income (Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah. 2011). However, for specific groups of people—culturally and linguistically diverse students who have been marginalized historically—we must ask ourselves, if our schools function to ensure their social, emotional, and cognitive well-being? Considering the disparate inequalities that linger (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017; Kozol, 1991), we must consider, how our schools continue to perpetuate these inequities despite the corpus of research that aims to facilitate our understanding of how to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Gramsci (1971), theorized hegemony as a function of ideology of the state apparatus in which those in power subordinate or oppress minoritized populations through the tacit acceptance of customs, language, and moors that guide our everyday experiences in society. Woodson (1933) aptly describes hegemony and how it pervades the mind and serves the purpose of the state, articulating that:

When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it (p. 4).

Hegemony, therefore, is so pervasive that we do not even think about our own ideological dispositions. It is easier to rule if you have the consent of the governed participating in the maintenance of a particular social order “through education, the media, religion, folk wisdom, etc.” (Omi & Winat, 1994, p. 67). Even so, Gramsci (1971) argued that actors in society also have agency to resist and work towards changing systems of oppression.

Agency and resistance to transform institutions happen at micro (the individual) and macro (societal) levels. The history of marginalized communities in the United States is one of constant resistance with an aim to transform systemic inequities.

Confronting systems of oppression is a challenge, bearing in mind their universality. Omi and Winat (1994) contend that society is built upon the historical racial hierarchy established during the colonial era. Although they recognize race as a social construction, they argue that it serves hegemonic purposes in that it maintains a social order whereby whiteness prevails. According to these researchers, “race is a matter both social structure and cultural formation” (pg. 56). The exploitation of people of color, for economic purposes propelled the U.S. economy. The powerful rationalized the subjugation of people of color by determining that there were biological deficiencies with people of color (Omi & Winat, 1994). The advent of eugenics in the 19th Century began a concerted campaign that concluded that people of color were not only biologically different, but also intellectually inferior (Valencia, 1997; Gonzáles, 1999). In doing so, scientists “legitimized” and propagated deficit views regarding people of color.

For Bourdieu (1986) a person’s habitus reveals hegemony. The culture and language of a person’s habitus reveals of close a person is culturally or linguistically to standardized norms. Those who are not born into the right habitus, hence, are seen a deviant by society. What Bourdieu refers to as cultural wealth advances the class argument for hegemony. In short, those born into a certain class only know how to live in that class and need to be taught the norms of dominant class to be accepted in it. Because Bourdieu was speaking specifically about French society, if we overlap with a racialized argument like Omi and Winat’s (1994) then we see how for people of color in the United States, the issue of hegemony becomes compounded.

When we think about the function of education in society, Bowles and Gintis (1976) offer the most incriminatory critique of U.S. schooling in their book *Schooling in Capitalist America*. There, they argue that schools are stratified to ensure a steady supply of labor for a capitalist society in which not everyone can be equal. As educators, we are complicit in stratifying students in the way our schools operate. Taken with what teachers expect from students culturally and linguistically to survive in school, we can use Bourdieu's arguments that ideologically speaking teachers expect students to arrive with a certain cultural knowledge and when they do not, we classify them to lower ranks of our schooling system.

IDEOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Educational scholars Apple (2004), Darder (2012), and Leonardo (2009) offer insight into how dominant ideologies function in education. Apple (2004) demarcates what most scholars would agree the definition of ideology to be as "some sort of 'system' of ideas, beliefs, fundamental commitments, or values about social reality" (p. 18). Borrowing from Marcuse (1955), Darder (2012) defines ideology as "forms of historically rooted domination that exist both in the socioeconomic structures of society as well as in the sedimented history of psychological structures of the individual" (p. 31). Together, these authors argue that ideology is a function of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) and that schools are complicit in perpetuating dominant ideologies. Apple, for example, makes the argument that the school's curriculum is designed to ensure control of knowledge and maintain social order through what he refers to as the hidden curriculum. Following Apple's (2004) train of thought, the daily routines and activities (i.e. scheduling, rules, maintaining order) of schooling as part of the hidden curriculum. Darder (2012) emphasizes the cultural aspect of ideology in addition to curriculum with respect to teaching emergent bilinguals. That is, the dominant ideology of whiteness in schools

reinforces deficit notions of students of color. Darder contends that without understanding how ideology operates in the schooling of historically marginalized students—specifically with bilingual/bicultural students—that teachers will not be able to meet their students’ social, emotional, and cognitive needs.

PEDAGOGIES OF LIBERATION

Whether we look at U.S. schooling from a racial, class, or cultural and linguistic perspective the marginalization of students of color is evident. Indeed, this history of marginalization of people of color has left what Ladson-Billings (2006) refers to as an education debt—the literal debt incurred over many generations by withholding access to education. The pervasiveness of these structures and their relation to hegemonic ideologies tells us that we need political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 1994; Darder, 2012). Scholars in the field of critical education have sought to restructure the way we envision pedagogy in hegemonic spaces, particular speaking back to social reproduction (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Freire, 1970; Paris, 2012; Kumashiro, 2000; Bartolomé, 1994; and Del Carmen Salazar, 2013; Yosso, 2005). In fact, when thinking about working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, these scholars agree demand that a direct critique of the systemic structure that maintain inequalities be taught. To do this, educators must understand their own histories in relation to the communities and students with whom they wish to work. Moreover, educators must be critical of and examine our own thinking, schooling, and ideological dispositions. In working particularly with bilingual students who are culturally and linguistically different than their native English-speaking counterparts, the issue of political and ideological clarity is heightened by language.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION: A HISTORY OF CONTESTED IDEOLOGIES

Bilingualism and multilingualism in the United States has a long and storied history that predates the colonial era (Macias, 2014). Yet, modern discourses regarding bilingualism and multilingualism depict a stark contrast to this history whereby additive programs like dual language education are viewed as a novel innovation that can facilitate global competitiveness in the 21st Century. Macias points out that for a nation that prides itself in its immigrant tradition the U.S. has contradictory attitudes towards language pluralism. In a comprehensive history of bilingual education, Ovando (2003) argues that it is the ever-shifting political, historical, and social landscape that informs policy and pedagogy stating that “Educators, politicians, and policy makers need to understand how notions of pedagogical effectiveness, symbolic racism or nationalism, instrumental efforts at social control, struggles for minority self-determination and equal rights, and interethnic competition have determined U.S. policies for educating language minorities” (p. 18).

Prior to the signing of the Bilingual Education Act (1968), there were three eras that dominated bilingual/multilingual discourses. The first era around during the Colonial times is accepted as a time that was accepting of bi/multilingualism in that there was no set prescription for dealing with the non-English speaking communities. However, a closer examination of history shows that African Americans were stripped of their languages and then forced into illiteracy for the purpose of keeping a subordinate working class. Similarly, Indigenous populations across the American continents were eradicated at the expense of colonial languages—Spanish, English, French, Portuguese—that left a legacy of linguistic and cultural hegemony. It should also be noted that the atrocities committed at the expense of Indigenous populations extends beyond linguicide into genocide. Flores (2014) notes that the acceptance of the notion that governmentality was not already a part of the

language equation is dangerous in not truly understanding the long history of subverting linguistic diversity.

The Miami-Dade public schools are one example of the ever-changing ideological nature of bilingual education. The Miami-Dade bilingual education program is important for two reasons: (1) it predates the bilingual education act and (2) it shows the intersectionality of policy implementation towards speakers of another language⁶. Coral Way in Miami-Dade became popular for its edgy “new” bilingual education model implemented for Cuban refugees. Because these people sought to go back to Cuba, and only saw themselves as temporary occupants meanwhile things got settled back home, they were granted permission to set up their own schools. The elite status of the refugees as wealthy, educated bourgeoisie of Cuba afforded them many rights. Indeed, the government thought this would help them promote capitalism across Latin America in their war against communism. In short, political expediency enabled a group of interlopers to set up bilingual education that benefited their students despite being minoritized language speakers in a foreign land. Here class and politics played a role in advocating for these language minoritized speakers even after having dismantled all bilingual education programs across the southwestern United States. At the same time, while the Miami-Dade bilingual programs showed great promise for the potential of bilingual education it should be observed that markers of class and race existed in their affluent, light skinned population when compared to the poorer, dark skinned immigrants that arrive today.

The Miami Coral Way programs also gave bilingual education advocates fodder for their movement. Indeed, Civil Rights movement and the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 indicated monumental gains across the country for minority populations. Almost immediately after LBJ signed Bilingual Education Act (1968)

problems began arising regarding funding, implementation, and fidelity to program models (San Miguel, 1984; Crawford 2004; Blanton 2004). In her analysis of the 10 years that followed the passage of the BEA, Sinclair (2016) found that even though language in the policy got progressively better with each reauthorization, the mechanisms used for assessment preserved the assimilationist and subtractive nature of bilingual education. Sinclair (2016) contends that “ultimately, what began as a call for imaginative bilingual programs in 1968 became essentially remedial by 1978 when students who had successfully acquired English were required to leave the program after 2 years” (p. 15).

Despite bilingual education advocates’ best efforts to sustain additive programs, time and again bilingual education has succumbed to assimilationist and subtractive tendencies. Situating the struggle for of bilingual education within the race radical paradigm of the Puerto Rican activist group, Young Lords—which sought to “overthrow hegemonic whiteness”—Flores (2016) outlines how the liberal multiculturalists, in their advocacy for bilingualism, re-inscribed hegemonic whiteness. That is to say, that when we argue for the cognitive benefits of bilingualism—as true as they may be—the liberal multiculturalists allow for the cooption of the bilingual education argument insofar as it allows others to standardize and idealize bilingualism that is associated with hegemonic whiteness. Flores (2016) attributes this to Richard Ruiz’s (1984) language orientations piece that argued for language-as-a-resource. This argument positions bilingualism as an idealized norm for a globalization—an argument which upper-middle class, white families have taken hold of as of late to promote two-way immersion programs (Petrovic, 2005). As a result, Flores and García (2017) maintain that bilingual education has been taken out of the basements and into boutiques, metaphorically speaking.

In sum, the contradictory and competing ideologies have historically speaking been part of bilingual education policy. Even when advocates argue for additive bilingual

education from a social justice or economic perspective, others have sought to completely dismantle the programs as was the case in California, Massachusetts, Arizona during the late 90s and early 2000s (Crawford, 2004). Nonetheless, scholars widely contend that is incumbent on bilingual education experts and advocates to pursue bilingual education.

AGENCY AND RESISTANCE IN BILINGUAL AND MEXICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Even though bilingual education has a history of contested ideologies, bilingual students and educators were not passive actors in adopting dominant ideologies. The following literature illustrates the ways in which bilingual education served as a form of agency and resistance in relation to the history of Mexican American education in the United States—particularly in the southwestern U.S. where language was often used as a proxy for racial discrimination and segregation (Donato & Hanson, 2012; García, Yosso, & Barajas, 2012; Rosa & Flores, 2017).

The history of Mexican Americans in the Southwest predates the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). With the signing of the *Treaty*, the United States not only acquired more than 761,000 square miles of land, but also Mexican citizens which included both indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. The treaty stipulated that the Mexicans who stayed would be granted rights as citizens. Even so, San Miguel and Valencia (1998) point out that the struggle for educational equality for Mexican Americans began almost immediately.

Mexican Americans did not wait for educational opportunities to be provide for them. Blanton (2004) documents the varied history of bilingualism and multilingualism in Texas, maintaining that parochial schools took on the brunt of the work of educating Mexican Americans prior to compulsory education. These schools often taught in Spanish and English along the border and in south Texas. In central Texas, there were trilingual

schools that taught German or Czech alongside English and Spanish. Similarly, the Texas *escuelitas*, or little schools, were community-based schools that sought to inculcate Mexican American children with Spanish literacy skills and Mexican cultural values (Barrera, 2006; Blanton, 2004; Gonzalez, 1930; Salinas, 2001). The *escuelitas* educated Mexican American children well into the 1950s—100 years after the signing of the Treaty—representing the agency to create educational opportunity and resistance towards the dominance of English.

With the advent of compulsory education, now Mexican Americans were forced to attend public schools that sought to explicitly assimilate Mexican children. Constituting one of the darkest times in the history of Mexican Americans in the US, overt actions were taken by school districts to segregate Mexican American children (Donato & Hanson, 2017; García, Yosso, and Barajas, 2012). Guadalupe and San Miguel highlight four court cases that took place between 1930 and 1950 that make up the litigious resistance of Mexican American segregation in the Southwest: *Independent School District vs. Salvatierra* (1930, 1931); *Alvarez vs. Lemon Grove School District* (1931); *Mendez v. Westminster School district* (1946, 1947); *Delgado et al. v. Bastrop Independent School District of Bastrop County et al.* (1948). These court cases aimed to disrupt the overt racism and argued that Mexican Americans could not be segregated against because of their official racial status as whites, granted to them by the Treaty. Although the *Salvatierra* case ruled that Mexican Americans could not be legally segregated based on race, they could be legally segregated based on linguistic needs for educational purposes (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). The other court cases ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and established precedent at the state and federal level that Mexican American children could be segregated based on race with a caveat in the *Delgado* case that did allow language separation for first graders as long as it was within the same campus. Collectively these court cases—argued

by and for Mexican Americans—comprise resistance that lasted well into the 1970s with the San Felipe ISD case in which the struggle was now about equitable distribution of school funds (Salinas, 2005) and *Lau v. Nichols* (1973) and *Casteneda v. Pickard* (1981) which explicitly dealt with the instruction of elementary bilingual education students (Hakuta, 2011).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Chicana activism also took place outside the courtroom when students took to the streets in California and Texas in massive nationwide walkouts. Their goal: to end the tracking and mistreatment of students in schools. The walkouts started by Chicana students in East LA and the forming of La Raza Unida party in Crystal City, Texas began the next generation of resistance. Speaking of the walkouts in the Texas Valley Guajardo and Guajardo (2004) state:

Dozens of students and hundreds of community members orchestrated an impassioned and highly publicized response to what they viewed as a system of educational, political, and economic control defined by historic segregationist policies and practices. The Edcouch-Elsa High School Walkout of 1968 was a manifestation of what *Brown* was intended to accomplish legally but could not achieve politically or socially. It was a demonstration of power by Mexican American youths against an elite structure rooted in the segregationist culture of Jim Crow, and it became a turning point in the self-definition of a community that had previously been bound by economic and political control (pp.514-515).

Indeed, the struggle morphed into academic tracking and inadequate funding and resources that relegated Mexican Americans and other Latinx to remedial courses that kept them from taking advanced courses they needed for college.

The history of agency and resistance in Mexican American and bilingual education unsettles the perceived Mexican American indifference towards education. Ideologically

speaking, these histories inform our current understanding of how bilingual education has been constructed and expounds upon the resistance of Mexican American educators to combat hegemonic forces, thereby giving credence to the Mexican proverb that introduced this literature review: *Nos quisieron enterrar. No sabían que éramos semillas*. Undeniably, agency and resistance have always existed within oppressive structures.

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

Within the history of struggle, resistance, agency and resilience for education, language has played a central role. Thus, considering teachers language ideologies, or what teacher think and know about language is key. Gal (1992) notes that “ideologies of language are important for social analysis because they are not only about language. They envision and enact connections between linguistic and social phenomena” (p. 448). We know that hegemonic ideologies pervade U.S. schooling (Apple, 2004; Darder, 2012). Teachers, therefore, are purveyors—knowingly or unknowingly—of dominant ideologies. For language minoritized students, teachers’ language ideologies determine the type of education they will receive. In bilingual classrooms, bilingual educators—whose students are inherently minoritized speakers—transmit language ideologies through their teaching. As such, how language ideologies are constructed and function in society and schooling become an essential component in this discussion.

From the field of linguistic anthropology, Silverstein (1998) maintains that understanding culture cannot be separated from the study of language. Similarly, Woolard and Scieffelin (1994) state that “Ideologies of language are significant for social as well as linguistic analysis” because they “enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality and to epistemology” and “often underpin fundamental social institutions” (Woolard & Scieffelin, 1994, p. 56). That is, studying language ideologies

enables researchers to comprehend cultural processes that are socially constructed and tied to institutions within which language operates. The field of linguistic anthropology has created an abundance of research on the study of language ideologies that aims to speak to the dialectal relationship between culture and language within macro and micro societal structures.

Multiple definitions of language ideologies exist. Silverstein (1979) defines language ideologies as the “rationalization and justification of perceived language structures and use” which speaks to the metacognitive aspects how and why we use language and how language can be manipulated to fit our needs (p. 193). Kroskrity (2004) defines language ideologies as “beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds,” (p. 498). According to Kroskrity, language ideologies are a social practice imbued in “political and economic interests” (p. 500) that is agreed upon by members of a social group. Likewise, Irvine’s (1989) definition of language ideologies speaks to the socially construct relatedness of language ideologies stating that “the cultural system of ideas about social linguistic relationships, together with their loading and moral and political interest” (p. 255). Silverstein’s early definition of language ideologies that the extent of language awareness to the more sociopolitical, sociohistorical, and sociocultural definitions has been taken on by later scholars to better understand language ideologies not only for how language is used but how it imbues historical, political, and cultural ideologies.

Several scholars have discussed the role of dominant language ideologies (Silverstein, 1996; Lippi-Green. 2012; Woolard, 1985). Dominant language ideologies fulfill the purposes of the group in power (Kroskrity, 1998). Because language ideologies are intricately tied to identity: culturally, nationally, or individually (Kroskrity, 2004) then we must fully understand how dominant language operate to maintain hierarchies of power and privilege. English, for example, while not the official language of the United States, is

considered to be an “American” language and thereby entangled with an “American” identity. Lippi-Green (2012) illustrated this with her theory of the myth of unaccented English (i.e the English of TV news anchors) that is fetishized as “*the*” standard of U.S. English; she maintains that there is no such thing. Yet, the myth of unaccented English is a powerful ideology by which all U.S. citizens are judged. Gal (1989) and Silverstien (1996) note that achieving the standardized version of language enables one to participate in the political economy. However, as we will talk about in later sections, these scholars fail to make a case for the racialization of language and how that plays a role in the dominance of historically marginalized populations. Consequently, as sites of social reproduction, schools propagate dominant language ideologies. Thus, bilingual teachers’ language ideologies, and how they are constructed, become significant issues to research.

Even so, not all members of a given community participate in dominant language ideologies. In short, there is agency amongst people to choose to be complicit in or resist dominant language ideologies which as Gal (1992) points out can be multiplicitous and even contentious. Kroskrity (1998) affirms that the “plurality of meaningful social divisions (class, gender, clan, elites, generations, and so on) within sociocultural groups that have potential to produce divergent perspective” ensure that language ideologies are “never uniformly distributed throughout polities of any scale” (p. 503). While we expect that there is a common understanding of language ideologies, it stands to reason that there will always be competing discourses regarding macro and micro beliefs, ideas, and attitudes. Silverstein (1996) contends that we should not want to sterilize or homogenize languages in that it defeats the biological need to survive and evolve through diversity.

In this study, understanding language ideologies is particularly useful as we begin to define what language ideologies are and how they have been used. I draw on the field of linguistic anthropology because their definitions have been particularly useful in

combining the study of language in anthropology and ethnography. As microcosms of society, we can see in classrooms the same language ideologies theories that are produced in the linguistic anthropology literature in practice. As previously mentioned, bilingual education has always been a site of ideological debate. As such, bilingual teachers' language ideologies are also infused with multiplicity and contention. This is an essential component to how and why we educate the way we do in bilingual classrooms which will be discussed in the following section.

Bilingual Education & Language Ideologies

There is a long tradition of studying language ideologies within the field of bilingual education. Sánchez (1934) for example speaks to the ideological nature of testing when he argued that I.Q. measurements used to assess bilingual students did not accurately capture what bilingual students did and did not know. He called for testing measurements to be reframed to reflect the uniqueness of bilingualism. Correspondingly, Ruiz's (1984) groundbreaking work regarding the conceptualization language orientations created an argument to push through the assimilationist tendencies of the 1980s by viewing language as a right and resource rather than problem. Currently, there is post-modern turn that attempts to reconfigure the ideological debate to a heteroglossic perspective in which bilingual educators view bilingualism from a dynamic perspective (García & Wei, 2014), seeing languages as fluid rather than as distinct systems (Flores & Schissel, 2014). The overarching theme in these ideological perspectives advances more socially just view of bilingualism in the U.S. education system.

The research regarding how dominant language ideologies manifest in the bilingual classrooms runs the gamete from policy (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2017; Macias, 2016), to policy implementation/teacher decision-making (Valdez, 2014; Palmer, 2011) and

classroom practices (Martínez, Hikidia, & Durán, 2015; Zúñiga, 2016). In a mixed-methods study of bilingual teachers, Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Palmer, and Henderson (2015) found varying language ideologies: languages other than English as a strength, language as a symbol of majority influence, English as a tool, academic language as a marker of intelligence, and language as a social bridge. These language ideologies represent a spectrum of dominant and counter-hegemonic perspectives. Furthermore, the research mentioned does not address how bilingual teachers construct language and literacy ideologies—and one step further, ideologies of what it means to be bilingual and/or biliterate which will be discussed later.

These ideologies have been known to influence teacher decision making (Palmer, 2011; Palmer & Lynch, 2008; Palmer & Snodgrass, 2011). Language of instruction plays a central role in an emergent bilinguals' schooling. Palmer and Lynch (2008) demonstrate that accountability measures placed on them influence their language of instruction for students. In spite of their knowledge of the benefits of knowing two languages and fostering the native language because of high stakes testing, teachers adjusted their instruction to fit those needs. Palmer (2011) also showed how teachers who work in transitional bilingual education often have conflicting ideologies about language of instruction. To be sure, the emphasis on accountability measures heavily influenced how teachers determined what language they would use for instruction. Therefore, it should be noted that even if teachers' life stories reveal additive dispositions towards language use in the classroom, the pressure of accountability mandates may be too burdensome to overcome.

Even when teachers express ideologies that are seemingly additive in nature there seems to be a difference between articulated and embodied ideologies (Martínez, Hikida, & Durán, 2015; Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014; Zúñiga, 2016). That is there is a mismatch between what teachers say and believe and what they do in the

classroom. Martínez, Hikida & Durán, (2015) studied two dual language teachers who articulated both ideologies that disrupted and participated in hegemonic linguistic practices. The contradictory ideologies were also embodied in nuanced ways that lead the authors to view these teachers dynamically. Similarly, Zúñiga (2016), participants also operated with two of Ruiz's (1984) frameworks of language-as-resource and language-as-a-problem. Zúñiga (2017) points out that:

Without ideological clarity, it is not clear that the language-as- resource orientation is enough to fulfill the goals of bilingual education advocates focused on civil and language rights for minority communities (p. 351).

Martínez (2013) offers some insight into how bilingual speakers construct language ideologies at a young age with an example of a 6th grade bilingual classroom. Even though Martínez depicted the dynamic ways students used Spanglish⁷ to make meaning, the bilingual students articulated and embodied both asset-based and deficit language ideologies regarding their own language practices. Using ethnographic methods, Martínez found that the bilingual student saw Spanglish as deviant but also utilized Spanglish to express deeper meaning. These contradictory notions represent the multiplicity of language ideologies that one can internalize at a young age. The specific focus of students in this study does not capture the extent to which teachers conveyed dominant or counter-hegemonic language ideologies. Nonetheless, Martínez shows that bilingual children understand their language practices and how said practices are positioned in society.

To review, we know that U.S. schools are engineered to engender ideological control. For linguistically minoritized students, dominant language ideologies pervade their K-12 schooling. As bilingual educators, it is imperative for us to recognize how these

⁷ In this article, Martínez (2013) defines Spanglish as the intentional mixing of Spanish and English to communicate deeper meaning within a social group.

systems function. More importantly, it is essential that we understand our own ideologies. The brief literature reviewed uncovers that bilingual teachers' ideologies regarding language is contradictory and wide-ranging. Moreover, no research suggests how ideologies influence bilingual teachers' notions of bi/literacy in the bilingual classroom. González (2005) point out that

Ideologies do not laminate perfectly onto processes of language socialization, but language socialization is never completely free from ideological underpinnings.... In other words, language can both construct and be constructed, and language socialization interaction and macro level patterns can be studied in schools... (p. 164).

Talking about schooling experiences aids our understanding of, but does not tell a complete picture, how ideologies are created. In what follows, I discuss two prospective frameworks that can facilitate our knowledge concerning how bilingual teachers' language and literacy ideologies are fashioned.

LITERACY IDEOLOGIES

According to the International Literacy Association (ILA), literacy is “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines in any context” (ILA, 2017). The ILA (2017) stipulates that “the ability to read, write, and communicate connects people to one another and empower them to achieve things they never thought possible.” Indeed, we know that literacy is correlated with future academic achievement and income potential. In this section I attempt to define literacy, but more specifically literacy ideologies that regarding the education of emergent bilinguals. In the previous section, we saw how language ideologies in bilingual education settings are multiplicitous and at times contentious. We

also saw how top-down policies heavily influence teacher decision making and language use in the classroom. Because literacy is such a large component of children's education, a closer examination of what the ideological nature of literacy is warranted. For emergent bilinguals, the issue is compounded by the fact that they are learning to be literate in two languages. Here, we will also see how added layers of power and privilege determine what literacy is and how it is taught within bilingual education.

Arriving at a common definition of literacy is complicated. During the late 90s and early 2000s efforts were made to redefine what we think of as literacy. Because of changing technology and increased globalization Street (2003) and the New London Group (1996) attempted to broaden the definition by calling for research that speaks to learning to read and write through multiple modalities and read and write through mediums that extend beyond paper, pencil, and books. Critical scholars have advocated for a redefinition of literacy practice as well. Freire (1970), most notably, talks about what it takes not only to read the word, but the world. In doing so he articulates the need for a humanizing pedagogy and a literacy that is rooted in undoing the historical marginalization of the oppressed. Gee (1992) acknowledges that literacy is imbued in social Discourses of what it means to be literate. Gee (1992) maintains that "these Discourses are not 'natural' or 'normal'—lots of other groups neither do them nor find them very senseful" (p. 125). Hence, what counts as literacy is also defined by those in power.

Cadiero-Kaplan (2002) offers three categories in which we can place literacy ideologies: functional, cultural, and critical. The functional aspect of literacy is what is most seen in schools as it relates to the teaching of comprehension, fluency, phonics, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary development. These are all skills deemed necessary to function as a literate person in society, but as Cadiero-Kaplan points out "the functional approach does little to engage texts and stories critically or to engage the historical and

lived context of students' lives" (p. 374). In Cadiero-Kaplan's conceptualization of a cultural approach to literacy, she argues that cultural literacy is one that imbues a literacy curriculum "that reflects ideology based in western traditions... to "control the spaces where knowledge is produced [and] to legitim[ize] certain core knowledge." Put simply, the body of knowledge that one needs to be successful in school and beyond that is rooted in middle to upper-class, mainstream culture. The last of these is critical literacy which students and teachers engage texts "in a historical context and advocates the interrogation of the curriculum" (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2002, p. 377). In other words, it is not just about reading the word, but the world (Freire, 1970). I offer these categories as conceptualized by Cadiero-Kaplan because she affirms that

Ideological constructions of literacy can allow us to critically reflect on our beliefs about literacy and the language arts curriculum.... For it is ideology that has the most profound impact on policy and curriculum decisions made from the federal, state, and local levels. (pp. 372-373).

This is especially true for teachers working with emergent bilinguals.

Conceptualizing Literacy

Heath's (1983) pivotal ethnographic study depicted how students, despite the having acquired certain literacy habits at home, were seen through deficit lens by their teachers who expected "middle-class school oriented culture." In studying three different communities, Heath noticed that children's acculturation process were unique, but it was Maintown whose parents engaged in literacy practices that aligned what teachers expected. Heath determined that:

(1) Strict dichotomization between oral and literate traditions is a construct of researcher, not an accurate portrayal of reality across culture.

(2) a unilinear model of development in the acquisition of language structures and cues cannot adequately account for culturally diverse ways of acquiring knowledge or developing cognitive styles.

Indeed, scholars have talked about alternative ways of knowing. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) speak to understanding a child's funds-of-knowledge and how educators can take that knowledge and use it in the classroom to restructure the curriculum to fit the student's needs. Similarly, Yosso's (2005) theory of community cultural wealth elucidates the ways in which historically marginalized students come to school with a wealth of knowledge that is not seen as valid by the schools. In studying an indigenous community, Urrieta (2015) also highlights "saberese", or ways of knowing, that are taught in an indigenous community and not recognized in schools. These models of learning collectively demonstrate that students have a wealth of knowledge base that is still not valued by mainstream education programs.

A more recent study conducted by Adair, Sanchez Suzuki-Colgrove, and McManus (2017) on the implications of the word gap argument on the schooling of Latinx immigrants revealed that teachers' and administrators' conceptualizations of what students know is influenced by dominant discourses. For example, Adair et al. specifically focused on research like Hart and Risley's (1995) study that showed there existed a gap in vocabulary knowledge across race and class. Although the Adair study deals specifically with vocabulary and the word gap, what it reveals is that teachers and administrators augment pedagogy with research in mind that shows students of color having a deficit that needs to be ameliorated. The deleterious effects of such research are shown in the lack of learning experiences being provided to these students. Or, instead of providing enriching experiences to predominately low-income students of color, teachers are confining themselves to more rote memorization strategies that limit children's ability to think and engage with texts

critically. As I go on the next section, it is important to keep in mind that dominant discourses of literacy continue to pervade U.S. schools.

Borderland Literacies

Studies from the borderlands, however, illustrate the nuanced ways in which people engage in literacy practices (Smith & Murillo, 2013; Piera, 2010; de la Piedra & Araujo, 2012; de la Piedra & Guerra, 2012; Jimenez, Smith, & Teague, 2009; Nuñez, 2018). Smith and Murillo (2012) study of the colonias—impoverished unincorporated border communities—showed that bilingual children learn different types of literacy at home that they constitute as capital upon which to extend learning. Specifically, they outline religious, family, and financial literacies that are taught through everyday practice such as reading the bible and going to the store. Smith and Murillo (2012) contend that “colonia families use Spanish to read and write for their own purposes. These transfronterizo literacies offer rich possibilities for research on the relationship between biliteracy and human capital” (p. 649). Like Smith and Murillo (2017), Nunez (2018) also studied literacy practices on the border. In a case study with transfronterizo children—that is children who literally cross the Texas-Mexico border daily to attend school—found that these children have adopted a literacy of surveillance. An era of hyper surveillance of Black and Brown bodies has taught emergent bilinguals that they are constantly being surveilled which they have used in creative ways in their classroom learning. For example, knowing what goods can and cannot be crossed at the checkpoint and being able to cross translates into how their language is policed in schools and the children knowing when, where, and with whom they can use Spanish. The new way of understanding literacies of surveillance can also be constituted as ways of reading the world.

Simply put, these agentic ways of viewing literacy are being practiced by bilingual education students. Even at young ages they are being taught at home about how to read the world even if at school they are not. Here Baquedano-Lopez (2004), Gutierrez (2008), and Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Tejada (1999) work on third spaces facilities our understanding of how culturally and linguistically diverse children make their own spaces for learning. Third space theory contends that when we take unofficial learning into official learning spaces a third space emerges that generates new possibilities for learning. All the same, Baquedano-Lopez (2004) concedes that “there is still the impending task of documenting how the larger society’s ideologies and practice, and the relations of power articulated in what counts as literacy, shape the learning process, especially for linguistically and culturally diverse learner populations” (p.263). In this project, I sought to understand how bilingual education teachers specifically come to understand what literacy and biliteracy are through an ideological stance based on their life stories.

LITERACY, BILITERACY & IDENTITY

Children begin developing literacy identities at a young age (Martínez-Roldán & Malavé 2004). For emergent bilingual children, this is doubly important as they are learning to make sense of their literacy practices in two languages. However, for many of these students, English plays such a prominent role in their literacy development that they begin to lose their Spanish literacy identity and prefer English over Spanish even when speaking at home (Babino & Stewart, 2017; Díaz, & Bussert-Webb, 2013). Babino & Stewart (2017) conducted a mixed methods study in which the surveyed bilingual students participating in a dual language program. They then followed up with a group of them to further comprehend the students’ thoughts towards Spanish, English, and bilingualism. Couched in a critical lens following Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of cultural capital, their

findings were not surprising in that while the students found bilingualism to be a benefit, they preferred English as a method of communication academically and socially. For emergent bilingual students, therefore, “literacy learning [is] a much more appealing activity if viewed as supportive of their Laitna/o identity, if it fostered their Spanish – language and literacy development” (Jiménez, 2000, p. 995). Just as important are what teachers perceive biliterate to be. For instance, Mateus (2016) conducted a longitudinal study in which she found that teachers privileged native English speaking, upper middle-class students insofar as these students limited use of Spanish was seen as an asset; these students incipient biliteracy practices made them biliterate whereas the same practices for native Spanish speakers learning Spanish make them deficient (Rosa, 2016). This was in juxtaposition to working class Latino students whose limited use of English was seen as a disadvantage in that they were not making significant gains. The effects on these students’ education included holding students back. In sum, class and race play a significant role in how we view language as a “resource” for some and not for others.

Other studies conducted with pre-service bilingual education teachers show the extent to which these dominant ideologies have lasting impacts with students in which they themselves have experienced negative schooling practice that subordinated their linguistic practices (Ek & Sanchez, 2013; Ek, Sanchez, & Quijada, 2013). Brochin-Ceballos’ (2012) study with Latina bilingual pre-service teachers illustrates the ways in which dominant language ideologies influenced their K-12 schooling experiences, especially relating to literacy and biliteracy practices. The bilingual pre-service teachers used language mapping and literacy narratives to (re)construct their childhood/schooling experiences. They concluded that their language and literacy practices are situated into two systems: Spanish and English. And, they further surmised that while they harness both systems for different purposes, that assimilationist schooling taught them to devalue one. To that end, this

project afforded them the opportunity to critically examine their subtractive schooling experiences and reclaim their linguistic heritage.

Who Gets to be Bilingual/Biliterate

Considering that identity development is an important part of constructing positive self-efficacy towards language and literacy practices, we must also reflect on who gets to be considered bilingual. The Seal of Biliteracy benefits students looking to participate in a rigorous academic curriculum in two languages. While that may be, it is still accepted that we see students of color language practices through a semilingual lens (Escamilla, 2006). That is, when students do not achieve proficiency in both language they are seen as having no language or semi-language skills. research with students who are labeled long-term English language learners, shows that these children experience language learning through subtractive lens (Flores, Kleyn, & Menken, 2015; Menken & Klyen, 2010). Yet, there has been research that has called teachers to look at students' language experiences through a different lens that make sense only to bilingual students. Despite this, Friere, Valdez and Delavan (2017) point out that we still see language as a resource for native English-speaking students as a tool for advancing in an increasing globalized society. Flores (2013) cautions bilingual educations to advocate for plurilingualism as it has also become a tool of neoliberalism; in a market-driven economy plurilingualism benefits those in power reifying the marginalization of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

THE CONTEXT FOR TODAY'S BILINGUAL TEACHERS

With all that has been said about the history of bilingual education, language and literacy ideologies the current state of bilingual education is in flux. Certainly, we have seen how the “astounding effectiveness” (Collier & Thomas, 2004) of dual language has

promised to save bilingual education has expanded dual language programs across the country. Most recently, states like California and Massachusetts have overturned the Unz Era policies that dismantled bilingual education. As previously mentioned there has also been a concerted effort to expand the seal of biliteracy across the country. While all this may seem like positive possibilities for bilingual education—indeed I do not make any effort to diminish the potential for bilingual education to be transformative in how we think about bilingualism—there is another battle going on for bilingual education that specifically pertains to educating culturally and linguistically minoritized students.

Cervantes-Soon (2014) studied how dual language programs were being implemented in North Carolina in what is considered the new Latino diaspora. She found that a neoliberal agenda was the undergirding process spearheading these programs. Valdez, Freire and Delavan (2016) used a critical policy analysis to uncover what they call the metaphorical gentrification of dual language. That is, dual language is privileging the a white-upper middle-class population and leaving behind those who dual language has purportedly aimed to serve historically. Correspondingly, Valdez, Delavan, and Freire (2016) analyzed 164 articles used to market the dual language programs in Utah newspapers from 2005 to 2011. They found a shift in the language from dual language to support equity/heritage to a global human capital argument. To highlight battle going on within bilingual education, it should be noted that Nuñez's (2018) study on the border happened with the context of an early-exit transitional bilingual education program. In addition, the study being proposed takes place in a border community of about 250,000 people of which 95% are Latnix. There, both school districts also operate an early-exit transitional bilingual education program with few strands of dual language. In sum, we must prepare bilingual education teachers to advocate for additive models of dual language education that support equity and heritage rather than global human capital.

THE FRONTERIZA TEACHER PERSPECTIVE

Preparing bilingual education teachers to respond to the hegemony of English has become a priority for researchers (Palmer & Martínez, 2013; Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Hopkins (2013) tells us that a bilingual education teaching credential yields more culturally and linguistically responsive educational outcomes for emergent bilingual students. Likewise, Rocha and Wrinkle (2011) found that support for bilingual education was increased by representation of Latinx board member, but most especially with Latina board members. There has also been work that show that growing your own teachers from within the community is beneficial for the student in that community. Villarreal (2012) for example, found that pairing students with teachers who share similar lived experiences bodes well for students of color stating that “their [Chicanx teachers] experiential knowledge and cultural and linguistic similarities and, therefore, better access to families, positions teachers to full understand students; academic and individual plights” (pg. 223). In addition, Chicane teachers are more likely to engage in critical bilingual education pedagogies. Similarly, Prieto (2009) found through life stories that Chicane pre-service teachers because of their lived experiences—and epistemic privilege—are predisposed to critical consciousness that can be developed in teacher education programs. Utilizing similar methodologies—like narrative inquiry and critical theories—I build on these studies to look how frontera teachers construct language and literacy ideologies. Thus, this study aims to garner their perspective in an effort to understand how these teachers make sense of their bilingual and biliteracy ideologies through a life story methodology.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

So, if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language.

- Gloria Anzaldua

The above quote is taken from Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) seminal text, *Borderlands/La Frontera The New Mestiza*. There, Anzaldúa describes what it is like for the mestiza to straddle to worlds: In one world, she is not white enough to be considered fully "American". In the other world, not Mexican enough to be fully Mexican. Therefore, Anzaldúa asserts, the mestiza must work twice as hard to be accepted in either. Growing up in the physical borderlands, Anzaldúa lived these challenges daily. Beyond the 2,000-mile stretch that represents the borderland between the United States and Mexico, bilingual educators straddle these same competing ideologies. Likewise, bilingual students are expected to give way to the old to make way for their new "American" education. This process, however, while fraught with issues of hegemony is not without challenge by acts of agency and resistance; as such, it is messy and not one sided. Anzaldúa's quote speaks to the centrality of language in that "*transition*" from native Spanish speaker to emergent bilingual, stating that "identity is twin skin to language" (p. 81). For bilingual educators, who have already graduated from K-12 schooling and experienced similar transitions, how they construct their ideologies regarding language and literacy is key in how they will prepare their bilingual learners to face similar experiences. Recent theories of Raciolinguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015) articulate how language is racialized. This theory is of particular interest in how we construct speaking subjects in relation to idealized whiteness of which bilinguals in the U.S. are juxtaposed with. Then, end with a discussion of nepantla (Anzaldúa, 1987, 2015) and border thinking (Mignolo, 2000) and how the two can be utilized as a theoretical framework for analyzing bilingual teachers' language and literacy ideologies.

Raciolinguistics

In this dissertation I draw of Flores and Rosa's (2015, 2017) theory of raciolinguistic perspectives to think about the maestras language ideologies. Raciolinguistics aims to reveal the conaturalization of language and race (Alim Rickord & Ball, 2016; Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Flores and Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017). For Alim (2016), Barak Obama's presidency illustrated how language is raced and race is languaged, stating "America's varied and passionate response to Barack Obama's language—from monitoring to mocking to 'marveling' ('he's *soooo* articulate!')—revealed the complex contours of contemporary forms of linguistic racism. These responses also exploded the myth of America as a 'postracial' society" (p. 3). In other words, in critiques of Barack Obama's language as too black, or too white, or not black enough, the U.S. revealed that it had not transcended racial prejudice, but more importantly, that language and race were intertwined and that we perceived others through the interconnectedness of language and race. Raciolinguistics, therefore, aims to elucidate the connection between language and race

Historically, raciolinguistic ideologies "played an integral role in the epistemological shift from positioning non-European populations as subhuman rather than less evolved humans" (p. 4). To become fully human, one could adopt a European language. However, adopting a European language was not sufficient in becoming fully human. The nation-states established by colonization continue to perpetuate these linguistic differences by adopting national languages and imposing standardized linguistic practices on people living within their borders, this is particularly done through schooling. Spanish, as a European language, spread to the Americas through colonization. Mignolo (2000) postulates that Spanish underwent two devaluations: the first happened in Europe when Amsterdam replaced Seville as the intellectual capital and the other when Spanish

became the language of the global south i.e. “Latin America, which is often stereotyped as brown and Spanish-speaking, and the US, which is often stereotyped as white and English-speaking” (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 626). (For the purposes of this dissertation, I will make reference to the relationship between Spanish and English.) Consequently, raciolinguistic perspective is a colonial legacy that established the modern world and continue to permeate every aspect of society.

Central to raciolinguistic perspective is the white listening subject. For Flores and Rosa (2015) an idealized white speaking subject pervades the imagination of what it means to be an English speaker. Along those lines, the hegemony of English and what it means to be an English speaker becomes the norm to which all speakers are positioned against. According to Flores and Rosa (2015) “This focus on listening subjects helps us understand how particular racialized people’s linguistic practices can be stigmatized regardless of whether they correspond to Standard English. Altering one’s speech might do very little to change the ideological perspectives of listening subjects.” Put another way, when we listen/speak to other people, we surveil and/or are being surveilled through the lens of standardized English that privileges whiteness. Furthermore, when minoritized speakers achieve idealized norms, their speaking practices are still insufficient to transcend their racialized position.

For bilingual education, a raciolinguistic perspective plays an integral role in othering children. Labels such as English learner or long-term English language learners that stay with children throughout their schooling frame these children as deficient and in need of remediation (Rosa & Flores, 2017). This is compounded by the fact that the bilingualism of native English speakers is celebrated as innovative whereas for native Spanish speakers who are expected to learn English, are seen as needing repair (Rosa, 2019). Flores (2013) for example, calls into question the bilingualism for all motto,

contending that not all bi/multilingual speakers are considered equal. He submits that neoliberal logics that purport a bilingual advantage for the market economy be interrogated. Other scholars advance the bilingual-education-for-who-? argument because they center whiteness. Where Thus, for bilingual educators we must self-examine our raciolinguistic ideologies and how we think about bilingual students.

In thinking about appropriateness, Flores and Rosa (2015) turn to the notion of critical language awareness. Appropriateness, they assert, “involve[s] the conceptualization of standardized linguistic practices as objective sets of linguistic forms that are understood to be appropriate for academics setting” (p. 150). Simply put, the authors argue against teaching codes of power without a critical examination of what makes them “appropriate”. Despite our best efforts to ensure command of codes of power, as racialized subjects, their language practices will always be seen as divergent from standardized practices. Thus, educators’ and scholars’ goal ought to be one that expresses affinity for the dynamic use of language practices and teaching children to challenge the status quo regarding language use.

Bilingual teachers dither between these opposing ideologies in their classrooms and lives. Teachers often delineate language practice between home vs. school, academic vs. social, or what is appropriate vs. what is unappropriated. A raciolinguistic perspective foregrounds these competing ideologies and complicates the ways in which teachers address language issues in classrooms and how those issues can be reconciled in their pedagogy. By taking on the construct of appropriateness, Flores and Rosa (2015) call for teachers, especially those who work with language minoritized students, to question the idealized white speaking subject. For bilingual teachers, this means asking them to question their internalized notions of language and literacy in an effort to prepare students for a

world that devalues their linguistic repertoires. In this study, we will see how the maestras both take up and disrupt appropriateness discourses in the lives and classrooms.

Nepantla & Border Thinking

In addition to raciolinguistic perspectives, I employ Anzaldúa's (1987) theory of nepantla and Mignolo's (2000) concept of border thinking to theorize the spaces that the maestras inhabit. The borderlands are both physical and psychological. According to Anzaldúa (1987),

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. (p.3)

From the "emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" emanates nepantla, the Nahuatl word for in-between spaces. Anzaldúa first used nepantla to describe the state of being that is caught in flux, between two worlds that is neither here nor there. The maestras in this study live in the physical and figurative nepantla as they are caught between their cultural and linguistic heritage that is Mexican and Spanish respectively. They are the amalgamation of colonial and imperial legacies that have occupied this space for the last 500 years.

When one is caught in nepantla, one is "not quite at home here but also not quite at home there" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 81). That is to say, one learns to juggle cultures, languages, identities, and competing ideologies to name a few. In nepantla, Anzaldúa states that mestiza's bear a tolerance for ambiguity and contradiction. For Anzaldúa (2015),

In nepantla we realize that realities class, authority figures of the various groups demand contradictory commitments, and we and others have failed living up to

idealized goals. We're caught in remolinos (vortexes), each with different, often contradictory forms of cognition, perspectives, worldviews, belief systems—all occupying the transnational nepantla space. (p. 17)

I argue that the maestras are also caught in this remolino. Their thoughts, ideas, teaching and lives are governed by the state of nepantla where they are speaking to idealized goals of competing epistemologies and ontologies. Hence, nepantla helps us to unsettle the contradictions that manifest in the literature of bilingual teachers' language ideologies. That is to say, contradictions and ambiguity are how the maestras in this study—and that of other studies—are the ways in which the maestras have learned to navigate, negotiate and survive within competing worldviews.

For Mignolo (2000), nepantla's genealogy is rooted in colonialism. In this study, I am particularly concerned with Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism as that is the historical backdrop of this space. Mignolo (2000b) argues that

“The ‘in-between’ inscribed in Nepantla is not a happy place in the middle but refers to a general question of knowledge and power. The kind of power relations inscribed in Nepantla are the power relations sealing together modernity and what is inherent to it, namely, coloniality.”

On the border where this dissertation takes place knowledge and power are ruled by the hegemony of English and whiteness that are the colonial legacy. The power struggle that Mignolo speaks about is that of resistance and resilience that nepantleros live on a day to day basis. Indeed, it is not a happy place, but one in which war is waged daily in the hearts and minds of those who inhabit nepantla.

Border thinking, therefore, as Mignolo defines is the need for an other thinking rooted in a double consciousness (Du Bois, 1978) or mestiza consciousness (Anzaldúa, 1987). For Mignolo global designs, which are the colonization that created modernity, are

not all consuming as local histories tend to resist. That is to say, the creation of borders also creates an other thinking in which those that live on the margins do not succumb to the global design. Rather, subaltern people figure out ways to negation their epistemologies to survive. In this sense, the maestras in this study have not entirely capitulated to western Eurocentric epistemologies. Rather, they have transfigured how they understand the world in order to survive on the margins.

Accounting for the colonial legacies of the spaces where the maestras inhabit, the first wave of Spanish colonization aspired to eradicate ways of knowing of the Indigenous peoples who lived in the area. Then, the U.S. invasion layered on top of that resolved to eliminate any remaining semblance of Mexicanidad. To that end, there has been little success in that a border thinking is created whereby *fronterizos* learn to be both Mexican and American. The maestras in this study exhibited border thinking in the ways that they resisted the hegemony of English and continue to live culturally Mexican lives.

Together, these theories, border thinking and *nepantla* help to disrupt the ways that we understand the maestras language and literacy ideologies. Their thinking is a genealogical legacy that they inherited to survive a world in which they are accepted in neither but have to live in both. Their home is the space where the maestras feel most themselves even though their border thinking and resistance is not situated in social justice language and culturally sustaining practices associated with critical consciousness.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Realizing our own ideological positionings provides clarity of thought and purpose in our daily lives. For bilingual education teachers, their dispositions towards language take center stage in their teaching, both articulated and embodied in their routines and expectations. We know that language is intricately entangled with identity (Anzaldúa,

2000; Kroskity, 2004). Yet, analyses of the formation of bilingual teachers' language ideologies is scant. In this paper, I have argued that to support our understanding of the development of bilingual teachers' language ideologies we should consider nepantla and border thinking. Raciolinguistics makes the case that we must unsettle dominant language ideologies because of their privileging of appropriateness. Nepantla illuminates the incongruities of internalized dominant ideologies and counterhegemonic ideologies but obfuscates the dichotomous nature of these ideologies.

Chapter Four: Methodology

As a child, I was most captivated by Güela's *historias* of her family. One story that she recounted on multiple occasions was how she ended up living with her sister Chita. Güela's adopted parents died when she was only three years old. In those days, it was customary for *padrinos* to take on the role of the parents in these situations. Against Geula's wishes, she was sent to live with her padrinos by her older brothers. She did not like living with her padrinos very much because they were strict. One day, her brother, José, stopped by to visit; Güela was outside sitting on the front porch crying. As best as Güela remembered she had just been punished for trying to carry a newborn baby who had been crying. Unbeknownst to Güela, the baby needed a changing. So, when she went to pick up the crying baby, not only was the baby in need of a diaper change, but now she had also made a mess of herself. When her brother, José, asked Güela if she was happy, she told him no and that she wanted to go live with Chita. So, José asked for my grandmother's belongings and took her to Chita's house where she would live until the day she married Güelo. Just like that, her life changed again.

Güela came to know and understand the world through these early life experiences, and through the many stories she narrated time and again. As we sat around the kitchen table enjoying pan dulce and cafecito, I too came to know the world through story. And it is through story that I also came to understand the relational aspect of one's reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) of the world. You see, to know that Güela had been orphaned at a young age is to understand her empathy for others and faith that God had a plan for everyone. To know that she had been taken in by a sibling is to understand why she was always so willing to help a family member in need. And to know that even at her very young age that she was trying to carry babies is to understand her infinite affinity for newborns.

For as long as I can remember, I have always been riveted by peoples' lives. A person's lived experience tells us about who s/he is and how s/he came to know/understand the world. Indeed, scholars widely contend that people are natural storytellers (Atkinson, 2007; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). In this qualitative study, I endeavor to build upon a long tradition of storytelling as a methodology to understand bilingual teachers' life stories. Specifically, I seek to comprehend how bilingual teachers' life stories reveal their language and literacy ideologies. Considering the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework proposed, I ask the following questions:

1. How do the life stories of frontera teachers inform the construction of language and literacy ideologies?
2. How do these language and literacy ideologies inform their conceptualization of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education?

In asking these questions, I aim to ask broad questions about who they are as individuals and how they came to understand the world in which they live. Their life stories will assist in constructing a narrative that depicts what it is like to grow up in a bilingual and bicultural space like the frontera. We can deduce, through these narratives, that unique geopolitical spaces like Laredo, engender complex and sometimes contradictory ideologies. The literature regarding language ideologies in classrooms illustrates the mismatch between our articulated and embodied ideologies. Using nepantla and raciolinguistic perspective as theoretical frameworks, this dissertation aims to unsettle the mismatch between articulated and embodied language ideologies.

In this Chapter, I outline my research paradigm and how my epistemological and ontological stances relate to the study of bilingual maestras' ideologies and the methodological framework proposed to comprehend those ideologies. I then describe the methodological framework—life stories—and the import of telling stories in education.

After I speak about the study site and participants. After that, I discuss Thinking with Theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) as an analytical method. Lastly, I speak about the significance of life histories for this particular study.

ON EPISTEMOLOGY & ONTOLOGY

Crotty (2015) outlines multiple research paradigms from a Western point of view: post/positivism, constructionism, interpretivism, and postmodernism. Each one is unique in its axiology, ontology, epistemology and methodology. In each of these there are sets of value systems that speak to the nature of knowledge and reality from a humanistic perspective established by the Enlightenment Period (Chilisa, 2012). Unlike post/positivism, constructionism and interpretivism acknowledge that multiple realities can/do exist as being socially constructed. As such, knowledge too, is also socially constructed. Similarly, a transformative research recognizes multiple realities, and the social construction of knowledge but also seeks to bring about change (Mertens, 2015). Transformativism highlights issues of power within society and situates peoples' realities within these power hierarchies. While each of these paradigms are useful in helping us understand how research in the academy is predominantly conducted, it is important to note that indigenous research paradigms exist—and have existed just as long—but are only recently being accepted by the academy.

Of particular interest to my study is an Indigenous Research Paradigm (IRP). Wilson (2008) and Chilisa (2012) agree that in an indigenous research paradigm, epistemology and ontology are relational. Our realities and how we know the world are related to time, place, people, the celestial, and to all things, living and non-living. Therefore, we can only come to understandings through our relationship with the ideas or concepts in relation to all its components. The indigenous research paradigm offers

researchers a new way of understanding that transcends the researcher/participant binary and holds us to relational accountability through respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (Wilson, 2008). As Chilisa (2012) points out, Indigenous Research Paradigm is also “participatory, liberatory, and transformative” in its “research approaches and methodologies” (p. 40). As someone who did not grow up in an Indigenous community, I cannot lay claim to an Indigenous identity. However, I do subscribe to IRP’s epistemic and ontological traditions and seek to emulate its relational accountability in my research.

According to Crotty (1998), ontology deals with the nature of being and reality, existence itself. That is, is there a reality out there? And if so, whose reality counts as true? From an indigenous paradigm, the essence of reality is relational. Wilson (2008) contends that “there is no one definite reality but rather sets of relationships that make up and Indigenous ontology” (p. 73). Not only is reality made up of our relationship to others, but also to our histories, subjectivities, place, spiritualities, the Earth, and the heavens. Reality, therefore, exists in each and every one of us. For this particular study then, reality exists also in each of the participants. Rather than to seek a definitive ideological reality of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education with the participants, I elucidate the multiple realities that exist, were created, and are still becoming.

Similarly, Wilson (2008) expounds that epistemology concerns itself with the relationships we have with knowledge. Epistemology is the nature of knowledge. An indigenous paradigm speaks about epistemology only as it relates to “our cultures, our worldviews, our languages, our histories, our spiritualities, and our places in the cosmos” (Wilson, year, p.74). Wilson goes on to say that indigenous epistemology “is our knowledge system in context...” (p. 74). Epistemology, in this study is analyzed through nepantla which, as previously mentioned, focuses on the lived experiences of fronterizos. The participants in the study already have knowledge that emanates from their lived

experiences as Latinas living in the United States along the Texas-Mexico border that is tied to history and culture. By centering the lived experiences of Latinas, they can lay claim to what counts as knowledge and epistemologically unique about teaching bilingual education. In speaking about identity from a post-positivist realist perspective, Moya (2002) states that there is an epistemic privilege to a *fronterizo* lived experience. I would add that it is not only a privilege but an *herencia* passed down from generation to generation. Thus, the life stories become the focus of that knowledge.

Believing that our realities are socially constructed and relational I utilized life stories to carry out this project. From an epistemic and ontological perspective, life stories afford the researcher and participants the opportunity to co-construct knowledge and speak about the multiple subjectivities that manifest based on what is meaningful to the participant. Güela is someone from whom I learned many life lessons. The oral histories that were shared around the kitchen table are *historias* that make us who we are as a family, a people with a heritage, and members of an ethnic community. *Fronteriza* bilingual maestras, with whom I wish to share this project with, also have *historias* that stem from “ancestral wisdom, community memory, and intuition [that] influences one’s own personal experiences” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 565). In other words, derived from their shared history, knowledge, language, and culture, is an epistemological *herencia* that *fronteriza* teachers apply to make sense of the world around them. With that in mind, I transition to life story as a research methodology.

LIFE STORY

In keeping with the relational aspect of an Indigenous Research Paradigm (IRP), I take on life history as a method. Simply put, the life history is compilation of narratives based on life events from any one person (Titon, 1980). Depending on how the

conversations materialize, these narratives can be told chronologically or not. In retelling a life story, the participant ascribes meaning and significance to these events. Fittingly, within the IRP, life stories attend to the relational; life stories represent an individual's life story in relation to others, history, culture, and language (Chilisa, 2012). The following paragraphs elucidate life history as a suitable method for this qualitative inquiry.

Central to the life history is the individual who chooses to share her/his stories with others. In choosing to share a life history, the individual engages in a political act that transforms how knowledge is generated and what counts as knowledge methodologically. Additionally, there exists the possibility to revise historical records, expose historical injustices, and/or mend old wounds (Cervantes-Soon, 2012; Urrieta, Kolano, & Jo, 2015). An individual's account of life events is essential in coming to understand present realities and imagine future ones as well.

Ochs & Capps (1996) attest that "we come to know ourselves as we use narrative to apprehend experiences and navigate relationship with others" (pg. 21). This holds true individually and collectively. One example is Aguirre's (2005) personal narrative regarding his experiences as a Chicano scholar in the academy. Not only does Aguirre's study expose the racism faced by Chicanos at multiple levels within the university, but he asserts his voice as a counter narrative to the dominant narrative about the integration of Chicanxs in universities. Similarly, Villenas (2005) uses a border theoretical framework to present the experiences of Latina mothers raising a family in a racially stratified society compounded by language hegemony. Both studies exemplify the affordances and constraints of the life history methodology and accomplish the goal of not only divulging societal injustices but also highlighting agency and resistance.

Even as researchers embrace life histories as a transformational methodology, others have sought to "legitimize" its use by attributing modes of reliability and validity.

Because of life history's reliance on human memory, people doubt its veracity. As an example, Hoffman and Hoffman (1994) experimented by having one of the researchers retell the events he experienced during World War II. Ten years after the first experiment, he recounted the events again. They supplemented the interviews with artifacts (e.g. photographs, logs, journals). Additionally, the researchers went back to the location of one the events recalled in the interview. Hoffman and Hoffman concluded that human memory is both reliable and valid. Even when certain occurrences were not retold in the moment of the interview, these events could be elicited "given the appropriate stimulus" (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1994, pg. 114). In discussing Hoffman and Hoffman's work, Slife (as cited in Hoffman & Hoffman 1994) counters their purpose for studying memory, stating

All of these issues regarding accuracy of representation stem from our assumption that there is an objective reality and that we should, therefore, find ways to objectively describe it. [Bishop] Berkley would ask us to consider instead the possibility that objective description is itself impossible and often simply not used or meaningful, so why should we constantly strive for such goals? (pg. 133).

In other words, as researchers, we must contend with our own epistemological and ontological understandings in attempting to seek validity and reliability.

To that end, scholars agree that one should embrace the complexity, nuance, and the unexpected when engaging a life history methodology (Tierney, 2000; Cary, 1999). One struggle for researchers is the idea that stories must be told in a uniformed and chronological fashion. However, as Cary (1999) identifies, when we listen to the unexpected stories, we learn more about the experiences of others and ourselves as researchers. Too often, we get caught up in searching for victory or Hollywood narratives that exhibit linear trajectories with happy endings. We also begin our projects with the expectation that certain narratives will be expressed to fit our research questions, to seek

truth. Yet, if we truly seek to honor our participants and their voice, then we must honor all facets of their life histories.

WHY TEACHERS' LIFE HISTORIES?

While Britzamn (2012) and Shulman (1987) acknowledge teachers' histories and lived experiences of their schooling and the relationship it has to becoming a teacher, however they do not speak about how teachers' experiences beyond the classroom influence classroom pedagogy and content. Classroom pedagogy and content, although, is not impersonal and mirrors our understanding of our lived experiences (Salinas & Castro, 2010). Hamer (1999) for instance, illustrates how teachers enmesh personal anecdotes with their classroom pedagogy and content. Studying two teachers in an U.S. history classroom over the period of 14 months, Hamer discovered that these teachers incorporated the personal anecdotes to humanize history, make connections between the personal and the historical, and insert multiple points of view. Unfortunately, the student interviews demonstrate a persistent disconnect between what does and does not count as knowledge even when storytelling is utilized as a pedagogical tool. Fortunately, as a pedagogical tool, storytelling enabled students to make personal connections with broader concepts. Nonetheless, Hamer expounds the idea that teachers are storytellers.

More than telling stories that are significant to us, we also talk about our beliefs and ideologies (Razfar, 2008; Hamer, 1999). For example, in his ethnographic study of English as Second Language teachers Razfar (2008) found that teachers narrated her/his beliefs regarding language through their stories and points out, "it is not only important for to consider what teachers say but also how they say it" (pg. 77). Specifically looking for semiotic practices, Razafar reveals that beliefs and ideologies are not wholesale, but nuanced. He argues that we can use narratives to understand the inherent "tensions,

contradictions, and multiple positionalities” language teachers navigate in the classroom. Correspondingly, my study discusses those tensions, contradictions, and subjectivities through a nepantla and raciolinguistic perspective.

RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

I grew up in Laredo, Texas, a border city of about 250,000 people. Due to the signing of NAFTA (1994) and the resurgence of the oil & gas industry, Laredo has seen exponential growth in the last 30 years. As a fifth generation Laredoan, my family has deep-seated roots in the city. Three of my four grandparents were born, raised, and educated in Laredo. My maternal grandparents told me stories of their families who lived and worked in the ranches surrounding the city as far back as the 1800s. As such, I feel very connected to the land. I still get thrilled as I barrel down I-35 and see the vegetation change from oak to mesquite or driving around town and see smoke and smell the aroma of *carne asada* that fills the air.

This is me (see Figure 4.1) I am about nine or ten years old in the photo. We are at my aunt’s ranch house, which at the time was still under construction. The frame can be seen in the background; the house was still under construction. I chose to include this photo as part of the study because it shows that even at such a young age, I wanted to be a teacher.



Figure 4.1. David at the Garcia's Ranch playing school.

I left Laredo to study elementary education at Texas State University in San Marcos. Leaving Laredo gave me a greater perspective on the intricacies of society and how Latinxs⁸ are perceived by others. Everything I knew about where I grew up to me seemed, well, normal. Speaking and hearing two languages. Eating Mexican food daily. Celebrating U.S. holidays with Mexican traditions. Being able to cross the border to shop at the mercado. The fact that those who controlled commerce, politics, and education were—and are to this day—Mexican American appeared to be quite ordinary.

While studying in San Marcos, I began to notice patterns that I did not exist Laredo. Firstly, all my professors were white. I did not see it as different through. Actually, it seemed quite normal. Then I began to notice that all the workers in restaurants who worked

⁸ I use the word Latinx here to refer to all the people of Latinx descent.

in the back or people who were maintaining the campus were People of Color—Latinx or otherwise. I would be remiss if I said that I noticed these intricacies immediately. Rather, it took some time to begin to observe that not only were people of color relegated to different roles in society but that I myself was a person of color and was also perceived a certain way. The first time was in my second year at Texas State when I asked my classmate if I had an accent. And she told me I did. That was news to me. The second and most pivotal was when I was about to graduate and was in search of a job. At the yearly job fair held at Straham Coliseum, as I walked around with my resumes in hand, district after district kept asking me if I was bilingual. When I responded that indeed I was, their response to me was go get a bilingual education certificate then they would hire me. Not having been educated in a bilingual program, I had no idea what bilingual education entailed. I realized in that moment that I was seen as someone who could only work in a bilingual space and not as a generalist teacher. Had I said I was not bilingual, would it have made a difference? Would they have offered me a generalist position? I do not know. In that moment though, I decided to apply to the graduate program in bilingual education.

My graduate school in bilingual education altered my trajectory as an educator once again. My bilingual education professors made me contend with an essential aspect of my identity: what did it mean to be bilingual? Being taught about the potential for dual language education made me question why programs like these were not being offered in Laredo. The critical literature we read on language had me yearning to want to reconcile my own perceived Spanish language deficiencies and reconnect with my Mexican heritage. In other words, I had begun to reflect on my upbringing and felt like I had been robbed of

being fully immersed in bilingualism. This process revealed to me how Laredoans view themselves in relation to the Mexican other⁹.

These notions of shame come to you at a young age and are everywhere. We are constantly barraged with statements like “Why don’t they learn English?” despite the fact that we know Spanish. Or, during their annual trips north, “here they [the Mexicans] come again. ¿Porqué no se quedan en su país?” Or, simply calling someone who just made a mistake or misspoke “Mexican.” Also, my cousins have taken to making fun of their children’s accent in Spanish all the while not actually wanting to teach their children to speak Spanish. It is as if the gringo accented Spanish is a marker of how Mexican they are not.

I chose to conduct the life stories with the teachers in Laredo. Their stories, like the city they inhabit, are unique. When I moved back to Laredo to teach after college, I noticed that most of the teachers and administrators (like 95%) were graduates of the local university. Yet, like me before my master’s program, where I had to contend with internalized deficit notions, many of the teachers would make comments like “these students need to practice English.” Or, “The parents do not do enough at home to teach them English.” These deficit ideologies were ubiquitous. However, they themselves live a bilingual and bicultural existence. They are involved in the community. They graduated from the same schools and attend the same churches. Yet it took me 22 years and a drive north on I -35 to fully understand my own identity. I also noticed that teachers were using translanguaging pedagogies in the classroom and spoke to parents in Spanish. I also noticed that the parents had immense faith in the teachers that they would do right by their children. I came to graduate school with those questions in mind. How do we reconcile the

⁹ Vila (2000) describes how Mexican can be both an ethnic or national identity. I use the Mexican other in this page to refer to the Mexican national.

contradictions we teach in the classroom while maintaining our cultural and linguistic identities as Mexican Americans?

To that end, I must also acknowledge the fact that I play the role of an insider/outside. Cervantes-Soon (2014) concedes that internal conflicts arise when conducting research with one's community stating that we must ultimately recognize that we have been transformed by our experiences in academic settings and come to terms with "collision of multiple layers of power, privilege, and simultaneous subalternity in the U.S." (p. 102). I concede that leaving Laredo altered my thinking in various ways and that privilege is ascribed to me as a doctoral student at UT Austin. Furthermore, I admit that as a male researcher, analyzing the lived experiences of Latinas is also problematic considering the history of Chicana feminism in the United States. As former colleagues and friends, the maestras agreed to participate. I do, though, take comfort in the fact that I have been able to maintain relationships with my participants. As such, while my conceptualizations of education and society have been influenced by my training, I feel as though my role is to listen and understand so that together we can come to an agreement of their understandings of language, literacy, and culture.

PARTICIPANTS

In keeping with the relational aspect of an IRP, I researched in the community where I was raised. An IRP stipulates that we must be connected to our research participants and site. In this section I delve into why I studied Laredo's teachers.

The teachers who elected to participate in the study are all Mexican American from Laredo. They studied to become teachers, and most are mid-career which means they have between 10 and 20 years of experience teaching in the classroom. Some have graduate degrees in administration or counseling, yet they have chosen to remain in the classroom.

They are also highly regarded by parents and administrators alike. Theoretically speaking, having grown up on the border, they would also exude cultural intuition. The teachers who participated in the study at one point taught with me at the same school. At the time of the study, they were at different campuses and teach across multiple grade levels.

As previously mentioned, I worked with these teachers. Working with them allowed me to already have an established rapport with the educators. Over summer and holiday breaks, these teachers, having already been reassigned to different campuses and grade levels, often got together for lunch or dinner to catch up on the latest happenings in their classrooms and in their personal lives. Spouses and children were often invited to these lunches or dinners. In short, the relationships that were built over time allowed for these teachers to be open with one another and with me. Recruitment began in Fall 2017. I wrote up an informal letter asking my former colleagues to participate in the study. The letter gave a general idea about what the project would be about and what would be expected of them.

Those who said yes, were given formal internal review board documentation.

Table 4.1 provides an overview the maestras. The names listed are pseudonyms that they selected. The positions and years of experiences given were their positions and years of experience at the time of the study. Their native language was the language most predominantly spoken by the maestras upon entering school. In all, five of the six maestras had graduate degrees. With the exception of Lorena, who obtained her master's degree at a state school outside Laredo, the others all attended and graduated from the local university. I asked the maestras for their ethnic identification and wrote down what they stated. I stuck with the given ethnic identification despite the political nature of using Hispanic versus Latino, Mexican American, or Tejana because it was the maestras who used the word.

Name	Position	Years of Experience	Level of Education	Native Language	Ethnic Identification
Nancy	Reading Intervention	20	M.S.	Spanish	Hispanic
Noemí	Kinder Dual Language – English	16	M.S.	English	Mexican American
Maria	5 th Science - Early Exit	20	B.S.	Spanish	Hispanic
Julia	5 th Math - Early Exit	23	M.S.	Spanish	Mexican American
Guadalupe	3 rd Dual Language – English	11	M.S.	English	Mexican American
Lorena	5 th Dual Language – Spanish	16	M.L.S.	Spanish	Mexican American

Table 4.1. Overview of Maestras

Nancy

For two years, Nancy’s classroom and mine were directly across from each other. Hence, we got to know one another well as we often talked outside our classrooms when lining students up or waiting for them to arrive in the morning. Nancy had already been teaching for 12 years when I started working at Rodriguez¹⁰. Having just had her first child, Kinley, Nancy was new to Rodriguez like me. Nancy’s aunt worked at Rodriguez, so she was familiar with names and faces. I looked up to Nancy because she was a Reading First teacher, an initiative Ranchos I.S.D.—the school district where we worked—had with State University. I thought for sure, she is a reading expert, and I wanted to be equally as good a reading teacher.

¹⁰ Pseudonym.

Growing up in Laredo, Nancy's grandparents were pastors at a Pentecostal church they founded. Mr. and Mrs. Solis, Nancy's parents were hard working people. Her father worked for the Country Courts as a court reporter. Nancy said he worked up to three jobs at times to make ends meet. Mrs. Solis, Nancy's mom worked at HEB, the grocery store, for a period of time to help her husband out with the family's expenses. Nancy has a younger sister who is also a teacher.

Religion plays an important role in Nancy's life. Her mother is still an elder in the church her grandparents helped institute. Nancy and her husband attend the same mass with their two children.

Noemí

On my first day at Rodriguez, Noemí peeked into my classroom with Veronica (one of our colleagues), curious to meet the new teacher. Always, the jokester, Noemí and I hit it off right away. I recall telling her all my wonderfully new ideas about teaching and schooling and she smiled pleasantly at me as if to say, you will learn soon enough. Noemí can light up the room with her smile. I, and the others, looked to Noemí to calm us down in those moments when we were being tried. To this day, I have never heard Noemí raise her voice.

Noemí is the oldest of three girls. Her mom was a teacher at the neighboring school. Noemí's father was retired from the neighboring school district where he worked at the alternative school. In that first year, Noemí married her long-time boyfriend Robert. They had one son before Robert unexpectedly passed away in our third year working at Rodriguez.

After two years in third grade, Noemí, Nancy, I got moved to different grade levels, like children being sent to different corners after being scolded. Noemí was sent to 4th

grade, Nancy to 1st grade, and me to 5th grade. Despite this, we remained close friends. We gathered after school in each other's classrooms and laughed and reminisced about our 3rd grade shenanigans.

Maria

Maria and I met when her son was a 5th grade student in Julia's class. Because Julia's and my classroom were next to each other, we got to know each other's students well. Maria's laugh is what I remember most. Her laugh booms through a room. My second year in 5th grade, Maria transferred to our campus. That year we spent together in 5th grade, Maria and I had lunch together with Julia; the three of us were the last to eat at the school. As such, we got to know one another well as we broke bread and conversed.

The most influential person in Maria's life has been her mom who is the backbone of the family. Maria's mom teaches her family about tradition and family—the importance of both and how one informs the other. At our plática, we learned that her father and my grandfather worked together for the Webb County Sherriff as deputy sheriffs. Maria has one brother who is ten years younger than she. Maria's children—one boy and one girl—are always with her. Mr. Garcia, Maria's husband, is also visible at school, volunteering for the PTA and being an involved parent.

After I left Rodriguez Elementary, Mrs. Ramirez, our former Vice Principal turned principal, recruited Maria to be a pathfinder teacher at Soliz. For Maria this was a huge promotion. A pathfinder is expected to teach full time but take on instructional coach and administrative responsibilities. To this day, Maria remains in that position where she also leads the science instruction for the campus.

Julia

When I taught third grade, Julia was already in 5th grade. Julia was an enigma. You never quite knew if Julia liked you or not because of her sarcastic tone. However, when I got to 5th grade, it was clear that sarcasm was Julia's playful demeanor and how she showed love. Because I was new to the grade level and next to her room, I knew that I had to crack her tough exterior. Little by little, we got to know one another. Her jokes, often made at my expense, united us. Julia was, and is, probably the most respected teacher at Rodriguez. Our principal held her in high esteem those years I worked there. Because she and I had lunch alone that year before Maria arrived, we spent a good amount of time getting to one another well.

Julia is the youngest in her family of nine. She says her parents spoiled her. Her father was a construction worker for a well-known company in Laredo. As a homemaker, Julia's mom spent time volunteering at Julia's school. Sadly, Julia's mom contracted amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, when Julia was in middle school. After that the disease progressed and Julia's mom's health worsened. Eventually Julia's mom passed away. This was a formative experience for Julia. She has two children: Eduardo and Cassandra. Eduardo is in college and Cassandra, her clone, is about to graduate.

Today, Julia still works at Rodriguez as a 5th grade teacher in the same classroom as when we worked together. Parents at Rodriguez want their children to be in her classroom. Her stern demeanor belies her loving disposition. Julia's family history made her tough and nurturing. She sets high expectations for her students and she does not give up on them until they meet those expectations.

Lorena

Lorena worked with my aunt at another elementary school in south Laredo. When I got hired at Rodriguez, my aunt told me, “make sure you ask for Lorena, she is one of the best teachers I had at President’s school.” Indeed, Lorena is one of those teachers who loves the subject she teaches—science. Her inquisitive personality lends itself to science teaching; her curiosity transmits to the students. Together we hosted the science fair and chaired the science club for the school.

Lorena’s mom was a single parent who worked her way up in the federal government agency that she continues to work for to this day. Rightly so, Lorena admires her mom for going back to school to earn her high school equivalency General Education Development (GED) while they were still young children. Lorena has two siblings: one brother and one sister. Additionally, Lorena is married with three children who attend Rodriguez, the same school where Lorena teaches. They are as curious and vibrant as Lorena.

After I left Rodriguez, Julia enrolled in graduate school to become a librarian. This time she felt school was much more difficult as she was already married and a mother of three. Because the local university does not offer a Master of Library Science degree, Lorena enrolled in online course at another state university. Lorena has tried to obtain a position as a librarian in Laredo but has not had success. Even so, her teaching has earned her many recognitions and the respect of her colleagues and parents.

Guadalupe

I never taught on the same team with Guadalupe like I had with the other maestras. We worked at the same school but were never on the same grade level team. My last year, I was relocated to a classroom in a hallway opposite the 5th grade team. Guadalupe, as a 1st

grade teacher, was in that hallway. So, I got to know her in the hallway as she passed by with her students. When Nancy was reassigned to 1st grade, she and Guadalupe got to know one another well. Today, Guadalupe and Noemí are the closest of friends as Noemí eventually got reassigned to kinder and was just doors down from Guadalupe.

Guadalupe's abuelita is the most influential family member in her life. Though, her parents raised her, Guadalupe spoke fondly of her grandmother as someone who taught her how to live. Guadalupe's father took her hunting and to the ranch. Guadalupe's mother was her first teacher. There is a difference of ten years between Guadalupe and her brother. One goal in life Guadalupe did not fulfill was to attend Texas A&M Corpus Christi. Guadalupe elected to stay in Laredo for college to save money for her parents. Because of this, Guadalupe left Laredo to teach in Zapata, a town about 45 minutes south of Laredo.

Guadalupe furthered her education by obtaining a master's degree in reading education. Today, Guadalupe continues to teach at Rodriguez where she is the 3rd grade dual language English reading teacher.

SITE

In 1964, four small school districts that surround Laredo consolidated to establish Ranchos I.S.D, the school district where the study takes place. According to Blanton (2004) Ranchos was the first district to offer bilingual education services in the state. District officials at that time traveled to Florida to see what was going on with the Coral Way¹¹ program and attempted to replicate it in Laredo. Initially made up of large expanses of ranchland, the district grew as the city grew. The 90s and early 2000s saw rapid expansion of the district; for example, three of the four high schools were built in that time. According

¹¹ In Chapter Three, I mentioned the Coral Way bilingual education program which was the first sanctioned bilingual education program in the country.

to their website the school district offers multiple types of ESL/Dual Language programs for their students. Texas Education Agency data shows that the school district currently has over 43 thousand students of which 97.6% are Hispanic, 76% economically disadvantaged, 39% English Language learners, and 42.8% participate in some type of bilingual/ESL program.

Within this Ranchos I.S.D., I visited three schools where the Maestas worked at the time of the study: Rodriguez, Brewster, and Soliz. These three schools share similar demographics. See Table 4.2 for more information. All the schools the maestras teach at are Title I¹² schools.

School	Rodriguez	Soliz	Brewster
Participants	Noemí, Julia, Guadalupe, Lorena	Maria	Nancy
Grades	PK – 5 th	PK – 5 th	PK – 5 th
Bilingual Education Program	Early Exit & Two Way Dual Language	Early Exit & Two Way Dual Language	Early Exit & Two Way Dual Language
Students	856	745	910
Hispanic	100 %	100 %	95.8 %
Economically Disadvantaged	84.8 %	84.3 %	76.9 %
English Learners	53 %	68.9 %	43.1 %

Table 4.2. School Demographic Information

¹² Title I schools are federally designated schools with a large population of low income students that receive financial assistance to meet the needs of their students.

Notably the school district boasts on its website that they offer a variety of services to meet the needs of English language learners. They celebrate their students' bilingualism in November as designated Bilingual Education Awareness Month and Bilingual Education Scholar Award which is given out monthly "for achieving academic success, participating in extra-curricular activities, and/or providing community service" (RISD, 2017). The district offers, early exit transitional and dual language as an enrichment/additive model at the elementary schools. For secondary schools the district offers ESL pullout for secondary ELLs and Foreign language classes.

DATA COLLECTION

When considering methods for data collection from an IRP we must first seek to honor and respect our participants. As such, the methods we seek to collect data cannot be colonizing by nature. As a researcher, I understand that data is not mine to collect as a means of ownership (Wilson, 2008). Rather, data is a gift that individuals are willing to share with a scholarly community of teachers, academics, and policy makers. The participants' data should be respected not for the value of completing a project but for their willingness to welcome the academic community into their realities as coauthors of knowledge. With that said, I engaged my participants in the data collection and analytical process in an effort to honor their intended messages. In the following section I speak about the data collection process and the type of data I collected.

The first step in any project is building relationships with others. Researcher/participant relationships tend to be transactional. However, within Indigenous research and decolonizing methods we seek to disrupt the researcher/participant binary. Like I mentioned, going home to conduct this research with participants who I have had

longstanding relationships with makes sense to me naturally and fits with the paradigm that I seek to emulate.

The data collection methods I utilized for this dissertation reflect Mexican ways of knowing. Chillisa (2012) reminds us that “to illustrate a culturally responsive indigenous paradigm is to acknowledge the local histories, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems that inform them” (p. 161). In keeping with this tradition, I incorporated the use of *pláticas* and *convivios* as data collection methods. In the following section, I detail the data collection process.

Pláticas

The central focus of this dissertation is the life story. Life stories have the potential to unpack a person’s lived experience so that they and others can derive meaning. As a reflective process in which the intended message is to engage the listener in a narrative, the purpose of life stories in this dissertation is to understand how language and literacy ideologies enable teachers to make sense of bilingualism and biculturalism. In order to fully grasp the complexity of the life stories of the participants I engaged them in *pláticas*. The word *pláticas* directly translates to conversations. However, *pláticas* are more than just normal conversation. The *pláticas* one has around the kitchen tables are told not only to provide information, but also to impart wisdom and/or *consejos* (Delgado Bernal, 1998). There is a grain of truth is passing on this type of ancestral wisdom/knowledge in a *plática*. The *pláticas* are also intended to be personal—a dialogue between trusted confidants.

To solicit their narratives, I employed photovoice as a method “by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique” (Wang & Burris, 1997). In canvassing photos, the maestras began to tell their stories in a non-linear, non-traditional manner rooted in critical consciousness and feminist

theory (Wang & Burris, 1997). Wang stipulates that photovoice has three objectives: “(1) to enable people to record and reflect their community’s strengths and concerns, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers” (p.370). In Wang’s study, she and her colleagues ascertained how the participants thought about their community’s health practices through photovoice. In my study, the photos provided a point of departure from where to begin telling their life story.

One example of the photovoice technique is illustrated in Figure 4.1. In Figure 4.1 Julia began to tell her life story. She spoke about the altar that she has at the entrance of her home. She told me stories about her father, mother, and brother. (See Appendix A for photovoice instructions).



Figure 4.2. Julia Photo – Family Altar

Each plática lasted about two (2) hours. I asked the participants to bring with them five (5) photos each. I told them that the photos could/should represent any aspect of their

lives and/or identities—that is, the multiple roles that they play. Furthermore, the photos should have significance to them and reflect their community. The pláticas were conducted after school hours on the day I went to observe them; for most, this was the most convenient time to meet. The one exception was Maria, for her plática, we met for dinner at a local restaurant. The participants shared stories about family, friends, their lives as teachers, their siblings. Some share testimonios about painful experiences from their family’s past. We laughed. Some cried. At times, I asked to follow up questions for clarification. In those two hours we got to one another more intimately. By and large, though, I allowed them to speak their truth by listening intently.

I shared with them my five photos as well. One of the photos I shared is included in my positionality. It was important for me to share with them my five photos to allow them to ask me questions as well. This was not meant to be a one-way interview.

Convivios

The focus group is another method described within the IRP. Chilisa (2012) gives the example of the talking circle in which a group of people sits in a circle and passes a sacred object indicating that person’s turn to talk. The talking circle accomplishes two things: (1) it gives each person the chance to contribute to the conversation without having others interrupt; (2) It asks others to listen while having them wait their turn in the circle to contribute. In that spirit, I emulated the talking circle with the specific application of reflecting not only on their life histories, but also through the theory itself through convivio. Delgado Bernal (1998) states that “including Chicana participants in an interactive process of data collation contributes to the researcher’s cultural intuition” (p. 566). The convivio, then will become part of the data collection process in that the participants will have a

chance to analyze and reflect on their own experiences by reading segments of Anzaldua's, *Bordelands/La Frontera*.

In all, we had three convivios. Through each convivio I intended to garner their thoughts and stories regarding language, literacy, and culture. Although I organized the topics at the convivios, the conversations took flights on different paths. There was a basic structure for each one in which I asked them to share stories, had them read articles to discuss, and of course, topics that they inserted into the conversation. (See Appendix B for an example of one convivio's PowerPoint.)

Each convivio lasted 4 hours. I provided lunch for the participants. As the convivios took place over summer vacation, their children were invited to the convivio location. Their children explored the convivio site, while we discussed the topics. For the convivios, I audio and video recorded. Then, I transcribed the pertinent data, after writing analytic memos. Having two devices (a video camera and audio recorder) allowed me to review the data through multiple angles. Moreover, when I could not hear the audio on the camera, the recorder served as a backup.

The convivio site (see Figure 4.3) provided the backdrop to our discussions. One of the key elements was that the convivio take place at a setting in which the maestras would feel comfortable. In thinking about where to host, I thought about my aunt's ranch house. Hugo and Selinda Garcia, my aunt and uncle, graciously allowed me to use their ranch house, which is located just outside the city limits as the convivio site. Because the home is located at the ranch, we were secluded from the city sounds. Cultural artifacts, indicative of the maestras and my bilingual/bicultural heritage, surround the space where we convened. The Virgen de Guadalupe is at the back of the room and the Saltillo tile on the floor are emblematic of Mexican culture. The western paraphernalia (i.e. the ropes,

saddle, five-pointed star, etc...) and the U.S. flag represent U.S. culture. In short, the contrasting iconography of the space exuded the bicultural lives of the maestras.



Figure 4.3. Convivio Site Garcia Ranch House, La Pitahaya Ranch, Webb County, Texas

Ethnographic Observations

To contextualize their narratives, I gathered ethnographic observations to appreciate how the teaches embodied these ideologies. I spent two school days with each teacher, totaling 15 hours of observation for each teacher. The pictures served to generate a discursive field that informs the spaces the maestras teach at. My observations began in February 2018 and were completed by May 2018. The maestras selected the days for observation based on their school calendar. The observations were not video recorded. Instead, the maestras walked around with a recorder attached to their keys. The audio recorded offered playback audio during my analysis. The classroom observations offered insights into how the teachers mediate their ideologies in the classroom in relation to their

prescribed curriculum. Specifically, my goal was not to look solely for disjuncture and convergence with their articulated ideologies but also for the nuances in which disjuncture and/or convergence takes place.

ANALYTIC METHOD

Multiple techniques of analysis have been utilized by researchers when carrying out narrative inquiry. Typically, after collecting the data, researchers engage in the various rounds of coding in which the outcome is one where themes are produced. Chilisa (2012) maintains that this process coding is dominated by western-Eurocentric epistemologies. In this dissertation, I take up Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) call to think with theory as an analytical tool. Operating from a post-qualitative perspective, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) do not offer a prescriptive method for analyzing data. They seek to disrupt traditional qualitative methods by thinking with theory. In their text, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) speak about plugging in data with theory. As such, I looked to see how the theory and data converse with one another. It is not simply about using the theory as a framework for analyzing data but about how the theory speaks to the significance of the data and vice versa. More than that, it entangles the researcher and researched, the human and non-human, and the living and non-living. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) assert "the codes might cause us to miss the texture, the contradictions, the tensions, and entangled becomings produced in the mangle" (pg. 12). Thus, allowing the research to be in a constant state of becoming—shaping and reshaping itself.

In thinking with theory, I considered the dialectical relationship between the data and theory. To accomplish this, the first course of action will be to sit with the data and theory and find instances where the data and theory converge and diverge. Anzaldúa (1987), for example, speaks about the idea of linguistic terrorism. There she articulates

what it is like to have her language judged by the hegemony of English and Spanish. She speaks about her linguistic repertoire being from neither here nor there but also having to live up to both here and there. Taking this concept, the bilingual maestras, through their linguistic histories, participated in theorizing their lives. Then, taking the theory and their stories, I analyzed and created narratives that illustrated how the theory materializes in the spaces occupied by the maestras.

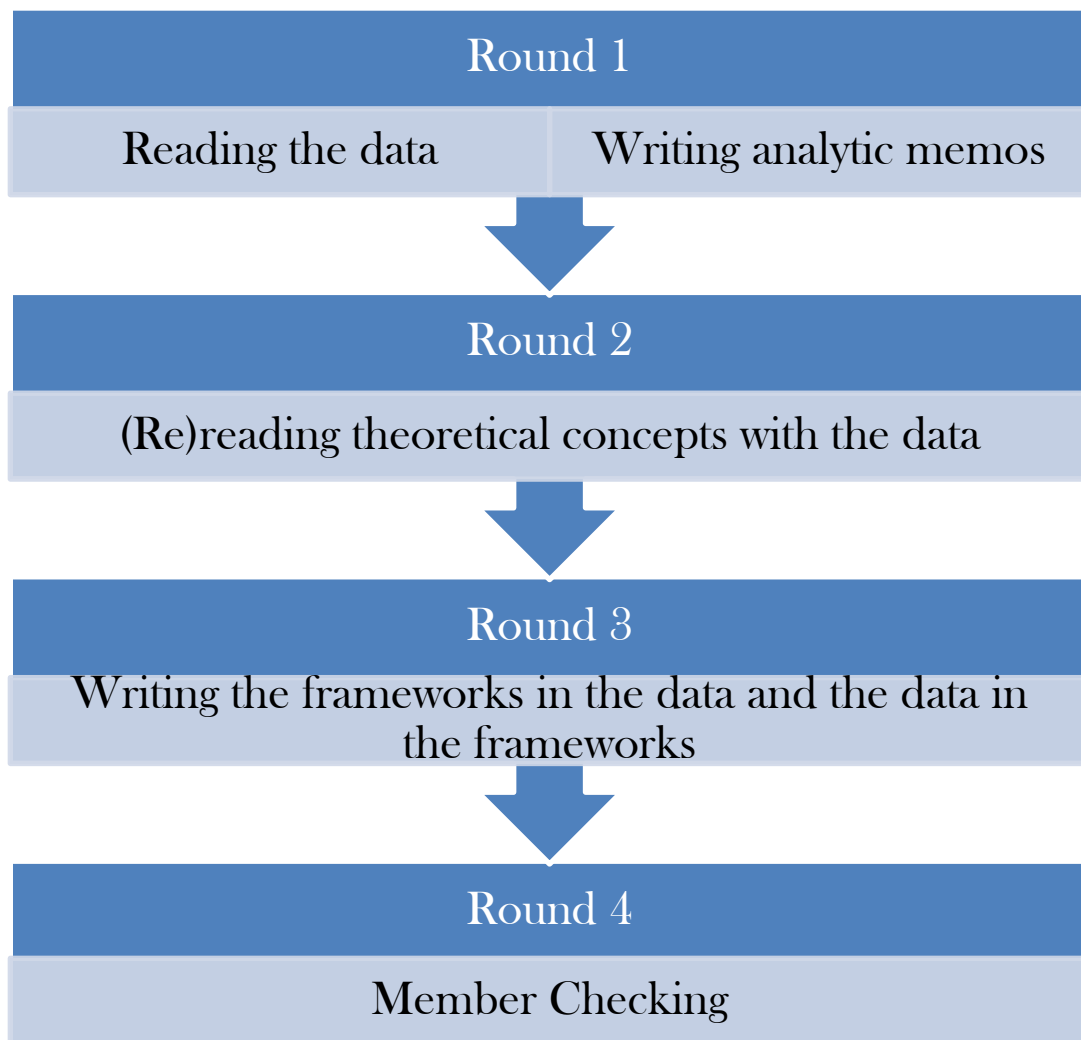


Figure 4.4. Analytic Method

The process of analysis began immediately. Taking analytic notes and memos were integral to the process. After each plática was transcribed, I sent it back to the participant with notes and questions that they can respond to. The same checking for understanding happened with the convivios. Once, I collected the corpus of data, I began the process of analysis that entailed the back and forth with the theory that culminated in four rounds. The first round was a reading of the data and writing analytic memos. The memos were my thoughts regarding what I was seeing in the data. The memos facilitated familiarity with the data. Round 2 comprised of rereading the theoretical frameworks with the data in mind. Here, I concerned myself thinking about the participants' voices as it spoke to the data. For example, the participants spoke back to Anzaldúa's (1987) theory of mestiza consciousness. I realized at this juncture that the theory was not capturing the voices and thoughts of the maestras, but Anzaldúa's theory of nepantla did. Accordingly, I engaged nepantla in Chapter Five rather than mestiza consciousness. For Round 3, I went back to writing the theory in the data and the data in the theory and produced, organized, and outlined the three chapters. Lastly, for Round 4, I member checked with each of the participants. This included asking questions to the participants via phone or text message. Sending chunks of data and seeking clarification for specific stories.

The methods described above alluded to enmeshing of the theory within the participants' reflections. In providing some theoretical underpinnings to the participants, I involved them in the analytical process. In doing so, a circular and reciprocal relationship between the researcher, the participants, and the data is created. Not only do the life stories become data, but their analysis provides them the opportunity to become part of the analytical process. I do not argue or claim that their voices will be truer or more real because I do not know that we can ever truly relinquish authorial rights. However, I do believe it can illuminate the tensions and contradictions in the analytical process.

My goal through the analytical process was to gain a nuanced understanding of the borderland experiences. While Anzaldúa's (1987) book aptly describes the lived experiences of many on the border, we have not applied her theoretical underpinnings to education research as it pertains to educators' lived stories. Their stories are complicated and as such, so are their ideologies. In speaking to and with the data, we allow for the nuance to emerge. By engaging the participants in the analytical process, I aimed to be respectful to keeping their original messages as complete as possible.

ETHICAL AND VALIDITY BASED CONSIDERATIONS

Indigenous paradigms critique the notion of validity and reliability in the traditional euro-western research sense (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2013; Tuck, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Traditionally, these words have been imposed in qualitative research to assert a sense of rigor believed to be had by quantitative research methodologies. Instead, an indigenous paradigm proposes that we maintain a sense of relational accountability to our participants.

Relational Accountability

Wilson (2008) speaks about relational accountability and denotes what must be considered: topic, methods, analysis, and presentation. In speaking about these aspects of relational accountability is the idea that we must "come to an agreement about mutually understood idea[s]" (pg. 122) and that "authenticity or credibility may be ensured through continues feedback with all the research participants" (pg. 121). Transparency for the entire research process ran throughout, from beginning to end. Throughout this section I have shared many anecdotes about myself and how I came to the research process. I shared these ideas with my participants as well. In thinking about the pláticas and convivios I did not see myself as the sole purveyor of knowledge or as the person who will simply be there to

collect data. Instead, I thought of myself as the facilitator of the discussions and co-creator of knowledge. That is, they were not specimens in a petri dish that had to be manipulated to ascertain some new understanding. Rather, we collectively decided what narrative to tell. We must also come to an understanding of how we can use this knowledge to further the field of education. Again, I do not deny how this paper must be completed for a credential nor that fact that it must be presented in the format of a dissertation.

Member Checking

Creswell & Miller (2000) define member checking as “taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account” (p. 127). I believe that member checking happens at all levels of the research process. At the onset of the project I sent my proposal to the participants to read and ask questions about the study. This enabled them to start co-creating the essence of the study. During the collection process, I asked the participants to read and confirm what was being said. For instance, I queried as to what should be included or excluded and discussed the reasoning behind why specific narratives might be crucial to the overall project. I applied this throughout the analytical process. Essentially, member checking is about transparency on my end as the person who has to complete the requirements of the project while conceding some authorial license to my participants.

LIMITATIONS

Much has been made about the notion of limitation in research, both qualitative and quantitative. In this project, I sought to understand how *fronteriza* teachers think about ideology in the borderland space where, historically, ideas and borders have been contested. An indigenous research paradigm afforded me the opportunity to think about

with whom I would like to conduct this study. In that sense, I thought a lot about wanting to go home a space where the people, customs, language, are all familiar. I carried this study out with a sense of pride that I can help others understand that corners of the world like Laredo are unique and have a wealth of knowledge that can be shared and added to not only bilingual education but how we think about education in general. Still, I understand that the findings presented here cannot be generalized to other sites or communities.

Similarly, the relationship between the audience and the text that cannot be foretold. I share this knowledge with the hope that those who read it will make use of it in a manner that is germane to their research, pedagogy, or policy. That said, I understand that the ideologies in this space are in constant flux and that those who teach and learn in this space are constantly negotiating their subjectivities. Therefore, this work as always becoming and never fully realized.

Even so, the one limitation that must be spoken of is that I, as the author and main tool of analysis, can never fully realize or grasp the essence of my participants, the community, or their ideologies. As much as I would like for this project to be an exchange of ideas and co-construction of knowledge, it is I who have to write the words in these pages and I who will ultimately get the credit for what gets published. More importantly, it is my lens through which these ideas get filtered. In so doing, my prints are all over this work and data meaning that the data will be tainted by my analysis (Urrieta & Noblit, 2018).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

My intention was to study the life history of fronteriza teachers along the two Laredos for the purpose of understanding how they construct language and literacy ideologies that determine their ideas regarding bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism.

With an Indigenous Research Paradigm in mind, I sought to employ narrative inquiry as my methodology. An IRP affords my participants and me the opportunity to be co-constructors of knowledge. Although there are many methods within the realm of narrative inquiry, I specifically endeavored to use life histories to garner this understanding. In the same manner that I came to understand my Güela as person, I believe that I can come to know how *fronteriza* teachers come to appreciate their roles as bilingual educators. While there are more characteristically appropriate methods of data collection (i.e. testimonio and counter-narratives). Embedded in those possibilities were the chance that the testimonio and counter-narratives will emerge naturally. To analyze these narratives, I engaged in thinking with theory. Theory allows us to make sense of data. But we should also consider how the data informs the theory as well. In thinking with theory and data alongside one another, I believe there is a more nuanced perspective to be gained.

As previously mentioned, Wilson (2005) speaks about relational accountability. Included in an IRP is the idea that our axiology and methodology subscribes to the three R's of responsibility, respect and reciprocity. We must ask ourselves as researchers if (1) is what we are doing is generative for the community; (2) how can we give back to the participants and community; and (3) are we being respectful of the community and their values? Through these methods engaged the participants in the research process in a way that was mindful of their multiple subjectivities.

Chapter Five: “Taming” a Wild Tongue: Bilingual Maestras’ Language Ideologies in Nepantla

“We are going to have to control your tongue,” the dentist says, pulling out all the medal from my mouth. Silver bits plop and tinkle into the basin. My mouth is a motherload.

The dentist is cleaning out my roots. I get a whiff of the stench when I gas. “I can’t cap that tooth yet, you’re still draining,” he says.

“We are going to have to do something about your tongue,” I hear the anger rising in his voice. My tongue keeps pushing out the wads of cotton, pushing back the drills, the long thin needles. “I’ve never seen anything as strong or as stubborn,” he says. And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down?

Anzaldúa, 1987/2012, p. 75

Gloria Anzaldúa (1987/2012) asks a poignant question, “...how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down?” (p. 75). In her metaphor, Anzaldúa compares a dentist’s job of attempting to control her “strong” and “stubborn” tongue for the purposes of performing dental work to that of oppressors who aim to silence and control language through institutionalized practices (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998; Tyack, 1974). It is through the metaphor of taming a wild tongue that I reflect on the stories and experiences of the six maestras who participated in my study. In this chapter I begin to answer the first research question: *How do the lived experiences of fronteriza bilingual maestras illuminate their language and literacy ideologies?* I specifically focus on the role of their lived experiences to demonstrate how they navigate and negotiate their language and literacy ideologies through their multiple subjectivities and identities.

While Anzaldúa (1987, 2015) notes that speaking Spanish in school “was good for three licks on the knuckles with a ruler” (p. 75), the stories shared in this chapter portray less punitive, yet equally violent, measures for taming a “wild” tongue. The data reveals the ways in which the maestras both adopt and disrupt/unsettle dominant monoglossic and raciolinguistic ideologies. I argue that their language ideologies are imbued with contradiction and ambivalence. To discuss the ways in which *fronteriza* maestras’ identities and multiple subjectivities are in constant negotiation as they straddle a world in which they live two with competing languages and cultures, I divide the chapter into three sections: learning a language, living a language, and teaching a language. In learning a language, I provide a story from each of the teacher’s childhood that reveal how their language ideologies begin to develop at a young age. Then, in living a language, I present two discussions from the *convivios* that show the complexity of their thinking. In one discussion they speak about their current family language policies and in the second they wrestle with how they feel positioned when spoken to in Spanish in everyday interactions with other Spanish speakers. Lastly, in teaching a language, I use classroom data and stories to show how the maestras, despite the contradictions between their family language practices and daily interactions with Spanish speakers, still find ways to push back against the hegemony of English. I conclude that as a result of living in *nepantla*, that *nepantla* governs their language ideologies. Moreover, like Anzaldúa contends in her theory, a wild tongue cannot be tamed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this chapter I draw on nepantla (Anzaldúa, 1987 & 2015) and raciolinguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017) to understand the lived experiences and language ideologies of the bilingual maestras. According to Anzaldúa (2015), nepantla is the “Nahuatal word for an in-between space, *el lugar entre medio*” or “the point of contact between the worlds of nature and spirit” (p.28). To be in a state of nepantilism is to be wedged amid two or more “cultural or spiritual worlds of two groups or another” (Anzaldúa, 1987/2012, p. 100). I employ nepantla to talk about how the maestras in this study are gathered amongst two cultures and two worlds: one in which their language ideologies operate within a society that privileges standardized monolingual English and another where they are rooted in their ancestral language, Spanish, and Mexican culture.

Although borders are artificial boundaries (Lugo, 2008) that intend to separate one nation-state from another, there exists a fluidity of languages and cultures. Pratt (1991) refers to these places as contact zones “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in context of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (p. 4). In his study of Texas-Mexico borderlands, Vila (2000) adds that the asymmetrical dynamics of the two nation-states creates a double mirror effect in which Mexican Americans define themselves “by the way I suspect the ‘other’ sees me” (p. 143). With respect to the Texas-Mexico borderlands, Mexican Americans identity is constantly being negotiated by how they perceive themselves in relation to both Mexicans and Anglos. Because to be Mexican is both a nationality and ethnicity (Vila, 2000), in this chapter I take up the concept of the double mirror to argue how the maestras language ideologies are a reflection of the double mirror metaphor whereby they use language to both situate and distance themselves from their mexicanidad.

Undergirding the maestras' language ideologies is a raciolinguistic perspective (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Raciolinguistics attests that the linguistic practices of minoritized speakers—like the maestras in this study—are constantly being scrutinized by the gaze of the white listening subject. Flores and Rosa (2015) contend that

a raciolinguistic perspective seeks to understand how the white gaze is attached both to a speaking subject who engages in the idealized linguistic practices of whiteness and to a listening subject who hears and interprets the linguistic practices of language-minoritized populations as deviant based on their racial positioning in society as opposed to any objective characteristics of their language use (p. 151).

The hegemony of Whiteness is central to the idea of the White gaze. Flores (2016) defines hegemonic Whiteness as what a “White person should be and act like in terms of his or her look, demeanor, sexual behaviors and gender identity, language practices, and so on” (p. 15). Because raciolinguistics aims to reveal the co-naturalization of language and race, English becomes the indicator of Whiteness in a society that privileges the White speaking subject. For the maestras who live nepantla, they are refereed by the white gaze and the hegemony of Whiteness, but they also take up the white gaze and act as referees to distance themselves from Mexican nationals. In this chapter, raciolinguistics and the white gaze coincides with national U.S. identity.

LEARNING A LANGUAGE

In childhood we are told that our language is wrong. Repeated attacks on our native tongue diminish our sense of self. The attacks continue throughout our lives. (Anzaldúa, 1987/2012, p. 80)

In the borderlands, where the maestras were born and raised, colonial legacies permeate their understanding and use of language (Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 2000; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Anzaldúa (1987) contends that a mestiza “learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view.... learns to juggle cultures.... nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned” (p.101). As this relates to language, the first stories told in the in this chapter depict how the maestras come to understand the nuances of living in the borderlands and how they begin to understand their language practices. In their childhood, understandings about language begin to develop through the messages they receive from peers, elders, and others in the community.

Because of the overlapping histories of Spanish colonialism and United States imperialism, language on the border is complex. As a result, the teachers described different trajectories of language learning and sense-making about language. Julia, Lorena, Maria, and Nancy stated that they were native Spanish speakers. Noemí and Guadalupe recalled being native English speakers when they entered school. Some shared stories of pain, another a story of language reclamation, and still others were attempting to make sense of their language ability in comparison to Mexican nationals. Although their stories show points of convergence and divergence, collectively these stories begin to illuminate the complexity of learning and living language on the border.

Julia

Julia lived with her mother and father. Her father worked for Kinder Construction—a prominent construction company in the area. Her mother did not work outside the home but spent a lot of Julia’s elementary years volunteering at her school. As the youngest of eight children, Julia commented that she had siblings who had already

graduated high school when she was in elementary school. Julia remembers hearing both English and Spanish at home. However, the language spoken depended on with whom you were conversing. Julia stated:

Growing up, at home I spoke Spanish with my parents, but it was just social, just to communicate. I had the conception that I had to speak Spanish to all the adults: to my grandparents, my aunts, my uncles—it was always Spanish. But then I did have a lot of older siblings. So, when I was born, I had a sister who had already graduated high school. I had two that were in high school, so communication with them was in English because they spoke English. So, I would speak Spanish to my parents at home, but I also had the English from my siblings, at home. But it was all just social.... I did go to regular public school in south Laredo and I remember being part of the bilingual program or being labeled a bilingual student. But I don't recall ever doing anything in Spanish—other than having the label. I wasn't ever expected to speak Spanish in school, or, taught, or anything. So, it was just whatever social conversations that were had with friends. (Julia, *Convivio*, 06/15/18)

Plainly speaking, Julia illustrates what life is like for most bilinguals in the U.S. today. If you have older siblings, you learn English at home from them. Her parents, who are Mexican American, spoke Spanish. With them and other family elders, Julia was expected to speak Spanish—this is often associated as a form of *respeto*, or respect, a form of *educación* (Valdés, 1997). At school, she was classified as a bilingual student but immersed in English. Others described the same phenomenon of having to go to school and make the transition to English, indexing subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999).

In her story, Julia begins to demarcate her language use. Although, she does not specifically state why it is clear that language borders are being constructed. Having older siblings who speak English likely made the transition easier for Julia. It is also important

to highlight that Julia refers to her Spanish speaking as social. Even at school, with her friends, the Spanish that was spoken was not in relation to their academics but rather to their social lives—that which is familial, intimate, and in subordination to/respect of adults. In speaking about Spanish as a social language, Julia indicates a privileging of English for academic purposes that is grounded in appropriateness discourses (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

Maria

For many years, Maria was the only child as she and her brother are ten years apart. Her father was a deputy in the sheriff's department and her mom worked as a computer lab aide at a local school. As the oldest in her family, Maria was exposed predominately to Spanish at home and entered Pre-K as a Spanish dominant child. She remembers spending a lot of time with her maternal grandparents—even lived with them for a brief period—who exposed her to Spanish as well. Maria commented:

According to what my mom says, cause I really don't remember, my grandparents were all Spanish speakers—maternal and paternal. It was all Spanish when I was growing up. According to my mom when I started school—Pre-K—it was nothing but Spanish, and supposedly, I had a hard time transitioning into English.... Until, eventually I was able to pick up English in kinder. Then I moved on. But when it came to my brother, they didn't want to make the same mistake. They wanted to make sure that he didn't have any trouble in school, so my brother is all English dominant. And both my parents they graduated from high school. My dad has college courses so they're fluent in English and in Spanish. They didn't want my brother to go through, I guess, what I went through. But when it comes to his work, he has to communicate in Spanish because he also has clientele from Mexico. He didn't even know what *joven* was. So now he struggles. (Convivio, 06/15/18)

Most salient from Maria's story is that she labeled her Spanish speaking as a "mistake." Furthermore, in order to not repeat that mistake, her parents spoke to her brother solely in English. The transition Maria made from Spanish to English was quick—only one year between Pre-K and Kinder. As such, she likely did not have enough time to acquire English. This signals an education system that was likely immersing children in English rather than providing additive bilingual education. By not passing on Spanish to her brother, Maria's parents remedied what they perceived to be a mistake. As such, he now "struggles." Maria contrasts her struggle to her brothers and yet they are one in the same in that neither one was able to fully benefit from their language albeit in different settings.

Nancy

The oldest in her family, Nancy remembers learning Spanish at home and speaking it fluently with her parents and other family members. Although she attended public schools as a bilingual student, she too does not recall learning any Spanish except for once in second grade in which they were given a purple book and "attempted" to read Spanish. But as Nancy put it, "it wasn't a full-blown lesson in Spanish." At church, though, Nancy developed her Spanish by attending Missionetts, a youth ministry program for girls. This is in keeping with scholarship that illustrates that the church can serve as a place for sustaining a child's heritage language and/or facilitate biliteracy skills (Ek, 2008; Smith & Murillo, 2012). At church, they read and wrote in Spanish and Nancy attests that it was there where she advanced her bilingualism.

Like most teenagers, Nancy entered the workforce in high school; her first job was in retail. There, Nancy came into contact with Mexican nationals. In this story she recalls what it was like to have to speak Spanish with people who had been formally educated in Spanish. Nancy recollected:

My first job I worked at Bealls. And Bealls had a lot of customers from Mexico. And I remember that they would come and ask for *pants*. “Es que ando buscando pants.” Ok, the jeans are on the wall. “No, no, pants....” And I didn’t know what the hell they were talking about. They were talking about sweat pants. But they would call them pants and the jeans were *mezclia*. Pues, I didn’t know. Those were words that I learned when I worked there. And so, as more Mexican people we got as customers the more I learned that we would call them something else I call them jogging pants.... When I felt that I was fully bilingual I lacked a lot of the vocabulary. (Convivio, 06/15/18)

Despite feeling like she had a strong foundation for her bilingualism, Nancy’s story divulges the perceptions we internalize from others even when we are not being explicitly mocked or ridiculed. A native Spanish speaker, schooling stopped her from fully recognizing her bilingual potential. Nancy realized this when native Spanish speakers used vocabulary to which she was not accustomed. Anzaldúa (1987) maintains that Chicanas “have internalized the belief that [they] speak poor Spanish.” Whereas the Mexican customers have had access to Spanish—“a whole lifetime of being immersed in their native tongues; generations, centuries in which Spanish was the first language, taught in schools, heard on radio and TV, and read in the newspaper”—Nancy, and those on the *frontera*, have been cut off from Spanish (p. 80). In so doing, this pits one Chicana against another, using their “language differences against each other” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 80). These feelings of inferiority in Spanish become internalized by Nancy and others like her who believe themselves to be fluent Spanish speakers.

Lorena

Growing up with her grandparents at a ranch, Lorena stated that her mom struggled to make ends meet and worked as much as possible for her, and her brother and sister. She remembers going to several different schools because they moved around town multiple times. Although her family struggled, she says her grandparents always had food for them and they enjoyed eating frijoles, sopas, and tortillas after school. A native Spanish speaker, Lorena shared a painful experience at the convivio in which she recalls being subjected to criticism for her pronunciation of English. Lorena said:

I said, “I want to sit on a shair,” and she was like, “shair.” Hahaha. ((mimics person laughing)) “What did I say wrong?” *I felt bad inside, but I laughed with her.* And she’s like, “It’s chair.” ((emphasizing /ch/)) “Oh, ok.” *I left*

I remember going home and I asked my mom, “How do you say this?” ((points to an imaginary chair)). And my mom works with Customs but a migrant. She had to drop out of school, got her GED. Migrant worker. Single mom She would go to LCC get her GED—she didn’t get her degree—but she got into a clerical position at Customs and then she worked her way up. She makes like triple than I do now. “Shair.” ((imitates mom))... I’m like, “Mom, no. You say chair.” ((again, emphasizing /ch/)) And she's like, “Oh.”

So, then I myself started to practice words. I remember looking for the words in the dictionary and actually pronouncing the words to fix it and I was always self-conscious about that and certain things that I would say and I still am. I'm not a good public speaker because of that. Like that person criticized me. Not in a “don’t

say it like that.....” I remember she had a ball with it. Probably something else besides that. But anyway.... (Convivio, 06/15/18)

As Lorena recounted this story, her fists clenched, and her palms began to sweat. Even now, so far removed from the incident, Lorena’s pain is visceral; she called the person who did this to her a “bitch.” Epitomizing the microaggressions a person learning and living two languages faces, this was first time Lorena’s speech practices were challenged for something that to her sounded phonologically correct. This occurrence exemplifies how minoritized speakers are judged by the White gaze (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Notably, Lorena was not upset at being corrected, but rather at how she was mocked.

While retelling this narrative, Lorena inserted her mom’s life story, mentioning that her mom is now in a high-level position with Customs—a government agency part of the Department of Homeland Security—and now earns four times what Lorena’s teacher salary. A single mother who comes from humble beginnings, Lorena’s mother attained her high school diploma only after she had her children and went back to night school at the local community college to earn her GED. In sharing her mom’s story, Lorena illustrates that on one hand, you can mispronounce a word and be stigmatized for it yet that is no indication of your ability to be successful in life. The juxtaposition between one’s salary and one’s ability to speak correctly, is emblematic of how language is used to keep others down, a way of taming a tongue.

Guadalupe

Guadalupe and her brother are ten years apart; she is the oldest. Her father worked in management at car dealership and when Guadalupe was a child, her mom worked at a local pre-school. Her parents sent her to school at a young age as her mother was already working at a pre-school. Then, Guadalupe attended a local private Catholic school; she

remembers being shocked in high school when she realized there would be no mass and she did not see statues of the Virgin de Guadalupe around campus. Guadalupe was raised in a household where English was the common language spoken, although her parents and grandparents are bilingual. At the same time, Guadalupe noted that “out of respect” she spoke to her grandparents in Spanish (Valdés, 1997).

At a young age, she recalls asking her grandmother to teach her Spanish. She supposes she must have been in second grade when her “grandmother remembers me coming home one day and telling her ‘I want you to teach me how to speak Spanish.’” According to Guadalupe, the little Spanish she did speak was “broken up.” Although she could not recall the exact reason as to why she wanted to learn Spanish, Guadalupe suspects that it was because she “couldn’t communicate with her [grandmother].” Guadalupe learned by asking her grandmother about specific words that she did not know and by watching telenovels, Spanish soap operas. With her grandmother, Guadalupe also attended mass in Spanish which said felt “different, but a good different,” adding, “you feel more of a connection when you are praying in Spanish....”

Guadalupe exemplifies a type of border resistance to the global design (Mignolo, 2000) by which all speakers are expected to lose an ancestral language in lieu of the nation-state’s language. The memory of wanting to learn Spanish was told at the plática and the convivio. Anzadlúa states that “we know how to survive. When other races have given up their tongue, we’ve kept ours (p. 85). In resisting the hegemony of English (Macedo, Dendrinis, Gounari, 2003) as a child, Guadalupe created a crack in the global design (Mignolo, 2000) that aims to subvert minoritized languages. Neither at her private school nor at public school were Spanish taught, but at church and from her family, Guadalupe was able to reclaim Spanish fluency.

Noemí

Noemí—the other native English speakers of the group—refused to communicate in Spanish, even with her father who intentionally spoke to her in Spanish. Dubbed the “gringa” of the group by one of her peers because of her self-described lack of Spanish proficiency, Noemí decided at an early age to not learn Spanish. Although she does not recall why she had this aversion to Spanish, she did state:

I was very against the whole Spanish thing growing up. Like my dad, he would always speak to us in Spanish and he would talk to my mom in Spanish. He knew English but he just wanted us to pick it up. And I would refuse. I would be like ok never mind then I won't communicate with you and I'll go talk to mom. And I would be like super stubborn not to pick up the Spanish.... Now that I think about it, I think that's why I stuck to my mom's family because they were also English. They knew Spanish but they would talk to the kids and you would hear a lot more English going on in the house. And we always felt like the Spanish was something between the adults. It was their language. (Convivio, 06/15/18)

In Noemí's refusal to speak Spanish, she acknowledged that it may have strained her relationship with her father's family. In fact, studies of language loss document that often times, language barriers within families can come at a cost to the family dynamics (Fillmore, 1991). Noemí also expressed the generational nature of learning English and Spanish in bilingual families when she emphasizes that Spanish was “their language,” referring to the adults in the family. Because Noemí felt most comfortable in English, she declined attending public schools, insisting that she stay at the private school she had attended since she was a child¹³.

¹³ Noemí's premise stems from a common belief that in South Laredo, where she grew up and where she still lives, people are more Spanish speaking. The maestras engaged in a discussion about language varieties associated with different parts of Laredo that I present in Chapter Seven.

As a pre-service teacher, Noemí also enrolled in early childhood education courses in the generalist program even when she was advised to seek a bilingual education teacher certification. Because the local school districts insisted that their teachers obtain a bilingual teaching certificate, Noemí was encouraged time and again to change majors. When Noemí graduated and searched for her first teaching position, she was hired under a three-year probationary contract while she sought her bilingual teaching certification.

Noemí's defiance towards Spanish can be understood through Vila's double mirror metaphor. Like Vila's (1997, 2000) participants in El Paso, Noemí admitted that she associated Spanish with a pervasive trope that all things poverty are Mexican. Similarly, Rosa and Flores (2017) maintain that Spanish also becomes a marker of ethnoracial and nationalist struggles. As a self-identified Mexican American, Noemí was not distancing herself from her ethnicity, but rather a Mexican national identity. Vila reminds us that on the border Mexico is a constant presence—a mirror in which the maestras do not always like what they see.

Thoughts On Learning a Language

In reflecting on her experiences growing up in South Texas, Anzaldúa (1987) contends that the violence of being silenced in schools is linguistic terrorism—an attack not only on a person's language, but her/his very identity—"if you really want to hurt me, speak badly about language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.81) The status quo for generations of speakers of languages other than English in the United States has been that of endless silencing and punitive measures for not speaking English (Macías, 2014). The maestras' contrasting childhood experiences are indicative of the complexities of growing up in the frontera and illustrates how linguistic terrorism persists. Growing up in bilingual families was not enough for them

to fully appreciate their bilingualness. They received mixed messages about Spanish and English from parents, family members, peers, and other community members. Subtractive schooling practices were commonplace for Julia, Nancy, Lorena, and Maria who were native Spanish speakers at the time they entered school. Inevitably, the lack of bilingual education schooling ensured the transition to English. However, Guadalupe demonstrates that reclaiming Spanish, is possible. Still, others, like Nancy and Lorena internalized deficiencies (Anzaldúa, 1987) about their languages in indirect and direct ways, respectively. Even in the group, they are cognizant of their language differences and this was made apparent when Noemí was called the “Gringa.” Their experiences with language, therefore, are saturated with contradictory messages undergird their conceptualizations about language as adults.

LIVING A LANGUAGE

*We are afraid of what we will see there. Pena. Shame. Low estimation
of self.*

(Anzaldúa, 1987/2012, p. 80)

The teachers also exhibited contradictory and multiple ideologies when expressing how they use language with their families and in the community. Two of the most salient themes that emerged were the struggle to teach their children Spanish and the offense they feel when others speak Spanish to them without being asked. Additionally, the teachers understood how people’s phenotypes are read and become a proxy for language (Flores & Rosa, 201; Rosa & Flores, 2017). In light of Vila’s conceptualization of the border as a double mirror for Mexican Americans whereby a Mexican identity is both an ethnicity and nationality, Spanish may constitute not just a production of racialized language but of

nationality. The intersections of language, race, and national origin become evident in the teachers' discussion at the convivio.

Family Language Practices

Figuring out what language to teach your children can be a challenge in bilingual families. Historically, Spanish speakers were subjected to abuse in US schools for speaking their native language (Blanton, 2006). To avoid the degradation they faced in schools for speaking Spanish, parents opted to teach their children English. On the border, however, Spanish remains a prevalent language. A recurring theme in their stories was that of the struggle to teach their children Spanish. All but one of the maestras who had children thought it was important for their children to learn Spanish and felt inadequate in their efforts. Julia questioned the utility of Spanish and the level of proficiency needed to “get by” on the border. Their stories also exposed that their partners' linguistic history influenced their decision to speak and teach Spanish at home.

Nancy has two children: a daughter in third grade and a son in kindergarten. She described them as cheerful, precocious children who do well in, and enjoy the, private Christian school they attend. Nancy's husband Orlando, who was born and raised two hours north in San Antonio, was not taught to speak Spanish at home. However, his job as a government officer entails some knowledge of Spanish and he has expressed desire to learn Spanish as a result. In the following story, Nancy details how her family manages languages at home:

Our kids speak English. But when we are at home [my son] just refuses to learn [Spanish], and Orlando gets upset and says “no, talk to them in Spanish.” My son tells them “we don't know what you are saying.” And that upsets me because I want them to be bilingual. But it's harder now because they refuse to watch TV in

Spanish. They're always on the tablets, their phones, or whatever. We'll change the setting on the TV so that the program will run in Spanish and they hate it. They will be complaining the whole time. For me, it's important that they learn both languages. I'm just having a difficult time. But at the same time, I get frustrated cause I'm talking to them in Spanish and they are like "What? What?" So, I get frustrated and I just talk to them in English. It's our fault because we speak to each other in English. So that's all they hear at home. Also, when we try to speak to them in Spanish, they get frustrated.

Nancy's story tells us that she values Spanish. She never indicated that there was an advantage to being bilingual in terms of monetary value—that being bilingual would aide their future prospects. However, her husband, a Mexican American who grew up outside Laredo, feels the limits of his Spanish proficiency and would like his children to learn Spanish. Nancy stated that her family attends mass in Spanish on a weekly basis. Confidently and proudly, Nancy told us "I don't do God in English. My God doesn't speak English." Her children attend Sunday school in Spanish as well. Additionally, Nancy makes it a point that her children's Sunday school teachers talk to them in Spanish, but it is not enough. At their children's private school there is no dual language available. As such, Nancy's children are further removed from Spanish. But prior to attending school her children were cared for by their grandparents who are native Spanish speakers and spoke to them entirely in Spanish. Nancy places the blame on electronic devices and the media the children are exposed to which compound the problem by being in English.

At the convivio, Lorena stated that children's peers have a lot to do with not wanting to speak Spanish. Lorena's children—all in the dual language program at the school Lorena teaches at—are exposed predominately to English at home because her husband is an

English-dominant speaker; Lorena added, though, that her children understand Spanish.

Lorena did say that for her Spanish does have more meaning, stating:

And then I have to use my chingao and they know mom means business.... And for some reason Spanish is a little bit more powerful: when you discipline the kids, and like church when we say the prayers and sing the songs it has more meaning, a more spiritual meaning. Even the romance, when you say romance words in Spanish, they are more meaningful. [Spanish] has more meaning....

Lorena emphasizes the emotional nature of Spanish and the power it has to be more meaningful than English. By enrolling her children in dual language, she wants them to maintain some semblance of bilingualism that they cannot fully achieve at home. Even so, it is not enough, to overcome the perceptions of Spanish that they get from their peers at school: that Spanish is bad, and English is good. Although, no evidence was offered to support this assertion, it has been her experience that her children's peers transmit deficit ideologies of Spanish.

Maria also finds it difficult for her children to learn Spanish but notes that one child is more apt to speaking Spanish compared to another. Her story entails that of having to not only deal with her son personally but also academically with respect to learning Spanish as a "foreign" language at school. Maria remarked:

My son refuses to speak. "Te lo voy a decir en español... y haz esto... haz el otro..." and he looks at me like "what? What do you want me to do? Just tell me in English." So, I have to translate. I was helping him with one of his Spanish classes in high school and I was reading the Spanish that he had to do. It was some type of reading literature in Spanish, and I was reading it to him. I couldn't understand it. I was reading to him and he was like "so what does it say in English?" (exasperated voice) "Translate it for me." And I'm like "oh my gosh." I was looking for some of the

words cause I was not familiar with them; it's a different vocabulary. Like I'm able to speak. I do a lot of code switching. I do a lot of Tex-Mex. I catch myself doing that, but I can't help it. My father-in-law... Maria... it's this long name. It's Basque; it's from Spain or whatever. He would always correct my husband, "you need to make sure that you teach your son Spanish." Yes... Yes... Si entiende. He understands it and he'll say "hola güelo," or "cómo estás?" or "gracias" and that's it. And with my daughter she knows more of the Spanish now. We are trying to teach her so that she'll understand more and sometimes she'll have to translate for my son, "This is what mom wants you to do" or "this is what grandma wants."

Maria touches on three key points in her response: First is that she attributes her last name, Maria, to a Spanish heritage and therefore elevates the need to learn Spanish. Her father-in-law emphasized that learning Spanish is significant for their heritage. Maria's family is Mexican American and learned Spanish because of it is their heritage language, yet she associates Spanish with her husband's "Basque" surname. As previously mentioned, to avoid any potential academic impediment, Maria's parents intentionally did not teach their son Spanish.

Second, Maria feels it is also important to learn Spanish and has had more success with her daughter who now can translate for her brother. Maria's children are four years apart, her daughter is younger but more willing to engage in speaking Spanish. Both her children were in dual language programs but only her daughter, through practice with her family, was successful in acquiring Spanish proficiency.

Third, in working with her son Maria again realized that even in Spanish, her reading skills were subpar. Maria emphasized her code switching and Tex-Mex vernacular from which she cannot disassociate. Maria reveals her internalized deficiency when she remarks that "I catch myself, but I can't help it." In "catching" herself she is self-policing

or surveilling her language (Nuñez, 2018). Yet communicating in both languages is a common practice for *fronterizos*. Additionally, Maria exhibits what Anzaldúa states is guilt for not being able to speak perfectly in one language or the other.

While the first three examples are about parents yearning to teach their children Spanish, in this next story, Julia exhibits ambivalence about the contradictions that manifest in her language practices. Julia's son Eduardo is an undergraduate student at a university in San Antonio and an assistant manager at a department store. In her linguistic practices with her children, Julia never enforced Spanish. Notwithstanding the fact that Eduardo began his schooling in a dual language program for three years at his elementary school, Julia does not see him as a Spanish speaker and "surprisingly speaks more Spanish now" that he is out of town. In this excerpt from our *plática*, Julia ruminates on her calls with Eduardo and his use of Spanish, in which she thinks it is "funny" that Eduardo engages in speaking Spanish:

Julia: And then, little by little, he started speaking Spanish at home. And now he does that... Because when he calls, I can always tell... Because he says it in English, he's like "what are y'all doing". Or he'll call he's like... "¿que iba decir, ummm... ¿Que hacen?" He sounds funny, right? Because he sounds funny, the way that he does it.

David: Why? Why do you think he sounds funny?

Julia: I think...

David: Do you think you're not used to it?

Julia: I'm not used to it. I just... I'm not used to it and because now he's in San Antonio... Because of the people that he's exposed to I wouldn't think that it would be his choice to speak in Spanish anymore. He

wouldn't have a need to do that. And even with me, because I speak the English language. Like some of these kids are forced at home to speak Spanish because that's what Mom and Dad understand. Or Grandma. He doesn't have that need with me. So now it's... I don't know. I guess he doesn't do it. He doesn't put thought to it. It's just how he does it now, because now he doesn't need to.

David: Do you think that he's longing for... It could be, don't you think that he wants to remember... It could be... Emotional or... Just you know... It feels comfortable.

Julia: It's like... A memory of home, type of thing.

David: Yeah.

In her interview, Julia states that Eduardo sounds funny when he speaks Spanish. Furthermore, she is surprised by his use of Spanish with her cause that is something that most children do with adults who speak exclusively in Spanish—just as she had done as a child with her elders. Yet, Eduardo inserts Spanish phrases when speaking with his mom. The contradiction that exists in Julia's ideologies is that even though she is a Spanish speaker, she does not expect to hear it from her son. Although she does not use the language difference against her son, she is still acting as the border inspector by examining his use of Spanish (Nuñez, 2018), thereby reinforcing a border about who is and is not allowed to speak Spanish (Vila, 2000). Julia seems to think that one transcends speaking Spanish—something that you leave in the past. In speaking about her daughter, Julia commented:

If she stays in Laredo, she has enough to get by. Cause that's the expectation we have here. We always say [you need to learn Spanish] but if you really put thought to it is it really true. About we communicate just though social.

However, Julia's languages are not in the past, in fact translanguaging is something that Julia does with her family. In telling me about her family, Julia makes it a point that her family distinguished between how they use Spanish and English.

Julia: My older sisters, they all speak Spanish now, for conversation. But then when they want to talk about... let's say like a current event or something, they'll speak in English.

David: And you speak with them in Spanish?

Julia: I speak with them in Spanish.

David: So like when you are talking about family or other people that you all know?...

Julia: Yeah, it's like if we're gonna get together or something they're like... "¿que vas a traer? Yo voy a...." they'll speak Spanish for that. But if they're gonna talk about something like, that they read... My sisters will say like... "No, it's because I was reading this or that", or at work we have special, and then the gossips, and she... They'll speak English. I don't know if that's just how they're mentally trained, like work related? At work, you speak in English, at home you can speak Spanish. Because they do that.

Julia revealed in this exchange the fluidity of her linguist experiences when she is with her family. As a participant who grew up speaking Spanish and English at home, this is what Julia feels is most natural. She notes that sometimes the language spoken is delineated by the subject of the topic. That is, Spanish is the language of gossip and speaking about familiar topics and English is the language of what they read or work-related activities. She questions if this is how her family has been "trained" mentally. Indeed, this type of discursive distinction is an implicit form of colonization. Julia is

illustrating that even in familiar places, amongst family members there are borders regarding what language is spoken is for different purposes. For things that are familiar to them like their neighbors and gossip about people they know, they tend to speak Spanish. In contrast, for work/school related they use English. The dichotomous nature of their language use is stated, but as noted in the story she used Spanish as well.

Are You Talking to Me?

Tellingly, the maestras not only spoke about their family's language dynamics, but about how they engaged with other Spanish speakers in the community. At the convivio, an exchange ensued in which the teachers discussed their different reactions to those who spoke Spanish or English to them. We had just seen a Ted Talk entitled *3 Ways to Speak English* (Lyiscott, 2014). There, Jamila Lyiscott speaks about being “articulate.” In powerful spoken word poetry, Lyiscott dismantles the notion that she is articulate because she speaks a standardized English vernacular and instead demonstrates that articulation is about her versatility of language—that is that, appropriateness is determined by context not the hegemony of English. This prompted me to ask the teachers if they thought we—as Laredoans/Mexican Americans who share common languages and history—also judge others by how they speak. Unanimously, the teachers agreed that day-to-day interactions in Laredo are not dictated by one particular language and agreed that with whom you are speaking matters, as does time and place. In other words, there are times when you can speak English, times when you can speak Spanish and times when you can get to speak with your friends a certain way, like when one employs more familiar colloquial language. But the maestras' responses to how people spoke to them without knowing what languages they speak and who they are is where the discussion exposed the contradictions in their

ideologies and ambivalence thereof. “Going with the flow” as they called it was something that you have to do. Maria explains:

Well as far as maybe judging people, or you know, I don’t. I’m not the type to. I’m not going to correct you cause I myself don’t feel that I can speak the correct English or the correct Spanish. But I don’t see it. I just go with the flow. Whoever is speaking, I join in. I’m not going to be like... I guess it just depends on the setting and the situation you’re in and where you are at. Work is work and you have to, you know, your professionalism. But when you are with your family or your friends it just changes. You adapt to what is the norm for... you are not going to pretend to be someone that you’re not. You have to be you.

Maria began by saying, yes, you do have to go with the flow based on who you are talking to and where you are at. For Maria, the rules that govern language are simple: your context and environment determine what is appropriate. Julia and the others began to push back on Maria’s notion that she does not judge people on their language practices. They interpreted Maria’s words as an admission that she too is being judgmental. Julia stated, “but you adapt cause you don’t want to be judged. You don’t judge but you have to adapt to the environment so you yourself won’t be judged.” Nuñez (2018) contends that transfronterizos—border crossers—have internalized the hyper-surveillance of the border and applied it to their language and literacy practices. That is, transfronterizos surveil one another and themselves in order to navigate spaces where they are under scrutiny by institutions. In this sense, the maestras articulate the same literacy of surveillance in how they are figuring how, when, where, and with whom they speak Spanish.

Indeed, how they are perceived by others became the topic of conversation. How they feel when they are spoken to in Spanish unveiled more contradiction and ambivalence in their language ideologies. Nancy stated that she does get offended when someone speaks

to her in Spanish without knowing who she is or asking what language she prefers, remarking:

I don't know why they talk to you in Spanish. I see it like if I go to the store and people are like "Buenas tardes, necesita ayuda?" I'll be like, "no thank you. I'm just looking around." You know? Like, "why are you speaking to me in Spanish?... Because I look Mexican? Because we are on the border? Or what?"

I get offended and I don't know why. Why? Why do I get offended? But I'm not that dark that you think I may not know any English. You know what I mean, and I feel I'm young enough that you think hey she probably went to school here. Why? Why speak to me in Spanish? And I grew up speaking Spanish because that was my first language. And I will respond to them in English and then they'll start speaking to me in English and then I'll go back to the Spanish, like "Ha! I speak Spanish."

In this exchange, Nancy takes offense to being spoken to in Spanish without her prompting it. Spanish becomes a marker of subordination in this case. Nancy believes she is being perceived as less educated. Nancy applied a raciolinguistic perspective (Flores & Rosa, 2015) when she declared, "I'm not that dark" and asks, "do I look Mexican?" Nancy's discernment intimates that because of her light complexion she thinks that people should know she is a U.S. citizen, or that her age would allude to being educated in the U.S. Furthermore, Nancy applies the double mirror (Vila, 2000) effect in which she is comparing herself to Mexican nationals with whom she does not want to be associated.

Conspicuously, Nancy suggests that she is the arbiter of when Spanish can and cannot be spoken. Nancy stated that upon responding to a person in English, she then will assert her Spanish to show that she is a Spanish speaker but deserves to be spoken to in her

language of preference. Accordingly, Nancy has become the border inspector, surveilling others (Nuñez, 2018) thereby determining what is and is not acceptable.

Julia also shared her thoughts about this phenomenon, stating:

I'm not one way or the other. I'm both sometimes I don't get offended if I go up and I place an order and they'll greet me in Spanish, and I won't get offended I'll go with the flow. But sometimes if I drive up to McDonald's and I go through a drive-thru and they are like "buenas tardes." I'm like, wait a minute...

Here, Julia begins to make a distinction about with whom and when it is appropriate to speak Spanish. Going through the drive thru and being spoken to in Spanish gives her pause. She then continued to explain her thinking:

I see the person and I'll make an assumption. I'll judge ok she's an older lady maybe she doesn't know so I go with the flow. In the drive-thru, it's like mmm wait a minute, you don't know who you're talking to. That kind of bothers me.

Julia tells us that she is both ok with and bothered by being spoken to in Spanish. While being spoken to in Spanish offends Julia, for her it does not have to do with skin color, but age. For Julia, one's age determines whether a person should speak English or Spanish. Julia would be ok with being spoken to in Spanish by an older person but not by a younger person because she feels she is young enough to that one would assume she was educated in the United States. Moreover, the idea that being spoken to in Spanish bothers her, demonstrates a deficit orientation towards Spanish and being perceived as a Spanish speaker.

Maria's response to these to comments were similar in that she too states that she is bothered but will continue to go with the flow.

I've run into that I felt like that cause before you even say anything, they are already talking to you in Spanish and I just reply, "no gracias."

However, you feel comfortable you go with the flow you have to we all do it. I'm not going to look down on someone cause they are talking to me in Spanish. That's just not me. I wasn't raised to criticize.

I've never corrected anyone like that. Like if they talk in Spanish I will reply in Spanish. Like if they ask me in Spanish when I'm in the store and I need to ask for something in particular I'm going to ask in English and hopefully they will be able to do that with me. But yo, todavía, wherever I go I say "buenos días" to whoever is there that's just the way I was raised. "Buenos días" when I see my elders. I address them "Buenos días, buenas tardes... buenas noches."

Although Maria, like Julia and Nancy, concedes that she is bothered by speaking to her in Spanish, she states that out of respect she cannot be rude or tell an elder to speak to her in English. Maria also claims that speaking Spanish is just part of who she is. This was noted in her depiction of how she enters a room and her initial reaction is to say buenos días. Stating "buenos días" is just good manners and respect—connected to the Mexican notion of *ser bien educada*, being well educated (Valdés, 1997). The fact though that these exchanges happen in Spanish also show that she is comfortable with Spanish and willing to speak Spanish with others. The language features become cultural markers of respect. The contradiction therein is that one can be offended by being spoken to in Spanish but also willing to speak to others in Spanish.

Julia was quick to comment that everyone judges at one time or another. Before the end of this exchange, Nancy questioned herself, asking, "why do I do that?... I don't know why? Maybe it's because we are in America?" This was the first time that nationality was brought into the conversation. Being Mexican is to be the other. And to be associated with

“Americanism” is to speak in English. For the maestras, at least Maria, Julia, and Nancy, it could be that they are bothered because they do not want to be considered Mexican even though being Mexican is very much a part of their culture and Spanish apart of their linguistic repertoire.

Essential to understanding the intersectionality of language, race, and citizenship is Saldaña-Portillo’s (2016) analysis of the racial geography of the border. According to Saldaña-Portillo, the border is the diving line between Mexico, a barbaric state, and the United States, which represents the purity of whiteness and English. She argues that in creating a new race, the mestizo—or mixed blood, European and indigenous—Mexico adopted a new identity that subordinated them to other European colonizers who altogether kept excluding indigenous peoples from their racial hierarchy. As such, the United States views Mexico as this barbaric land, equal to that of *indio bárbaro* of the past. Spanish, therefore, is an extension of the racial geography. To speak Spanish and be considered Mexican on the border, is to be considered less than. Speaking English and being a United States citizen offers superior status. The maestras in this section are distancing themselves from the *indio bárbaro* and want to ensure that they are perceived as a citizen of the United States and this is manifested by their being perceived as English speakers.

At the end of this exchange Lorena asked, “Could it be that deep inside we are ashamed of our roots?” Anzaldúa would argue that indeed mestizas have been taught to demean one another for not speaking the colonizers language but also for misspeaking in their native tongue—Spanish. Vila (2000) argues that on the one hand “living near Mexico allows many Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans to be in touch with their heritage...” (p.4). But he goes on to say, “the presence of Mexico around the corner is also a constant reminder of the poverty and corruption many people identify with that country” (p.4). Rosa and Flores (2017) point out that “as a result of both Spanish and US

colonialism, many US Latinxs are confronted with reified national, linguistic, and ethnoracial borders between Latin America, which is often stereotyped as brown and Spanish-speaking, and the US, which is often stereotyped as white and English-speaking (p. 6). Thus, Vila's (2000) double mirror metaphor offers us a way to think about how the maestras as grappling with the identities and subjectivities through the use of language. Lorena asks, "do we hate ourselves?" Nancy also questioned her own logic about why she would judge others for speaking Spanish knowing full well that she is a native Spanish speaker. Perhaps, Nancy suggests that their feelings of condescension about being spoken to in Spanish are couched within their Americanness. Language, therefore, is not only an identifier of ethnicity, but also of nationality. The teachers have become the border inspectors (Nuñez, 2018) as it pertains to language and by extension nationality. Flores and Rosa (2017) would argue that one does not need to be surveilled because hegemonic whiteness or the white gaze has been internalized to the point that minoritized speakers use the white gaze against one another. Up to this point in the convivio the teachers had not read Anzaldúa's chapter "How to tame a wild tongue? Yet, in their conversation they were articulating what Anzaldúa so eloquently wrote 30 years ago about the ambivalence and contradictions *fronterizos* live when having to straddle two worlds and two cultures.

TEACHING A LANGUAGE

*Humildes, yet proud, quietos yet wild, nosotras los Mexicanos-
Chicanos will walk by the crumbling ashes as we go about our
business. Stubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing
a malleability that renders us unbreakable, we the mestizas and
mestizos, will remain.*

(Anzaldúa, 1987/2012).

Teachers are the arbiters of language in schools. Up to now we have seen how language plays out for maestras in their childhood and how languaging operates in their

families and communities. The ideologies are multiplicitous and often tend to be deficit. In my observations of, and in their reflections about, their teaching, however, the maestras exhibited some disruption of the hegemony of English. In my classroom observations with the teachers, I noticed that they allowed for agency and even identified with bilingualism. Even when the 5th grade teachers, who are all in transitional programs, empowered their students in unique ways that affirmed bilingualism and Spanish.

Guadalupe, who opted to learn Spanish as a child, shared two stories in which she aims to disrupt the hegemony of English and show that Spanish is tied to authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999). In this sense Spanish is used to bridge and make connections with students and parents. In the next excerpt, Guadalupe was working as a teaching assistant to a Kindergarten teacher who was opposed to speaking Spanish with parents. Guadalupe shared:

Where my Spanish got better was when I was a kinder assistant. The teacher that I worked with refused to speak Spanish with the parents. And she would say like “No, we are in the United States and I’m going to speak English. And, they need to learn to understand me.” These are parents that are paying for education, so they look at me “¿Pues que tiene esta maestra? ¿Por qué no me puede hablar en español? and I’m like chingao, “I’m sorry. Pues no, déjame decirle... va muy bien...” or whatever.... and she would get offended that I would go and communicate with the parents. I’m like, chick, you’re not communicating with them, somebody has to. (Guadalupe, Convivio, 06/15/18)

Guadalupe asserts her agency and speaks Spanish to the parents to combat the nativist attitudes expressed by the teacher with whom she was working. As previously indicated, Guadalupe was the native English speakers who sought to reclaim Spanish. Often parents lack of communication with schools is the result of language barriers. In this

case, both teachers spoke the parents' language and had no reason other than deficit ideologies of Spanish to refrain from speaking Spanish with the parents. Guadalupe intentionally sought to undo the violence de facto English only policies set up by the classroom teacher. In this sense, Guadalupe employed Spanish to cross borders (Vila, 2000) and make connections with students' families.

The one caveat in Guadalupe's remarks is that she encapsulates the incident in the fact that the parents were "paying" for their child's education—at the time she was working at a private school—so she thought if the parents are paying, then they deserve to be spoken to in their language. However, in Guadalupe's other teaching positions, like the one that came after in Zapata, Texas and her current position in Laredo, she stated that she has taken the same approach to working with parents. Again, indexing an additive ideology¹⁴ that is mindful of parents cultural and linguist background.

It is also important to point out that Guadalupe saw this an opportunity to improve her Spanish. When she began telling the story she remarked "where my Spanish got better." Her statement conveys that interacting with native Spanish speakers would be one way to continue learning the language and that at school she added another community with which to speak Spanish.

In her discussion, Guadalupe went on to say that her ability to be fluid with her linguistic practices has changed as she has progressed in her career because she feels much more comfortable in her role as a teacher. Guadalupe commented:

¹⁴ Flores (2016) interrogates the term additive with respect to bilingual education as the history of bilingual education has been imbued with hegemonic whiteness. Essentially, he asks scholars and educators to consider for whom additive ideologies benefit—minoritized speakers or majoritized speakers learning a second language? I use the term additive in references to Valenzuela's (1999) definition of subtractive schooling in which she argues that immigrant children are provided an education that subtracts their cultural and linguistic abilities in lieu of Americanization or Anglicization.

I've noticed my English has changed in the classroom because as the years go by and you get more comfortable doing what you do, you mix that... it's not so academic anymore because with my kids it's not always this professional realm and "oh no, yes..." (mimics voice of superiority). No, it will be like if the door is about to hit the kid, I'm like "aguas te va pegar la puerta" type of thing. It's not like "oh be careful Johnny the door is about to hit you in the face." (again, mimics voice of superiority). I can't even if I tried.... There can be somebody in the classroom, like somebody "important" and I'm like "ten cuidado te vas a pegar." And I'll code switch and I don't think twice. (Convivio, Guadalupe, 06/15/18)

Here Guadalupe juxtaposes formal English and Spanish denoting that caring is not authentic for her if it is not done in a language that closely resembles who she feels she really is. Her examples, "aguas" and "ten cuidado" are immediate reactions to protecting a child from an impending accident. The instinct to use Spanish to tell a child that he/she is about to get hit in Spanish is one that comes from a nurturing side. To reiterate, Guadalupe learned Spanish from her grandmother whom she loved dearly and looked up to. Spanish is associated with her grandmother whom she loved deeply and was someone who cared for her. Guadalupe implies that language comes from the heart—a place deep inside you that is authentic and real—and will burst out when necessary despite the expectations as a professional or whomever might be in the room.

Teaching has also transformed how the maestras think about native language instruction. For Noemí, teaching kindergarten helped her appreciate the importance of your native language instruction. Up to now we have seen how she has been the most resistant to learning Spanish and using her Spanish—the group dubbed her the gringa. Noemí stated:

It wasn't until I went into kinder that I realized that they do need the Spanish. Cause I was always against the Spanish. I would be like no, school just English. Immerse

them in the English, and they'll pick it up. But when I went with the little ones and saw the actual reading program and how some parents were trying to do that to force their child to the English even though they didn't know... It was really bad. They struggled, and they failed. And, those were the students we would see in third that were super against school. Cause they had failed since they were small. And now I'm more open to the idea that let them learn their language and reading and then transition them correctly.

Teaching kindergarten after working in 3rd grade for 12 years facilitated Noemí's understanding that students need to learn their native language to facilitates learning in their second language. She made the connection that the students who struggled most in 3rd were the ones who had been denied native language instruction. She recognized the problematic nature of parents opting out of their children's bilingual program. In doing so she can now advocate for students. As a dual language teacher, she has made calls to recruit students for the dual language program. Additionally, she enrolled her son in the dual language program. As someone who was the most opposed towards learning Spanish, Noemí's epiphany indicates that the hegemony of English can be disrupted.

In their teaching, the maestras also exhibited additive bilingual ideologies. I observed Maria while she was in the midst of preparing for her STAAR¹⁵ Science test. Maria is the pathfinder teacher for her 5th grade team, an accomplishment of which she is understandably very proud. In her plática, Maria stated she was grateful for Dr. Nava, her previous administrator, for bestowing this "opportunity" on her as she does not have a master's degree. The first day that I was there, the school had just received their scores from the Math and Reading STAAR. She began her day by congratulating the students on

¹⁵ STAAR is an acronym for State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness.

a job well done as they had attained high pass rates in Math (91%) and reading (77%). She then proceeded to provide the students with their scores individually. After speaking with the student individually she comes back in to the classroom and says, “I’m very proud of *mis pollitos*.” She then goes on to give the students a pep-talk and tells those who did not pass that they “need to remain positive. ¡*Si se puede!*” It is noteworthy that she speaks in Spanish when stating affirmations with her students. Again, this shows the emotional nature of speaking Spanish. Some sentiments cannot be totally expressed in English but rather need to be expressed in Spanish for emphasis or deeper meaning.

Because Maria is in a transitional bilingual education program, at 5th grade the language of instruction is in English. Spanish for the most part is non-existent in 5th grade as most of their students had “transitioned” in third grade. In fact, the other 5th grade teachers that I observed also spoke exclusively in English as well. Once the discussion about students’ test scores concluded, they began to change classrooms as the teachers regrouped for test preparation. Once Maria got settled, she began reviewing a question regarding solar energy. After reading the question and answer choice she stated:

T: Solar has the word s-o-l in it. What does sol mean?

Ss: Sun.

T: For those of us that are bilingual boys and girls, you have an advantage. I’ve told you that several times. Some of these science words you can say “oh, I can make the connection because I know Spanish.”

In telling the students that they are at an *advantage* for being bilingual, she is encouraging the students to use whatever linguistic knowledge they have to make sense of the science content. According to Maria, she constantly reminded her students of this advantage. When teachers acknowledge the linguistic resources that their students bring to

the classroom, they support positive identity development and open up spaces for students to translanguage (García, Ibarra Johnson, Seltzer, & Valdés, 2017).

Not all the language interactions were positive and exhibited the same contradiction that manifested in the aforementioned conversations. In the following example, I was walking with Nancy—a reading interventionist—to pick up her students for class. This group was in 5th grade and are considered newcomers to their school because they arrived from a foreign country—Mexico. As we picked them up, Nancy asked them all to tell me where they were from. One-by-one they each told me they were from Nuevo Laredo, the city directly across the river from Laredo. Nancy began this exchange by first speaking to the teacher in Spanish. She then proceeded to talk to her students.

Nancy: ya estan grandes (laughs, talking to the teacher). Get your bag.

S1: se me olvidó my backpack.

Nancy: [S1] go get your brother.... Lets walk to the classroom.

S2: mi papa le dijo a mi mamá.

Nancy: You dad said what to your mom?

S2: que le dijo a mi mamá...

Nancy: What? He's going to say what to your mom?

After this exchange, S2 silenced himself. Nancy wanted him to tell his story in English. She did not make the direct statement, but that was her intention in questioning his every utterance. In this instance, Nancy was acting as the border inspector, surveilling her students' language (Nuñez, 2018). She was reinforcing a border between English and Spanish (Vila, 2000) and inscribing a discourse of appropriateness (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

Later, in her classroom, as Nancy got her materials ready, the students could be heard in the background chatting in Spanish. When Nancy's student concluded her story, without skipping a beat, Nancy turned, looked at the students, and said "ok, now tell each

other in English.” Nancy’s command was explicit: no Spanish, English only. Nancy proceeded to carry out her lesson in which she was checking the students’ fluency in English. One-by-one she assessed them while others could be heard speaking in Spanish. Nancy ceased to police their language and went on with her work. As a reading interventionist, Nancy’s job is to ensure that those students who are struggling readers learn to read fluently and with comprehension in English. However, how this happens can be less violent/subtractive (Valenzuela, 1999) and more humanizing (Freire, 1970; Bartolomé, 1994; Fránquiz & Del Carmen Salazar, 2004).

Later, I asked Nancy about this instance in her class. Specifically, I wanted to know why she stopped policing the language and why she herself started to speak Spanish with the students if she is supposed to be the “model” for them. Her reply was simple and exact stating “because I identify with Spanish. That’s how I make a connection with them [her students].” Indeed, Nancy was not the optimal model of standard English for her students; at the beginning of this exchange, Nancy spoke Spanish to the other teacher. By speaking Spanish, Nancy flouted an English-only rule showing her students that she herself is a Spanish speaker, that school is a place where Spanish is spoken, and that she is a rule breaker. However, as teachers they have privilege in that space, by silencing them she engaged in linguistic terrorism (Anzaldúa, 1987). Taming a tongue by means of institutionalized forces is difficult for speakers, live Nancy, whose tongue is not tamed. In that respect, Nancy personifies the contradiction, whereby “nothing is thrust out, the good the bad, the ugly” (Anzaldúa, 1987).

As bilingual teachers, the maestras exhibited much more additive ideologies towards the use of Spanish. Although, the nature of their jobs is complex in that they are all functioning within a transitional bilingual education model, with the exception of Noemí and Guadalupe who are English teachers in the dual language program. They each found

spaces for their students to use Spanish. These instances were simple, yet significant considering the heavy amount of English speaking that is expected and the constraints placed on them by the assessments (Palmer, 2011). More than anything, these interactions display that their ideologies are not totally imbued with a deficit orientation towards Spanish. Rather, it shows that in subtle ways Spanish is able to penetrate the monoglossic English ideologies. In Chapter Eight, I will unpack the significance of these understandings for bilingual education.

CONCLUSIONS

The U.S.-Mexican border es una herida abierta, where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds to form a third country—a border culture” (Anzalúda, 1987/2012, p.25).

Anzaldúa’s metaphor of the *herida abierta*, or open wound, encapsulates the ideologies of the maestras who live in nepantla, caught between two worlds. In this chapter, we have seen that as children, in the present lives, and in their teaching that the maestras’ language ideologies are contradictory and that they are ambivalent towards those contradictions. Therefore, the psyche is trained to embrace these contradictions. The wounds of the grating are real in how linguistic terrorism is used against and by them. Consistent with research in the field (Martínez, Hikida, and Durán, 2015; Palmer, 2011) the teachers language ideologies were multiplicitous and contradictory. However, these multiplicitous and contradictory ideologies are the result layers of Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism.

The maestras used their language practices to surveil one another and to assert their citizenship. Nuñez (2017) tells us that literacies of surveillance are used for the purposes of knowing when and where to use Spanish and English. She argues that this is a byproduct

of living on the border were people are hyper-surveilled. The teachers acted as both the border inspectors and border crossers at different times. The central marker of identification for them, however, was being thought of as English speakers. In Vila's (2000) study of the El Paso, "Spanish is both the language spoken in Mexico and the cultural marker for a great part of the Mexican American community." At the same time, Vila states that "Spanish to name poverty... local hegemonic discourse invoking both national and ethnic identification systems" (p. 83). In my study, the maestras played both sides by which at one-point they use Spanish as a signifier for their identities but also saw it as a marker of a Mexican national identity from which they wanted to be disassociated.

Like, Vila (2000) I argue that their resistance towards Spanish is part of their sensemaking insofar as the double mirror causes them to resist anything that can be associated with the Mexican nation-state. How they made sense of themselves as Spanish speakers contradicted the fact that they are native Spanish speakers who are Mexican descendants. Anzaldúa (1987) elucidates that "we call ourselves Mexican-American to signify that we are neither Mexican nor American, but more the noun 'American' than the adjective 'Mexican'..." (p. 84) and goes on to say that "...the struggle of borders is our reality..." (p. 100). Thus, the maestras' language ideologies are the struggle of borders: competing for acceptance of the white gaze, while holding on to the past.

Analyzing with Anzaldúa's (1987, 2015) theory of *nepantla* we can better understand language ideologies insofar as these ideologies become transfixed in competing mechanisms of hegemony. It is important for researchers to reframe the debate about language ideologies and seek out theoretical frameworks that inform the genealogical thinking behind why teachers can hold contradictory ideologies about language. Anzaldúa (1987) states that "stubborn, persevering, impenetrable as stone, yet possessing a malleability that renders us unbreakable, we the mestizos, and mestizas will remain" (p.

86). The bilingual maestras have built a tolerance for ambiguity and embrace the ambivalence of their contradictory ideologies that I argue has sustained border communities for such a long time. Although sometimes violent in the ways the maestras use the language differences against one another, the maestras encourage their children to learn Spanish and model translanguaging for their students. Mignolo (2000) application of border thinking, therefore, becomes necessary to crack the global designs. In the following chapter, I extend this conversation to the ways the maestras used their literacies to unsettle the hegemony of English.

*Because I, a mestiza,
Continually walk out of one culture
and into another,
because I am in all cultures at the same time,
alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,
me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.
Estoy norteeda por todas las voces que me hablan
simultáneamente.
(Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 99)*

Chapter Six: Bilinguaging Love through Bi/Literacy

- David: What is literacy?
- Guadalupe: I just thought of reading and writing.
- Noemí: Basic reading skills, the foundations of reading and writing.
- Julia: I think, the only thing that came to mind was reading.
- Nancy: Literacy is everything phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension....
- Maria: Being able to read and write is the basic foundation being able to express yourself whether it be in speech through writing.
- Lorena: Ability to read but it's got to be for a purpose for entertainment to learn something to get information out of it.

In coming up with a definition for literacy, the bilingual maestras fixated on autonomous/functional literacy practices (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2002) that are a part of schooling. Conversely, stories about their lives depict that bi/literacy came in both traditional and non-traditional ways. In this chapter, I center the maestras' literacy practices to further expand on the first research question about how teachers' lives illuminate their language and literacy ideologies. I argue that the participants were taught to read the world through the process of bilanguaging love. According to Mignolo (2000), "Languaging is the moment in which "a living language" (as Anzaldúa puts it) describes itself as a way of life ("un modo de vivir") at the intersection of two (or more) languages" (p. 264). The previous chapter revealed that the teachers' language ideologies reflect nepantla—embracing the contradiction and living in ambivalence. Furthermore, their language ideologies speak back to and are an embrace of the hegemony of English. In this chapter, I use bilanguaging love to show how their bi/literacy practices emulate the maestras' epistemologies that counter global designs of coloniality. Moreover, I use Mignolo's

(2000) concept of border thinking and bilanguaging love to claim that their bi/literacy practices and ideologies can only be understood within the context of the space they inhabit—the borderland where *nepantla* (Anzaldúa, 1987, 2015) is way of life and knowing. In doing so, the participants embody bilanguaging love that not only teaches children how to read and write for traditional literacy but also how to read the world (Freire, 1970) through two languages as a *modo de vivir*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“THE CELEBRATION OF BI OR PLURI LANGUAGING IS PRECISELY THE CELEBRATION OF THE CRACK IN THE GLOBAL PROCESS BETWEEN LOCAL HISTORIES AND GLOBAL DESIGNS, BETWEEN “MUNDIALIZACIÓN” AND GLOBALIZATION, FROM LANGUAGES TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND A CRITIQUE OF THE IDEA THAT CIVILIZATION IS LINKED TO THE “PURITY” OF A COLONIAL AND NATIONAL MONOLANGUAGING”

(MIGNOLO, 2000, P. 250).

Mignolo (2000) contends that local histories speak back to global designs. Global designs, according to Mignolo are the legacy of settler colonialism that established the current world order resulting in the hegemony of English and subordination of Spanish. I argue that the maestras’ literacy practices, while not inherently novel, are informed by the local histories of the space they inhabit and speak back to global designs of coloniality. Specifically, these maestras operate in a system in which American imperialism is layered on top of Spanish colonialism that took hold of Indigenous lands and ways of knowing and created the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987). In this space, the *frontera*, there is a clashing of ideas, ways of knowing, languages, and cultures. In the previous chapter we saw how the participants grappled with their linguistic identities in spaces where they engaged with Spanish speakers. While four of the six of maestras are native Spanish speakers, they sought to distance themselves from the racialization of Spanish as a barbaric, uneducated

language. At the same time, they feel compelled to hold onto their Spanish as a means of survival in a world dominated by the hegemony of English.

Analyzing with Mignolo's (2000) ideas of bilanguaging love, I argue that their stories demonstrate that bi/literacy is a means for bilanguaging love. In speaking back to the "purity" of monolanguaging educators open up spaces for student agency in the classroom. The examples presented in this chapter from the maestras' reveal how they were taught to bilanguage love. They spoke about how they continue to bilanguage love with their children at home and in their daily lives through bi/literacy practices. Furthermore, they embody bilanguaging love in their classroom practices with their students by showing that the production of knowledge can be bilanguaged. In doing so, the teachers crack the process of colonial global designs.

To understand the bi/literacy practices of teachers, I draw on sociocultural frameworks of bi/literacy. Street (1995) defines literacy practices as the "broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts" (p. 79). As such, literacy events, or individual events that can be captured and documented (i.e. reading a book to a child) (Heath, 1983), become part of a general practice of understanding literacy within a wider cultural context. In this sense, reading a book to a child before bedtime is an event within a general practice of reading to children as a way to school them in autonomous literacy practices. Street (1995) however, wants us to account for the larger cultural and broader definition of what constitutes a literacy practice within the multiple literacies that people know. Freire (1970) contends that experience teaches us to read the world and the word. That is, that what we experience teaches us to critically engage in interrogating and deconstructing oppressive systems and structures. Through *concientización*—critical reflexivity—Freire believed that one could engage in praxis, or critical reflection and change. However, *concientización* does not materialize

without praxis. In this chapter, I argue that despite being taught to privilege functional literacy practices at a very young age, the maestras' lived experiences enable them to read the world—even if not fully realized. Although they do not exhibit *concientización* (as conceived by Freire), Mignolo's (2000) concept of bilanguaging love helps elucidate how the maestras crack global designs in the face of hegemonic English and the privileging of functional literacy practices.

TRADITIONAL BI/LITERACY PRACTICES

As a determining factor for academic success (IRA, 2017), functional literacy played an essential role in the maestras' lives as children. Indeed, in addition to only defining literacy as reading and writing they each described a process by which they were schooled in the importance of functional literacy practices by their parents. At the *convivio*, I asked the maestras to share their literacy journey with me. Each one of them described what it was like to learn to read in school and how their parents aided that learning at home. Namely, this was done through the process of going to the library to check out books. Below are their stories pertaining to their literacy journeys.

Maria

As children we receive many messages about what we are and what we are not. Maria is no different and recalled being labeled a struggling reader. Although Maria recalls having books at home, when she asked her mom if she had been read to as a child, she responded “no preguntas porque no me recuerdo... don't ask.” Maria did go on to say that,

As far as literacy growing up, at school, I remember reading the *Golden Books*, the *Little Golden Book*. I remember those series. I also remember *Highlights*. I do remember, apparently when I was in elementary, I struggled with reading. I was in

this reading lab. That is what they used to call them, labs, back then. In this reading lab, of course they had the earphones and they used to have books, the ones with the tapes. I would get that additional help, I guess because I was struggling. I remember it was in first or second grade. I do remember in Kinder, with Ms. Martinez, my kinder teacher had all the nursery rhymes and I would love saying them.

In this anecdote Maria describes very traditional literacy learning as part of her schooling: nursery rhymes, the *Golden Books*, *Highlights*. This demonstrates that she grew up with a lot of English print around her even though she lived in a Mexican American family on the border. Most telling however, was that Maria remembers going to the reading lab to receive assistance for her purported struggling reading. In previous discussion, Maria said that at home Spanish was the only language spoken and that she struggled to make the “transition” to English. In reflecting on these experiences, as a parent she adjusted how she would prepare her children for school. Maria stated:

When I had my kiddos, of course, literacy was important to me. I didn't want them to struggle supposedly like I did when I was growing up. So, I always had books for them. I'm glad to say that I did that that I read with them. Because to this day J.J. and Cassandra, they never struggled with reading. Like you know they've always... J.J. when he was in 5th he got commended. He's always done well with reading. Math is a different subject but reading yes. And Cassandra, she's reading at an 8.5 reading level. So, it's good. I'm glad I did the right thing. (Holds up books to show) The tradition of *El Cucuy*, *La Llorona*, and *Ghost Fever*, we do this one every year because I love it. We do the activity... (Referring to *Ghost Fever*). So, I expose them to the English and the Spanish. (Referring to *El Cucuy* and *La Llorona*).

As a mother, she did not want her children to struggle “supposedly” she had in school. She was very proud that her children did not struggle with reading and noted traditional schooling measures as evidence of their success: Cassandra, reading at an 8th grade level and her son, Jorge, attaining Commended Performance¹⁶ on a state standardized assessment. Whereas Maria was a struggling reader, her children are not. This illustrates the value placed on testing measures associated with functional literacy practices in U.S. schools. Maria, because of her own schooling, has internalized the significance of these measures.

Maria also shared two traditional Mexican folklore books with us: *El Cucuy* (Hayes, 2001) and *La Llorona: The Weeping Woman* (Hayes, 1998). The two books are bilingual books and part of Maria’s home library. Mexican folklore books such as these play an instrumental role passing along cultural knowledge and are told to children to teach them life lessons (Barker, 1979; Reese, 2012). In this way, the books are cracks in the global design as they keep alive a tradition that was once an oral story told by one generation to another.

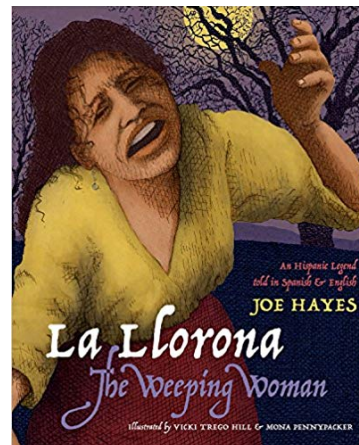
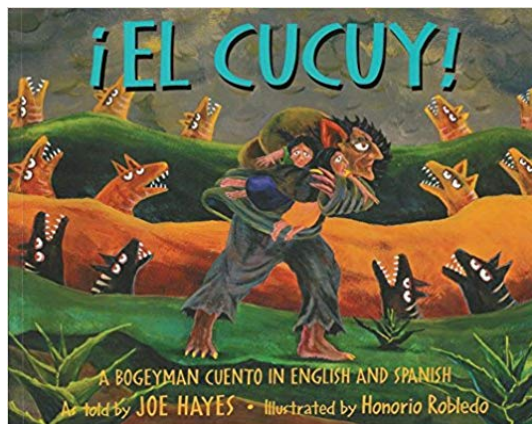


Figure: 6.1. Maria’s Picture Books

¹⁶ Commended performance is the highest recognition one can receive on the state mandated exam.

Lorena

Lorena did not describe any difficulties learning how to read. Growing up in a single parent household with limited financial means, Lorena's mom worked two or three jobs to make ends meet. At one point, Lorena's family lived with her grandparents for a period of time. However, the cohesiveness of their family unit was never in question. She recalls going to the library as a child. She described their Sundays as "mass, public library, and then Pizza Hut." She also mentioned why literacy was important to their family:

I grew up at the public library. Growing up in a single-parent household with no money and no cable, our entertainment was either playing outside or reading books. And my books were stories that my mom read to us in Spanish, and I had to practice my own reading in English.

Not much detail is given in terms of what was read to her in Spanish. Nonetheless, Lorena's mom read to her in Spanish. Here we begin to see the bifurcation of English and Spanish. Spanish was something her mom was able to read to her and English she had to practice on her own. Going to the library to check out books is a very traditional literacy practice and is accessible to families from working class backgrounds who may not be able to buy books. Her mom infused a love for books at a young age, a tradition she continues with her children. At the convivio, Lorena showed us her children's library cards that are from their younger years—one to two years of age. She made it a point to tell us that they are still toddlers in their library card photos to underscore the importance of literacy in her family.

As a trained librarian, Lorena loves books and remembers purchasing one book in particular as a school teacher. *Icy Watermelon/Sandia Fria* (Galindo, 2008), is about a family who enjoys eating watermelon on the front porch. Depicted on the cover is a Latinx family and the title is in both English and Spanish. Not only does this artifact bring with it a cultural connection in terms of a family tradition, but also a linguistic connection.

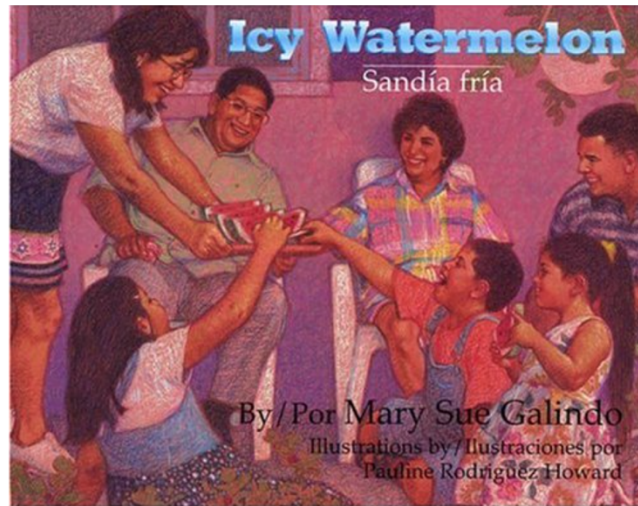


Figure. 6.2. Lorena's Picture Book

According to Lorena:

It's one of our favorites at home. I acquired it even before I had kids. It's about a family that eats watermelon outside, so we can relate. This is what I read to my kids. We still go to the library to check out books. But every once in a while, they say "Mom, read us the watermelon book." And I read it to them: one day in English and the next time will be in Spanish. Literacy is a big part of our home and I try to read to them in both languages.

Reading to children, again is another literacy practice. Through this practice she is able to convey to her children the importance of reading. Notably she reads in English and Spanish. In doing so, Lorena is articulating the crack in the process of colonial global designs by demonstrating to her children that literacy is not solely a practice that is done in English. Rather she commences the process of bilanguaging love through the use of bilingual books that also stress the importance of family. Mignolo (2000) speaks about how global designs tell us that the production of knowledge is contained in the hegemony of

European languages such as English, French, and German. Although, Spanish itself is a colonial language, as the language of Latin America, Spanish became subordinate to English. The racial geography of Mexico and the U.S. (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016) further advances this bifurcation of where knowledge is centered. Hence, because Lorena continues the tradition of reading to her children in Spanish, she not only re-centers where knowledge is produced, but she does so through bilanguaging love in that she uses texts that make a connection to their own familial practices.

Julia

Julia recalled her literacy being a part of her child but not as something that was explicitly taught. Rather, she recalls that her parents modeled literacy practices and going to the library as a means to take up time and get out of the house. Julia remarked:

I think for me growing up I cannot recall my parents reading to me. I remember me seeing them (her parents) read. They would read those little novelas—revistas Mexicanas. I would see them read but they wouldn't read to me. So, I would do a lot of that mimicking for the reading that I would make up according to the pictures. Again, because my siblings were older, they would go to the library—not to read, right—they would go hang out at the library. So, I would tag along. And they didn't want me in their little group of friends, right, so I would have to go off and read on my own cause they were hanging out.... There was a park two blocks away so they would go to say that we did go to the library and then take off to the park. So whatever book I would check out I would take to the park and that's where I would read cause they didn't want me around their friends listening to their stuff.

In going to the library Julia was able to read books alone because her siblings were using the library as a “hang-out” with their friends. In the process however, Julia developed

her literacy skills. Moreover, Julia's parents modeled what good readers do by reading revistas mexicanas—a type of Spanish weekly magazine. Wanting to pretend to do what her parents were doing, Julia recalls “mimicking” their practices. She couched it in terms of “not actually reading” but certainly pretending to read is part of a child's literacy development.

One Spanish literacy practice that Julia described happened at church where she attended mass weekly. At church, Julia practiced reading in Spanish. Julia stated:

I would also do a lot of the reading at church, but it was in Spanish. I remember in high school, I would go to mass by myself. And I would always go to the Spanish mass because that was the noon one and that's the one I was willing to wake up to and go to. I remember going to mass, since I was in mass even when I graduated, and I would always go to the Spanish mass. Maybe the last ten years I started going to the English mass because of Celina. But even when they are singing and I hear the music, in my mind I'm doing it in Spanish. Because I've always done the Spanish—the singing, the prayers, and everything Spanish.

The church played a significant role in Julia's Spanish literacy development (Baquedano-López, 2000; Ek, 2008). As an adult she goes to a weekly bible study in Spanish at her church. Although Julia states that she attended the noon Spanish mass because that the one she was willing to go to, she insisted on continuing that tradition as an adult by opting to attend weekly bible study in Spanish. Julia talks about translating the prayers and songs from English to Spanish in her mind. Similarly, bilinguals on the border have engaged in this translation method for comprehension (Degollado, Bell, & Salinas, in-press). In keeping up with her Spanish literacy skills, Julia is holding on to a language that was denied to her through her schooling. Mignolo (2000) tells us that “*Bilanguaging then becomes an act of love and longing for surpassing a system of values as a form of*

domination” (p. 272). Although Julia is bilanguaging in her mind when she prays and sings in Spanish, she is resisting the complete transition to English even at church, thereby making a crack in the global design.

Nancy

Like the others the library was a weekly event for Nancy. She did not recall that her parents read to her, but Nancy recollects the ways in which they signaled the importance of reading by taking her and her sister to the library and buying them the books that they wanted. Nancy stated:

I don't remember growing up with my parents sitting and reading to us. I don't remember... cause my mom always worked and she worked on Saturdays. My dad would take Linda and me to the library and we spent the whole morning reading books at the library. We would always check out the *Berenstain Bears* and *Amelia Bedelia*. We would take them home and swap books and then read them and the following Saturday we would go back and check out more books. But I don't remember them reading to us. I see my mom reading to my kids now. They'll say, "Tita read this book to us." They are all bible story books. I would stay at my grandmothers and she would read. She would read the Bible to us. She would be sitting down in the rocker and would say "ven mijita" and she would read to us little portions of the Bible. She would sit at the table vamos hacer una oración y vamos a leer Pan de Vida. It was little plastic box, like a tooth pick box. It would be the verse of the day, the thought of the day. We would read that, and we would pray. Then, we would eat. My parents? I don't remember that they would. We were always buying books from the *Troll*. We had a subscription to *Highlights*. We had all *The Golden Books*. *The Poky Little Puppy* was my favorite.

In ruminating about her childhood, Nancy demonstrates that reading was a part of their lives even if she cannot remember being read to. Nancy's parents emphasized the importance of literacy by taking her to the library and buying her and her sister books. For example, Nancy had subscriptions to *Trolls* and *Highlights*, indicating an English print rich environment. Though her family are native Spanish speakers, Nancy's parents reinforced the idea of English literacy and thereby the hegemony of English. At the same time, Nancy's grandmother did read the Bible to her in Spanish. Through reading the Bible and practicing their religion in Spanish, *fronteriza* families crack the global. (Julia, Guadalupe, and Lorena also talked about practicing their religion in Spanish.) Now, Nancy's mom reads Bible stories to her children, but in English. For people as religious as Nancy, the church plays a significant role in how they understand the world around them. The church is a more personal space but opens up avenues for different ways of thinking and knowing and keeps Spanish literacy skills afloat.

Now that they have children, Nancy continues the tradition of buying books. Nancy's husband is not a native Spanish speaker but endeavors to reclaim his Spanish, he enforces a rule of buying books in Spanish. Nancy stated:

We buy a lot of those Spanish/English books and we buy them not because that's my preference to go look for those but because Orlando is like "if you're going to buy them a book it has to be in Spanish." And the kids are like "ughhh in Spanish...." So, we look for one that has both so that we are reading it Spanish, but they are reading it in English.

Her husband imposes this rule because he was not taught Spanish as a child. Nancy did state that her children do not pay much attention to Spanish when reading. Another literacy event in which they involve their children in Spanish is having them watch TV in Spanish But Nancy's children do not enjoy watching Spanish tv shows and complain about

it. Nonetheless, the act of buying Spanish/English books is one way in which Nancy and her husband disrupt the hegemony of English.

Noemí

As the daughter of teachers, Noemí was immersed in literacy. She had an abundance of resources and books and was an advanced reader at a young age. She attended a private Catholic school in Laredo and remembers being selected to partake in a reading club of sorts at her school.

The earliest thing of reading I can remember is when I was four years old and I had just started at San Martin. Our teacher, Ms. Alexander... I was part of... it was like a group of five of us, we already knew how to read. We were like emergent readers or whatever. She would take us... she would have our parents take us to her house on Saturdays. And we would spend practically the day there reading at her house. And practicing and doing all these little activities.

These experiences continued through high school where Noemí would choose electives that had to do with reading and writing, remarking “science, math, no... I’ll take the novel.” Noemí opted to take two advanced literature course that exposed her to the canon of Eurowestern literature. She recalls the impact taking those electives had on her college experience in Laredo where she was considered one of the advanced students.

As a mother, Noemí now performs the same literacy practices for her son. Noemí stated that the first place they go to out of town is Half Price Books. They have a library at home where Jr.—her son—catalogs all his books. To this day, Noemí chooses a set of books to read over the summer. While all this is seemingly traditional, she did elect to place Jr. in dual language. As someone who has been reticent to speak and learn Spanish, this in and of itself represents a disruption in the process of the hegemony of English. At school

Jr. learns Spanish from his peers. As such, while Noemí may not be able to expose her son to the level of Spanish that others might be able to, she ensured he was part of the dual language program, thereby preparing him for a world that is different from hers.

Guadalupe

Guadalupe was the other native English speaker in the group. She recalls that her mom worked for a daycare. As such she described her mom as literally her “first teacher.” She stated:

I started daycare since I was 3, at the School House on Calle del Norte. And I remember I started regular school, she (Guadalupe’s mom) would leave me homework. She would leave me like a list to do. My prayers it was in English. But of course, with my Grandmother it was always in Spanish. That’s really where I picked up the Spanish, if anything it was the prayers. The Golden Books, *Amelia Bedelia*, that’s where I first started noticing the idioms. I thought those books were hilarious. It was the same concept, we used to go to the public library on Saturdays, we would pick out books, and my mom would before bedtime. She would read a page and I would read a page.... When we were in school... I brought my *Charlotte’s Web*, the *Nancy Drew Mysteries*—I think I read all of them there at Mary Help.

The literacy practices that Guadalupe was exposed to at home are all part of a print rich environment that reinforced her schooling practices. Guadalupe competed in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) and won a practice for oracy because she recited *Fredrick* by Lio Lionni (1967), which she stated that she “absolutely loved”. She said that in school they read the canon in Ms. Treviño’s AP English literature course. To this day, she reads for pleasure. Now she has moved on to romance novels. A recent graduate of the

reading education program at LSU, she believes that all children should have a strong foundation for reading.

Functional literacy was very much part of the maestras' lives at a young age. They all recalled very traditional literacy practices that they now continue with their families. Going to the library was a popular choice of all their parents. In very subtle, yet important ways, they disrupted the hegemony of English. For Julia, it was watching her parents read revistas—Spanish magazines—and going to church in Spanish. Similarly, Nancy and Guadalupe talked about reading the Bible and memorizing prayers in Spanish, respectively. For Lorena and Maria its reading to her children in Spanish and English. For Noemí it is enrolling her child in a dual language program. While not all their literacy practices are imbued with criticality as theorized by contemporary scholars (Freire, 1970), we see how disrupting the hegemony of English in this space happens subtly, as in reading Spanish/English bilingual books. Cultural knowledge is also passed on through books like *El Cucuy* and *La Llorona*, both common Mexican folktales. Therefore, the maestras were introduced to a type of bilanguaging (Mignolo, 2000) that is unique to their community. In the following pages we will see how these disruptions come from the home and become part of their practices at school.

READING THE WORLD

In their aforementioned stories, the maestras spoke principally of functional literacy practices that were modeled and/or inscribed in them by their parents. Indeed, for their parents, academic success was equated with upward social mobility and future financial success. Spanish played in a role in their lives to the extent that it was used for some literacy practices, of which the church plays a significant role in maintaining a semblance of Spanish literacy in their current lives. In the following section I speak about the ways in

which the teachers were taught to read the world (Freire, 1970). As I previously indicated Freire tells us that experience teaches us how to read the world. Accordingly, our lived experiences facilitate our meaning and sense making in our functional literacy practices. Considering Mignolo's (2000) notion of bilanguaging love, he speaks about the "disarticulation of colonial languages" of which functional literacy practices are part. Mignolo (2000) adds that "this love is a restitution of the secondary qualities (e.g. passions, emotions, feelings) and of the impurity of language that have been banned from education and epistemology since the very inception of early colonization and modern rationalization" (p. 274). In other words, there are cultural ways of knowing left outside the production of knowledge within colonial legacies that must be accounted for. To this end, I take the notion of abuelita epistemologies which locate the "abuela as educator, tradition keeper, and cultural warrior" in families (Gonzales, 2015). In this section I discuss the ways in which the maestras were taught to read the world through their lived experiences and the ways in which their mothers and grandmothers served as mentor texts for passing on cultural knowledge as a way of reading the world.

Dorfman and Cappelli (2017) define mentor texts as "pieces of literature that we can return to again and again as we help out young writers learn how to do what they need may not yet be able to do on their own" (p. 6). Just as mentor texts serve as model for how novice writers can become better writers, mothers and abuelitas also serve as mentor texts for how to read and write the world. The stories shared are both happy and painful. Not all stories, however, can be shared. The purpose of sharing these narratives is that they illustrate that ways knowing and being emerge from lived experiences. In sum, in this section I depict how learning to read and write the world emanates from mentor texts like family elders is a literacy practice.

One of the central influences in these women's lives were other women. The women in the family broker knowledge and culture and in that sense are teaching others how to read the world. Guadalupe spoke of her grandmother and how she taught her ways of knowing by the example she lived. Julia, who lost her mom at a young age, learned through taking care of her mother how to care and be vulnerable with her students—one of the reasons Julia became a teacher. Maria, whose mom endured a lot pain and suffering, wanted her daughter to receive an education so that a cycle of dependency on men could be broken. Something that she speaks about not only with her children at home but also her students at school. Noemí's mom did not impose Spanish on her daughters but now that she has grandchildren is playing *loteria*—a Mexican bingo game—with her family. And for Nancy, her mom is an example of service to others. Nancy admits that she wishes her mom would do less for others to better take care of herself. I will illustrate later in this chapter, while the teachers privilege functional literacies, it is the *abuelita* epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015) that allow them to make cracks in the global design—albeit subtle.

At our *plática*, Guadalupe shared her grandmother's' story as someone who greatly influenced who she is today. For Guadalupe, her grandmother modeled strength, religion, and caring for others. One memory Guadalupe shared dealt specifically with watching her grandmother take care of her grandfather when he became ill with diabetes and then watching her grandmother blame herself after Guadalupe's grandfather's death. Although Guadalupe did not expect that reaction from her grandmother, she say how she persevered after losing her partner of several decades. So, when Guadalupe went through a rough patch in her life, she turned to her grandmother for wisdom. Guadalupe stated:

With my grandmother, I think it's those life lessons... because I saw everything she went through... You know. Uh. I moved back, I went through a break up, and it was like a rock hard break up. And she was a person like trying to, so in the mid of

all my crying and whatever, she was the one that told me like “*más vale sola que mal acompañada* (better to be single than in a bad relationship)“, like, it’s better that you found it now, that he was like a piece of shit, than like, later on in life she would marry him then go through this and then what? You know? When she got real sick, I ended up staying with her. So I spent like, about four months more or less with her, and it was like taking care of her, waking up in the middle of the night, like go to the restroom whatever, like, waking up in the morning for work and I would go and you know I haven’t gone to the restroom yet make sure she was ok and then I wait for the *palomita*, and would switch right. And that was a different experience, because with her I saw, I saw that she never gave up. ... And she was the one who taught me the importance of...like your faith. You know? This is the lady that we’d pray religiously at three o’clock every day the *Rosario* (*Rosary*). Religiously. Uh. And It’s that like, the importance of religion, like the... like I guess the role like, for example, in her kiss La Virgen de Guadalupe (Virgin of Guadalupe) She was a devote catholic, she was like, she was the caring person to turn to. You know, and she had it everywhere. We cleaned up her house after she passed away, I think we had like eighty rosaries. I’m sure there’s more we didn’t catch.

Guadalupe’s grandmother represented for her a way of knowing and seeing the world—someone from who she would learn about life’s lessons. Abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015) talk about how the abuelita is the center of knowledge and understanding in the family unit. Guadalupe’s abuelita is such a representation of knowledge and wisdom. She taught her life lessons about loss, love, and faith. One of the consejos Guadalupe’s grandmother gave to her was about love. Valdés (1997) defines consejos as “spontaneous homilies designed to influence behaviors and attitudes” (p. 125). A common dicho in

Spanish about being in a relationship with someone who does not appreciate you or treats you badly. Guadalupe's grandmother also passed along her strong faith in the Virgen de Guadalupe. Guadalupe noted this time and again at the convivio and during our plática. In passing along this knowledge, abuelita epistemologies enable the maestras to have a strong sense of self based in love.

Similarly, Maria shared in her plática a story from her family this painful. Because of the pain these stories bring her family she asked me not to share. In keeping with other scholars who refuse to share data that is compelling for the research, I honored Maria's request. That said, Maria's mom offered consejos for life that have sustained Maria. For Maria, her mother is the center of wisdom and knowledge. Maria stated:

she said, "I need you to make sure that you get yourself an education." And she was like, "As you can see, you never know who you're gonna marry, how they're gonna treat you, how you're gonna find yourself, so I want you to make sure that you're independent or you can support yourself. You don't have to rely or tolerate anything." Because things were different back then, and a lot of times, you would put up with a lot and you would stay because of the customs that were handed down to you, so...

Maria then went on to talk about how she relays this message to her children as well, stating:

So I guess I am the same way with my kids. I have told my daughter, especially my daughter, "please educate yourself. I need you to be an independent woman. Make sure that... " because of the things that she's seen also in my house over the years, she understands. And she knows she needs to do. And my son the same thing, you know? I tell him, I said, "I'm not gonna live forever. As much as I would love to be

here, one of these days I may not be. I wanna make sure that I can go and say you'll be okay and be able to support yourself."

Using almost the exact same language with her students, Maria passes this message to her students. In doing so, Maria transfers knowledge through the form of *consejos* and that not all learning can be acquired through a textbook; some life lessons, like the one Maria's mom learned, are acquired only through life experience. To avoid further anguish, *consejos* become a means of rearing children in Mexican American families. By telling her students, Maria reveals authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999) that is grounded in *abuelita* epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015). Notably, Maria not only speaks to her daughter about this, but also to her son. Maria does emphasize the point about wanting her daughter to be an "independent woman."

Life's lessons teach us many things about ourselves shape who we are today. For Julia, who was the youngest in her family, her entire life was shaped by losing her mother at a young age. In reflecting on her life, this was the first story Julia told me and this is where she gets her strength and nurturing side. Julia recalled her mom being a housewife and volunteering at her elementary school in Laredo. She brought with her to the *plática* the cut out of her mom receiving a volunteer award from the local elementary school. Julia and her mom walked with each other to school every morning and then things changed. In our conversation, Julia emotionally recounted her story:

My mom got sick... I guess I was in elementary. She got ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease. It was aggressive to where she became like immobile, right?... I remember her being a volunteer like up to at least my fifth-grade year in elementary. But then that's when she got sick and I remember that she would always go to doctor's appointments. I remember she even went across like to like to a *curandero* and *brujos* and stuff like that. Because nobody could tell her what was-what was wrong

with her. So she...we... we... I remember even going to that extent that they would take her across um to like brujos, to see if they could help her. Umm and then... it was my, it had to be my freshman year—because yeah she wasn't involved when I was in high school--My freshman year ya she-I guess it kept progressing and progressing to where it affected like her-her body and it got to where it affected her breathing so I remember one day she was rushed to the hospital. So... she ended up going to the hospital and um... she stayed in the hospital four years. She was there for four years. Umm so it was like my whole high school years. She did have um-she ended up having a trach and uh... like we all-because after four years that you get to know the nurse and staff, and we had to, I guess we didn't have to. But *we learned*, like how to-to clean it out and everything. There was always someone with her. My sister, and I'll show you the picture cuz that's the other picture that I have. One of my sisters would always stay with her during the night. So during the day, *si estaba sola*, then as soon as we were out from school if it was me or my other sister cuz I have a sister that's a year older, we would go and stay with her until late in the evening, then my sister would show up and stay with her.

In the process of having her mother in the hospital at such a young age, Julia had to quickly learn a lot about what I was like to care for someone with a debilitating disease. For example, Julia learned how to clean the trach. She remembers spending holidays in the hospital with her mother. Specifically, she recalls one New Year's Eve that she stayed with her mom and could see the fireworks from the hospital window. According to Julia, this experience made her a more nurturing person. She considered becoming a nurse because of what she had learned at the hospital. She decided that being a nurse would be too emotional for her and thought that teaching would be a better fit. Julia also attributed the close bond she has with her family to her mom's passing as well. After that moment, they

became a more cohesive unit and to this day celebrate each other's birthdays and holidays. Most recently, they had decided that one family member would host a monthly get together at her/his home. Not for any special reason other than to bring the family together to eat and play games.

Other ways that abuelitas teach their children to read the world is through the passing on of traditions. Noemí—whose story is riddled with an anti-English bias—said that there is an important role that her mother plays in taking care of RJ. While Noemí's mom is a former elementary school teacher and spends her time with RJ reading and having him explore, she also chooses to play games with him, like Loteria. She also prays the rosary with RJ. Noemí attested that these are cultural ways of knowing that do indeed need to be passed from one generation to the next and that she is happy her mom is able to play. Gonzales (2015) claims “Grandmother do not just hold on to knowledge; they actively educate in a manner unique to heir contextual histories as well as their ancestral knowledge with intentionality. Those traditions are like a form of curriculum” (p.44). Unquestionably, this is what Noemí's mother is ingraining in R.J. Julia added, that she would have to be that kind of abuelita because she does not know how else Eduardo's children would learn about culture and Mexican traditions without teaching it intentionally.

Collectively, these experiences have taught the teachers about authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999; Noddings, 1986) that is rooted in ancestral wisdom (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994; Delgado-Bernal, 1998). For these teachers, these experiences carry them to their teaching and emerge in a way of knowing and seeing/reading the world (Freire, 1970) that is rooted in abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015). In speaking about experiences shape our understanding, Anzaldúa (2015) states that

in formulating new ways of knowing, new objects of knowledge, new perspective, and new orderings of experiences, I grapple half-unconsciously with a new

methodology—one that I hope does not reinforce prevailing modes. I come to know how to “read” and “write”; I come to knowledge and *conocimiento* through images and “stories” (p. 4).

Like Anzaldúa, these teachers come to new understandings through their experiences, thereby learning to read and write the world through those understandings. As mentor texts, their mothers and *abuelitas* impress upon them ways of navigating the world that disrupts Eurocentric ways of knowing. Bilanguaging love, therefore, comes not only from the use of Spanish and English for literacy but in the ways we navigate and negotiate a world to impinge upon us a western Eurocentric knowledge. In the next section we will see an extension of this disruption in the global design through their use of languaging for bi/literacy in schools.

TEACHING BILANGUAGING

...love for being between languages, love for the disarticulation of national languages, and love as the necessary corrective to the “generosity” of hegemonic power that institutionalizes violence...”

(Mignolo, 2000, p. 274)

Mignolo’s (2000) quote speaks to the necessity to disrupt the hegemonic powers that govern our language and literacy practices. For centuries, children have been stripped of their mother tongue only to be left with colonial languages. Mignolo tells us that in so doing, we concede that the production of knowledge can only be had in colonial languages like English. As I previously indicated, theorists recognize that Spanish too is a colonial language, but because of the subordination of Spanish as a Third World language, it becomes the language of the subaltern (Mignolo, 2000; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Therefore, knowledge produced in Spanish is also considered less than in the U.S. The *maestras* in this study were taught to privilege English, functional literacy as a means to academic

success. Their definitions of literacy at the beginning of the chapter speak to that. I then presented their stories in which they learned to read the world through what might be considered abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015) that decenter the self and speak to the need to do for others and the common good. In what follows, I will reveal the data that merges these understandings into the classroom and where spaces for biliteracy occurs in the context of English transition programs. I begin by presenting the discursivity of hegemonic English through photos that I took while observing. Then, I exhibit their use of translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014) for academic purposes, highlighting its utilization for bilanguaging love (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016; Mignolo, 2000).

The Discursivity of Hegemonic English

Upon walking into the schools and classrooms where the maestras taught, I immediately noticed the ubiquity of English print material throughout their schools. Spanish displayed on bulletin boards, as depicted in Figure 6.1 below, presented information for parents. Announcements provided by Ranchos ISD, such as the upcoming Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)¹⁷ testing and the official standardized dress code, are furnished in Spanish and English, with English taking priority over Spanish. Announcements exhibited from other sources are exclusively in English.

¹⁷ The TELPAS is an English language proficiency test administered to English Learners in Texas every spring. The assessment measures English language proficiency in reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

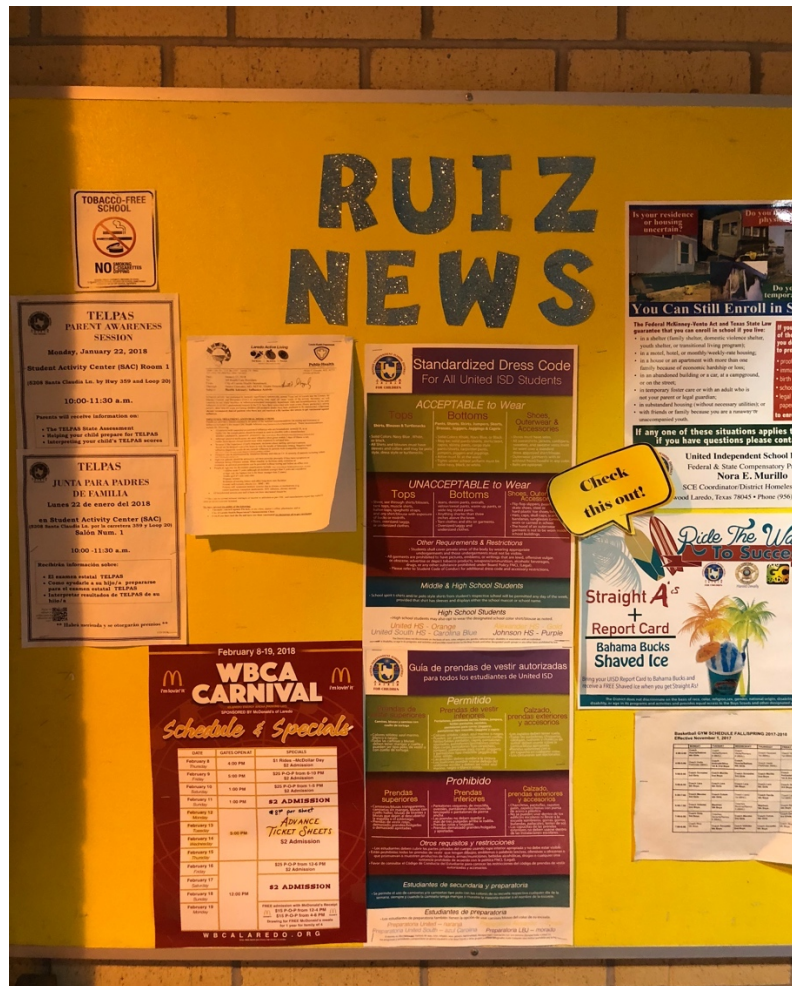


Figure 6.3. Informational Bulletin Board, Rodriguez Elementary School

Maria's school did offer a more welcoming presence for Spanish to their parents in that the entrance displayed welcome messages in English and Spanish. Figure 6.3 depicts how the entrance to Elementary school #3. You will notice here too, thought that English come first before Spanish in each photo. Nuñez (2018) the separation of languages creates borders and implies a privileging of English literacy. Where this is an abundance of English print material, such as the photos depicted in this section, there is a surveillance going on that stipulates an English-only ideology.



Figure 6.4. Welcome Signs Soliz Elementary School

The teacher's classrooms represented the discursivity of monolingual English despite the fact that they are all bilingual education teachers. In a transitional model like the one used by the school district where these maestras taught, it is not surprising that the institutions exude hegemonic English. With regards to Spanish literacy, there was one sign in all the schools that portrayed some semblance that literacy can be a Spanish enterprise. Figure 6.5 reads, "leer es vivir para una vida saludable." It appears to be a campaign by the Laredo of Tomorrow Coalition in an effort to bring about awareness of literacy and healthy living.

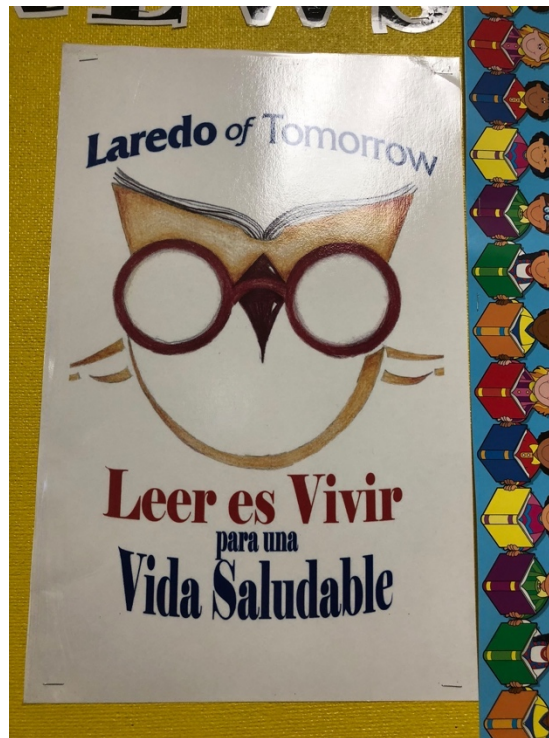


Figure 6.5. Laredo of Tomorrow Promotional Reading Sign

With English being prominently displayed throughout the schools and classrooms, there was one more notable sign that demonstrated the ambivalence of a bilingual community transitioning to English. Figure 6.5 portrays the irony of promoting

bilingualism and working for bilingual students while showing an all English signage about the cognitive, affective, and linguistic domains. The district mandated signage regarding the bilingual domains were prominently displayed in each of the maestras classrooms. The posters belie the bilingual educational transitional model afforded to the bilingual students at Ranchos ISD. In other words, how can you truly be worried about the cognitive, affective, and linguistic well-being of bilingual students if they cannot read, in their home language, the purported goals of the district?

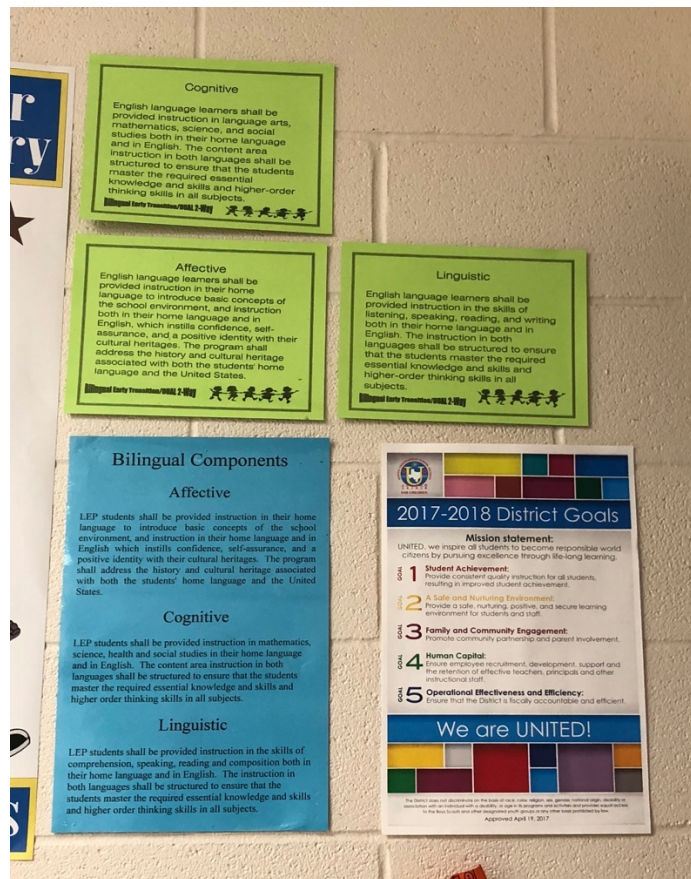


Figure 6.6. Bilingual Education Components

The maestras' classrooms were also emblematic of the hegemony of English. In Figure 6.7, I use Nancy's classroom to indicate how English and Spanish are dichotomized. Nancy has two tables, one for English instruction (right) and one for Spanish instruction (left). The English table shows considerably more resources available for the students than the Spanish table. When I asked Nancy why she uses two separate tables, she said it was easier to keep the resources for each language separately.



Figure 6.7. Nancy's Reading Tables

I share these photos of the schools and Nancy's classroom to show how the semiotics of the spaces where the maestras are working make the push towards English prevalent. By erasing Spanish from the discursive field, the school district and teachers are in effect telling children that English is not welcome in the school. And where Spanish is welcome, it takes a subordinate role to English. Even so, the teachers did not succumb to the English only mentality and opened up spaces for Spanish to be used.

Cracks in the Global Design

As teachers, literacy is an important part of their job. In a schooling system where transitioning to English is paramount, the teachers often abide by the rules and have learned to work within the system. As bilinguals who know what is best for their students, they find ways to disrupt the system that privileges the monolingualing of national languages like English. I argue that these moments are cracks in the global designs (Mignolo, 2000) and allow the students to conceive of knowledge production in more than one language. Furthermore, these cracks emanate from a place of love instilled in the teachers through abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015).

One manner by which the maestras bilanguage love is through vulnerability. By that I mean, that the maestras allow students to correct them for misspeaking. In Nancy's statement below she reveals how students are allowed to correct her in class. Nancy's statement about her work with native Spanish speakers is indicative of the sentiments expressed by the teachers:

In the position that I'm in, I work with recent immigrants. You saw those kids they are pretty good in English; they are very strong in Spanish. A lot of times when I would talk to them in Spanish, they would laugh at me "ay Ms. Nancy... así no se dice... se dice así..." and they would correct me. One of them would tell him,

“don’t make fun of her.” And I’m like, “no, if I say something wrong, correct me because I don’t want to teach you the wrong way. If you know that I’m doing it wrong, you tell me.” And I would try, to make them feel comfortable that they could correct me.... Five-year-olds would correct me in Spanish.

First, Nancy wants us to take note of the fact that she is a reading interventionist and works with “recent arrivals,” or students who are attending a U.S. public school for the first time. As a reading interventionist, her job is by its very nature to intervene in the child’s learning and facilitate the transition to English. However, Nancy’s philosophy has always been to make sure that her students feel comfortable in the classroom and that their language is valued. In this case, Nancy is being corrected for misuse of Spanish. The students, who in this story are 5-year-olds, have the knowledge and skills to know what is and is not correct Spanish. While scholars would argue that we should not dichotomize language as such, in this moment, Nancy is humanizing the child by honoring his Spanish expertise. By engaging in this type of interaction with the students, Nancy is undoing the teacher/student binary whereby she is the expert and he is there to learn. Nancy is also engendering *confianza*, or mutual trust, between she and the students (Fránquiz & Del Carmen Salazar, 2004). I maintain that in this example, Nancy disrupts the teacher/student relationship in which the teacher is all knowing. Moreover, the students demand that Spanish be taken as seriously as English in this setting. In other words, where schooling involves the teaching of standardized English, the students inserted their own Spanish standardization in this space.

Nancy advanced Mignolo’s (2000) idea that knowledge can be produced in a language other than English when she allowed for translanguaging to occur in her classroom during a literacy lesson. This lesson was conducted with a group of recent arrivals who are advanced in their Spanish reading but are transitioning to English. The

comprehension passage, entitled *Animal Ways*, is like a “mini STAAR¹⁸ passage.” She begins by asking about what the title means and what follows is the exchange she has with the students.

T: Animal Ways. Look at the title. What is Animal?

SS: Animal (in Spanish)

T: and Ways?

S1: Lados. Así como... así lados.

S2: tamaño.

T: It means different things. You’re thinking *weighs* como *el peso*. This is *Animal Ways*. *Ways* is like *las maneras*... las maneras de los animales. *Animal Ways*, o sea las cosas que hacen los animales.

....

T: In this paragraph the word *threatens* must mean? In this paragraph... in this paragraph.... What does that mean?

S1: en este párrafo

T: so we are going to be looking in this paragraph. The word *threatens* must mean...

S2: de que trata este palabra...

...

T: And these are the definitions in the answer choices. A. causes a feeling of joy. B. Wants to make friends with. C. Shows signs of hurting. What is causes a feeling of joy?

S2: causa una... emoción

¹⁸ STAAR is an acronym for the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness—a state madnaded yearly assessment for students in the 3rd-8th grade.

S1: una emoción... como una emoción de felicidad

T: Una emoción de felicidad, ok. B says....

Nancy begins by breaking down the title to make a prediction about what the story might be about. She asks in line 1 what is Animals when the students respond Animales in Spanish, Nancy does not redirect but instead continues by asking what the second words is Ways. As the students are making sense of the word in Spanish, Nancy understands that they are thinking about the words weighs as in weight rather than ways as in a manner of doing something. So, she clarifies in Spanish. Again, without worrying about what language the students are making sense of the comprehension passage, Nancy allows for the production of knowledge to happen in Spanish. The test the students will be taking is going to be an English version. This continues in the second part of the lesson when she begins to review the comprehension questions that the students will be asked. The students respond to her English questioning in Spanish and as soon as Nancy knows that they are comprehending what they are being asked, she proceed with the lesson. Lastly, in the section just after, where they are reviewing the answer choices, Nancy does the same thing and once they end their review of the comprehension questions, the students proceed to read the passage aloud in English.

Not only does Nancy allow for the students to use Spanish, but her responses are also sometimes in Spanish. In lines 6-8 Nancy translanguages. She models for the students that her language is done in two named languages (Garcia & Wei, 2014). By modeling this Nancy is disputing the global designs in the process by acknowledging the local histories that take into account the use of two languages as a means for meaning making in the social, political, cultural, and commercial way of life. Carrillo & Cervantes-Soon (2016) postulate that translanguaging is “an essential component of border pedagogy that seeks to not only value students’ linguistic and cultural practices, but that also aims for social

transformation and the decolonization of knowledge and identities” (p. 290). As translanguaging relates to Nancy, these are small but important cracks in the global design. (We will see later on how the teachers feel surveilled by administrators for using Spanish.) Moreover, in Chapter Five Nancy stated that for her Spanish is a means of connecting with students.

Like Nancy, Guadalupe also does this type of translanguaging in her classroom. I argue that translanguaging is a type of bi/literacy event that teaches children that the world is not dichotomized but that they can think from the dichotomies as Mignolo (2000) states. Guadalupe is the English teacher in her dual language program. She teaches math and English language arts. In first grade, her students are still young and do a lot of Spanish speaking as they have not entirely “transitioned” to English. In the following example, I observed while attending Guadalupe’s classroom, I noticed that she too translanguages when needed. The following is an example of her direct teach.

T: Today we are going to be talking about shapes. What is a 2-D shape? Do we know?

Ss: No!

T: A 2-D shape is a flat shape. How many of you all have seen a 3-D movie?

Ss: Me

T: the movie where you use the glasses? Donde se ponen los lentes? Donde se ven las cosas que vienen así a ellos...

....

Si no me entienden, me dicen.... All of these are going to be flat shapes. O sea, no resaltan. They stay flat.

...

¿Me entines, Job? ¿Si o no? ¿Me entiendes lo que estoy haciendo? Los lados y las esquinas. ¿Si me entiendes? Estamos hablando de los diferentes.... (Teacher begins to think of the word for shapes, then pauses). How do you say shapes in Spanish? (Asking researcher.)

David. Figuras.

T: ¿Figuras, right? Las diferentes figuras. Ok. ¿Estas viendo? cuantos lados tiene y cuantas esquinas tienen.? So, por ejemplo, square tiene cuatro lados y cuatro esquinas. Alright if I look at a rectangle... ¿Job, cuantos lados? How many sides?

S: Cuatro.

T: Four, ¿verdad? ¿y, esquinas?

Guadalupe demonstrates linguistic dexterity by switching in and out of named languages. She begins by first asking the students a question in English. Then, when she realizes that her Spanish students are not following along proceeds to translanguaging the entire lesson. She also repeatedly tells her students if they do not understand they should tell her. There is one student in particular that she calls out in the lesson by asking how many sides. She then immediately repeats what she said in English. Guadalupe feels comfortable teaching her students in both languages and this was common event in her observation. Immediately following the lesson, she told me that Job was a recent arrival and shared this snippet of information about him:

T: And it's funny cause he'll be the first one to tell you.... When he started, he was like "no te entendí...." And I asked, "porqué nó?" He's like "solo hablaste en inglés. Yo no entiendo inglés." I'm like hmmm.... And he's this small and he's the first one to tell you.

Interesting to note that she states “he’s this small” as if to say “who would have thought” that a child so small would be so direct about his learning needs. I would argue that if Job had not taken the agency to detail what his needs are, Guadalupe might not have used Spanish in her subsequent lessons. Taking into account the student agency, Nancy and Guadalupe make another crack in the global designs (Mignolo, 2000) of the hegemony of English. This was a humanizing experience for both Job and Guadalupe that changed how she thought as a teacher and her students, again building the *confianza* needed to decolonize the education process (Bartolomé, 1994; Fránquiz & Del Carmen Salazar, 2004).

For Carrillo and Cervantes-Soon (2016) “translanguaging changes the locus of enunciation to a border position, and thus illuminates and brings into dialogue potentially conflicting practices and points of view in creative, interdependent and productive ways” (p. 291). Indeed, what Job did was to change the locus of enunciation, not wanting to succumb to the pressure of the hegemony of English, making his learning comprehensible. Figure 6.1 depicts Spanish writing over English spelling.

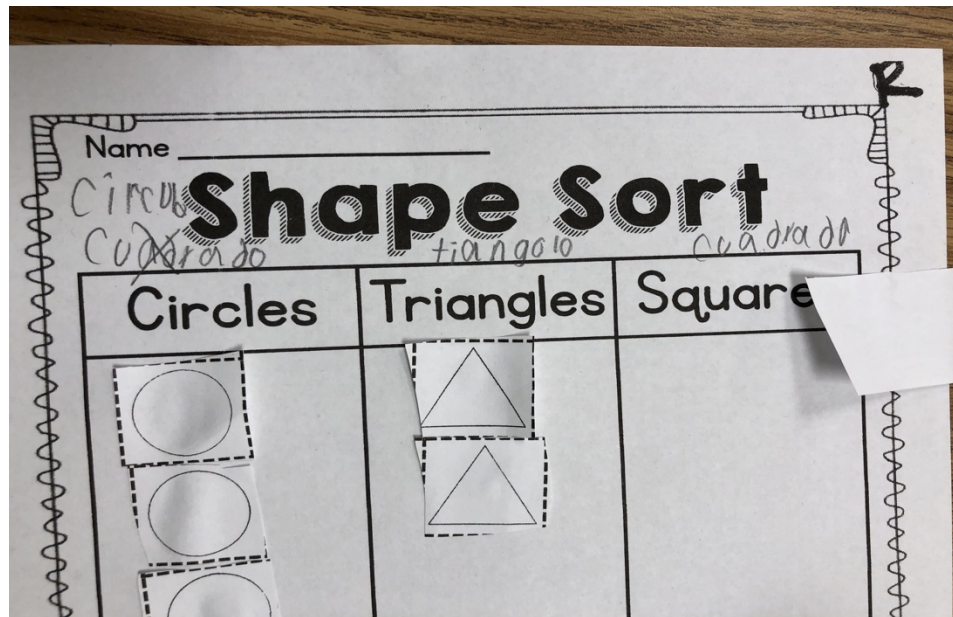


Figure 6.8. Job's Worksheet

In writing the Spanish translation for each word, Job made this a bi/literacy practice that facilitates his learning in both languages. As Guadalupe and I walked around the room I noticed and she acknowledged the fact that he is agentic. She looked at his paper and told him in Spanish that circle was not *cuadrado* but *círculo*. So, he marked out “*cuadrado*” and wrote “*círculo*.” Had Job not asked for his Spanish translation and had he not written the meaning of each word, he might not have made the grade for this shape sort. But because he augmented the worksheet to fit his needs, he is able to accomplish the task at hand.

Julia's class was another example of this type of learning. She was reviewing for the Math STAAR when I came to observe. Her class was made up primarily of ELLs but only one student who was Spanish dominant because she was also a recent arrival. This student sat at the very front of the class where Julia stood at the smart board. As the lesson progressed and she began to ask students questions in English it became apparent to Julia that the student was not making sense of the content. So, as she finished her line of

questioning in English. She walks over to the student and begins to reiterate everything in Spanish. Below is what was said.

- Julia: Can you read that? What does it say?
- Student: Costomer.... (struggling to read English text)
- Julia: Customer, yes. The total number of customers who completed the survey was 13,249. The total number.... total (in Spanish) total de qué? de las personas que respondieron. ¿Cómo va agarrar el total de las personas? ¿Qué son totales...? ¿Va sumar? Va restar? Va multiplicar? O va dividir? Que va ser?
- Student: Sumar.
- Julia: ¿Qué es lo que va sumar? Totals de personas... Cómo va agarrar el total de personas?
- Student: Sumando.
- Julia: ¿Sumando cuáles? los ratings? las calificaciones que les dieron? o la frecuencia, the frequency? so los va sumar y cuando sume todo los cuatro juntos tiene agarrar un total de que? de acuerdo de esa opción.... So no le da esa total esta es su respuesta ahora cuando lo sume como va a sumar que opción que le puede hacer para sumar esos valores. Puede sumar los cuatro a la misma vez. como mas lo puede hacer? puede sumar los cuatro y agarrar el total o puedes sumar los primeros dos, agarrar la respuesta y luego sumar el tercero y agarrar la respuesta y luego sumar el último a ver si agarras lo mismo. ¿Cómo se siente más ajusto... haciéndolo dos por dos o los cuatro juntos?
- Student: Haciendo dos por dos.

Julia: puedes usar este espacio aquí o este espacio acá.

Julia adhered for the most part to the strict separation of languages. In fact, for the most part, Julia modeled academic English in her math problem solving think aloud as a means for her students to internalize the thought process. However, in speaking to this student in Spanish, Julia is disrupting again the production of knowledge as an inherently English. When the scores came in, Julia told me that the student she worked with that day—who took her state assessment in English—passed.

Speaking Truth to Power

Three classroom examples presented all revealed the linguistic dexterity of the teachers. Furthermore, they illustrate the potential for translanguaging to be used as an anticolonial pedagogical practice (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016). At the same time, the maestras have internalized that translanguaging is an inherently deviant linguistic practice (Anzaldúa, 1987). In Chapter Five they talked about the use of Spanglish as if it were a crutch. Scholars have shown this to be untrue (Martínez, 2010). At our convivio, the maestras brought up their own translanguaging practices and gave reasons as to why they employ translanguaging as a pedagogical practice. Maria was the first one to talk about why she translanguaging, stating:

When it comes to the language part in my classroom, you probably saw that I do a lot of codeswitching, a lot, because I try to relate to my kids. Because I was in their same situation when I was in school. I would have wanted to have that connection with my teacher. Therefore, I see myself that I have to have that connection with my kids.

Maria wants us to know that she relates to her students by “code-switching¹⁹” a lot. What was most telling about the exchange was that she was almost sorry for why she does the codeswitching almost as if it is an inferior way of talking. Nancy added:

I think we all do the same with code switching, for the same reason. I think that administrators forget what it was like to be in the classroom because then they call it to our attention “Don’t code switch. Those kids are not going to learn the language if you keep talking to them in Spanish.” But then how are we going to get across to them? How are we going to bond with them so that they can feel comfortable enough to ask us questions? To talk to us? To want to learn?

These ideas that translanguaging is bad come from administrators who Nancy says have forgotten what it is like to be in the classroom. In Nancy’s argument she wants to humanize the teaching and learning process and wants her students to feel comfortable about with her. Nancy and Maria point to the fact that they feel like their language and literacy practices are being surveilled (Nuñez, 2017).

By surveilling the language and literacy practices of teachers, administrators place constraints who feel that the education process needs to be more humanizing. As portrayed above, the discursivity of the hegemony of English saturates their schools; the maestras receive messages both overtly and covertly to eliminate Spanish by means of transitioning students to English. Employing abuelita epistemologies, (Gonzalez, 2015)—that is, teaching children “how to adapt and blend their cultural traditions according to changing needs and changing environments” (p. 44)—the maestras serve as mentor texts, using translanguaging to humanize schooling. Bilanguaging love (Mignolo, 2000), therefore,

¹⁹ The maestras used the term code switching and Spanglish. I argue that what they are engaging is translanguaging because languaging emanates from their ideolinct which they talk about in Chapter 7.

comes from their cracking of the global designs by being subversive to the hegemony of English and serving as mentor texts for resistance.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

“...the subalternization of knowledge in the modern world system seems to be creating the conditions for an “otherwise than epistemology” out of several articulations of border thinking, in its exterior and interior borders.

“Border thinking, in other words, is, logically a dichotomous locus of enunciation and, historically, is located at the borders (interiors or exteriors) of modern/colonial world system...”

(Mignolo, 2000, pg. 85)

For Mignolo (2000) border thinking derives from the exteriors and interiors, “thinking from dichotomous concepts rather than ordering the world in dichotomies” (p. 85). In other words, one learns to think from both local histories and global designs. The locus of enunciation becomes not an either/or proposition but an either/or/both. In this chapter, I used Mignolo’s (2000) concept of bilanguaging love to illustrate how the maestras speak back to the hegemony of English. Bilanguaging love is an act of caring rooted in an *other* epistemology as the necessary corrective for years of oppression. In other words, it is a type of love that allows for the thinking not only between languages but between epistemologies. As this relates to the maestras, Eurocentric western notions of functional literacies are privileged and were taught to them at a young age. Alongside that, however, they were also taught abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015) that have grounded them in love and in humanizing schooling. Together, these represent not only the articulation of bilanguaging love but crack the global designs of coloniality.

Like Carrillo and Cervantes-Soon (2016), I concur that through translanguaging “a new discourse is produced in which the two languages are no longer fixed nor associated

with a single national identity and subaltern voice can be emerged” (p. 291). One of the ways that the maestras bilanguaged love was through their translanguaging. Translanguaging for them was illustrative of their linguistic deficiencies (Anzaldúa, 1987). For the maestras, however, translanguaging is the only way they felt that they could make a connection with their students. The highly restrictive English only environment in which they are constantly being surveilled by their administrators and reinforced by the discursivity of hegemonic English. Hence, translanguaging is a crack in the global design. A limitation of my study that I will discuss in my last chapter is that I did not spend enough time in the field to further expound on the maestra’s use of abuelita epistemologies. Notwithstanding this limitation, by allowing translanguaging to happen in the classroom, the maestras also served as mentor texts for disrupting the hegemony of English.

In Chapter Five the maestras displayed ambivalence to the contradictions in their language ideologies. Yet, they could not entirely untangle themselves from their linguistically Spanish and culturally Mexican roots. So too, in their literacy journey we saw that cracks in the global design manifested and the voices of the subaltern emerged. Bi/literacy practices transpired at home when they read Mexican folklore books in English and Spanish. For instance, books like *La Llorona* and *El Cucuy* evoke their Mexican cultural tradition. Another site where bi/literacy is supported and the maestras crack the global design by is at church where Spanish plays a central role. Nancy stated in Chapter Five “My God doesn’t know English.” This is a powerful statement in which Nancy invokes the Divine as Spanish speaking, superseding the hegemony of English at school, home, and society. To that end, the privileging of functional literacy practices at school is certainly problematic, but there is a semblance of abuelita epistemologies (Gonzalez, 2015) that evoke Mignolo’s (2000) theorizing of bilanguaging love and help to decenter the hegemony of Eurowestern epistemologies.

Mignolo (2000) states that "...bilinguaging, in certain situations and in certain colonial legacies could lead the way toward radical epistemological transformation." What the teachers in this study were doing in their classrooms, what they were taught in their lives at home through traditional literacy and ways of reading the world, were not inherently critical as defined by contemporary scholars like Freire (1970). However, by understand the context in which these events occurred, and the coloniality of the space we can see that there is very much a part of the maestras that is cracking the global design. As such, their language and literacy ideologies demand that we think of how their experiences might look not from a non-academic perspective and to appreciate what they are doing to model bilanguaging love for their students.

Chapter Seven: Staring in the Mirror at the Indio Bárbaro: Towards Border Thinking in Bilingual Education

The inhabitants of Laredo were always conservative. They remained faithful to Spain during the Mexican revolution, to Mexico during the Texas revolution, and to the old established customs even to this day.

(Guerra, 1941, p. 2)

Young Texas-Mexicans are being trained in American ways. Behind them lies a store of traditions of another race, customs of past ages, an innate inherited love and reverence for another country. Ahead of them lies a struggle in which they are to be the champions. It is a struggle for equality and justice before the law, for their full rights as American citizens. They bring with them a broader view, a clearer understanding of the good and bad qualities of both races. They are the converging element of two antagonistic civilizations; they have the blood of one and have acquired the ideals of the other. They, let it be hoped, will bring to an end the racial feuds that have existed along the border for nearly a century.

(González, 1930 p. 477).

In the period after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) Mexicans living on the U.S. side of the border had to come to terms with new epistemologies and ontologies. Guerra (1941) and González (1930) provide insight as to the shifting ideologies that existed in the borderlands at the beginning of the 20th century stating that there is both a longing for the traditions and customs of the past while having to survive in the world of the future. Not even one hundred years removed from the Treaty, these women from the *fronteriza* were theorizing and historicizing for their *gente*, what it meant to live on the border. In their words, they aimed to capture a spirit that had existed for before the U.S. annexed the Southwest. Both statements index an ideological positioning that situates the land, customs, people, and language in flux. In Chapter Five, I considered the ways in which the maestras' language ideologies are illustrative of living the physical and psychological borderlands that Anzaldúa calls *nepantla*. Then, in Chapter Six I discussed

how despite being schooled to privilege functional English literacy, the maestras bilingauged love through their own abuelita epistemologies and translinguaging as a component of their border thinking. In this chapter my aim is to answer the second research question: *How do the language and literacy ideologies of frontera bilingual maestras inform their conceptualizations of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education?* In this chapter I argue that their language and literacy ideologies are part of a genealogy of thinking in which they have mapped on and internalized the racial geography (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016) of the United States and Mexico as part of historical colonization. I then illustrate the ways in which the maestras' musings about bilingual education are part of their nepantla (Anzaldúa, 1987) and call for a border thinking (Mignolo, 2000) approach to bilingual education in which the maestras articulate the need to work within the systems they have been afforded. In this sense I argue that the racial geography of bilingual education is that of staring in the mirror at the indio bárbaro.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Nancy: Dile a Mr. Degollado de donde vienes.

Sarai: Nuevo Laredo.

Mevla: ¿Y tu Anali? Dile a Mr. Degollado de donde vienes.

Anali: Nuevo Laredo.

Nancy proceeded to explain to me that the two girls we were picking up for her reading intervention class went to school with one another in Mexico. Bright and enthusiastic children, the two girls were part of a group of five new comers to the United States that Nancy taught in her Spanish intervention class which was comprised of older students—4th and 5th graders. All five were from Nuevo Laredo. In the moment, I expected to hear the students speak about coming from the interior of Mexico or a Central American

country. I remember thinking, “these students were not really that ‘new’” as they were from Nuevo Laredo, the city directly across the Rio Grande from Laredo—the students were about two miles away from where their previous schools are located. However, policy stipulates that these students be labeled as such and Nancy utilized the official term to speak about these students.

Saldaña-Portillo (2016) points out that Laredo and Nuevo Laredo “are geologically, architecturally, and “racially” far more similar than dissimilar... because historically, economically, ecologically, and socially these cities form one cultural landscape” (p.3). Yet, in that moment Nancy was distancing and othering the students by pointing out that they were not from Laredo proper but from *el otro lado*—the other side (Vila, 2000). And the people from *el otro lado* are not to be confused with people from this side. Vila (2000) attributes this disjuncture to the “all Mexican is poverty” trope and from which Mexican Americans seek to disassociate. In this chapter I draw on Saldaña-Portillo’s (2016) book, *Indian Given* to discuss how the racial geography of Nuevo Laredo and Laredo seep into the maestras’ psyche in regard to their conceptualization of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education.

According to Saldaña-Potillo (2016), “Heterotemporality and racial geography as a theory of the present offer a model for understanding the clash of the multiple racial epistemologies of coloniality and postcoloniality transpiring in one region, one-citizen subject at a time” (p. 25). Theorizing through the racial geography of Mexico and the United States accounts for the multiple histories, epistemologies, and ontologies that overlap the borderlands. Mexico through the auspices of the Spanish colonialism embraced the concept of *mestizaje*. The idea of *mestizaje* is in its own way is an erasure of Indigeneity but gives credence to the Indigeneity of Chicanx and Mexican Americans of the Southwestern United States. On the other hand, in the United States, British colonialism

pushed/erased indigeneity entirely from the landscape. Thus, borderland inhabitants have internalized the geographic mapping in which they see their Mexican brethren as part of the savageness associated with the *indio bárbaro*.

Language also becomes a function of the racial geography of the Mexico and the United States. That is, if Mexico is illustrative of the *indio bárbaro*, then the culture and language become deviant. Like Saldana-Portillo (2016), Mignolo (2000) states that the modern world is built on the inclusion and exclusion of native peoples. Accordingly, embracing *mestizaje* subordinated Spanish to the language of the Third World despite its role as a European colonial language (Mignolo, 2000). English maintained its superiority through the United States neocolonial expansionist project and is now demonstrative of modernity. On the border English becomes associated with modernity while Spanish becomes the language of the past (Rosa & Flores, 2017). In this chapter, therefore, the *maestras* sensemaking regarding their bilingualism is couched in these racial geographies while at the same time becomes a language of resistance and border thinking through translinguaging (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016).

The Rio Grande acts as the diving line between the racial geographies of Mexico and the United States. The same racial geography maps out in Laredo where the teachers spoke about how one part of the city is more Spanish speaking than the other. Dichotomizing the world is a colonial legacy in how the teachers understand their space. Mignolo (2000) argues, however, that border thinking emanates when we learn to think from the dichotomies. I use his work to situate the teachers' conceptualizations around bilingual education as they learn to negotiate and navigate a system that privileges English and expects teachers to facilitate that transition as efficiently and quickly as possible. While their stories represent *nepantla*—contradiction and ambivalence—their actions are that of

constant negotiation between what they feel and know is right—whereby they resist what is forced on them.

RACIAL GEOGRAPHY AND LANGUAGE

Language is one manner by which groups of people distinguish themselves from others (Mignolo, 2000). It is a marker of status, class, and what Bourdieu (year) calls cultural capital. In this case of the maestras who live in the borderlands, language can also be a marker of citizenship—that is English is equated with the United States and Spanish with Mexico. To be considered “American” is better perceived than to be considered Mexican (Vila, 2000). The same juxtaposition of racial geography, however, they argued was mapped out onto the city itself in terms of how language is used. This is a struggle for the teachers as they have internalized the heterotemporality of the borderlands by which language becomes a proxy for race and citizenship.

Bilanguaging Racial Geography

One of the ways the maestras discussed their language in relation to the racial geography of the borderlands was by contrasting their bilingualness in Laredo and outside Laredo. This exchange from the *convivio* illustrates how the teachers think about their language in relation to the spaces they inhabit. That is, who gets to be considered bilingual in different spaces and with whom.

Noemí: With you all I would not say I’m bilingual. But if I were to go out to like Dallas or something I would say I’m bilingual.

Lorena: But you understand Spanish? So, I think you are bilingual.

Nancy: Considering ourselves bilingual I think would be outside Laredo. Because in Laredo there is no one language.

- Lorena: It's the norm
- Nancy: It's the norm: English/Spanish, Tex/Mex, slang it's the norm. if we were to go to San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, Houston, then I would say, "Yes I'm bilingual." Because there that's where you find yourself... you are at the mall and there are some people from Mexico. And you're trying to talk to people from Mexico.
- Julia: But even for that would you have to be proficient?
- Nancy: You wouldn't have to be because you can get by.
- Julia: Because you can get by here.

In this conversation the teachers consider the spaces in which one is bilingual and where one is not. What the teachers are illustrating here too is who gets to be bilingual and with whom is in that space. For example, Noemí in this segment said she would not consider herself to be bilingual because in that spaces she understands that others are more proficient than she is. Lorena questions that statement by asking "but you understand Spanish?" So there Lorena gives Noemí license to consider herself to be part of the bilingual club.

Julia suggests that Laredo is this overlapping space of inbetweenness by stating, "because here you can get by." In other words, proficiency of bilingualism is not so much about having to answer to others—whether it is the idealized white speaking subject or the educated Mexican—who are judging but what you need to know to "get by," to survive. Nancy agrees with Julia's assertion about getting by and adds that "there is no one language." As such, Laredo is a place with overlapping geographies where bilanguaging transpires, thereby negating the Tex/Mex, English/Spanish binary. Consequently, the maestras are neither here nor there but both here and there. For teachers this is a mode of survival in a space where there is no language.

However, outside Laredo, you are an *other* and you do have the privilege of being bilingual—you are the expert. There you are a language broker between the monolingual English-speaking U.S. population and the Mexican who is typically shopping while on vacation in the U.S. Nancy went on to give an example of what happened to her in a store, stating:

Nancy because it's happened to me where I'm at a store and there is a lady and she's trying and the worker is like "ughhh." So, I translate to the worker and she's like oh yes... its over here and then I tell the lady "allá esta, de aquel lado." Or whatever.... So, I think that's where the bilingual comes in.

In her anecdote, Nancy is talking about this commonly derived other from Mexico. The person who knows no English and who ostensibly requires assistance in navigating that space from someone like her who can speak two languages. The other teachers agreed that this was indeed the case. Those are the spaces where Spanish is beneficial. Lorena attested that outside Laredo she would also have better opportunities because there they need people like her

The maestras in this anecdote are engaging in spatiotemporal production in which their language practices are beneficial for certain purposes and for certain audiences. In Chapter Five, when spoken to in Spanish, the maestras sought to disassociate themselves from any connotation that they are Spanish-speaking. That is, that they can be associated with the Mexican national and the trope that to be Mexican is to be impoverished and corrupt (Vila, 2000), what Saldaña-Portillo (2016) would consider the *indio bárbaro* associated with Mexicanidad. However, in these examples, the maestras are embracing their bilingualism and produce spaces where their bilingualism is advantageous and needed. Even Noemí the "gringa" of the group dichotomizes her bilingualism as outside Laredo yes, inside Laredo no. Outside Laredo, the *indio bárbaro* is not removed from the

scene/seen, but brought back, thereby “challenge[ing] the model of white settler colonialism predicated on the theoretical presumption that white settlement practices displaced, eliminated and absorbed indigenous spaces” (p.). It should also be noted that the maestras in those spaces are privileged in that they are U.S. nationals.

Laredo’s Racial Geography

While, in the previous section the maestras spoke about their bilingualism as it relates to spaces inside and outside Laredo, in what follows, I present a conversation that summarizes the maestras’ language use to generate a racial geography of Laredo. That is, for the maestras that are spaces in Laredo that are more Spanish speaking than others. Particularly, they saw this distinction between north and south Laredo. Although, Spanish can be heard throughout the city and there is no official language policy that differentiates between the north and south, it is assumed that one part of Laredo is more Spanish speaking than another. Tellingly, in Chapter Five the maestras articulated their frustrations about being spoken to in Spanish. Yet they themselves have not left the part of Laredo that they perceive to be more Spanish speaking.

Laredo runs north to south along the Rio Grande. (Figure 7.1 presents a map of Laredo.) The map shows that Laredo and Nuevo Laredo are separated by the Rio Grande. Both central business districts are located directly across from one another. I included this map to contextualize the details of the city that the maestras refer to in their statements. United States Highway 59, which leads to Houston, cuts Laredo in half. When the maestras refer to the north side they are speaking of Laredo north of that dividing line. All points south of Highway 59 represent South Laredo. The maestras—with the exception of Nancy and Guadalupe—all live and work in South Laredo. (Figure 7.2 shows a more detailed map of the space where the maestras live and work.) Not only do they currently live and work

there, they have always lived, worked, and studied in South Laredo. Again, Nancy is the only teacher who was raised in south Laredo and has moved north of Hwy 59. Guadalupe, always lived north of Hwy 59. Note that the university the maestras attended—Texas A&M International University (TAMIU)—is north of HWY 59.

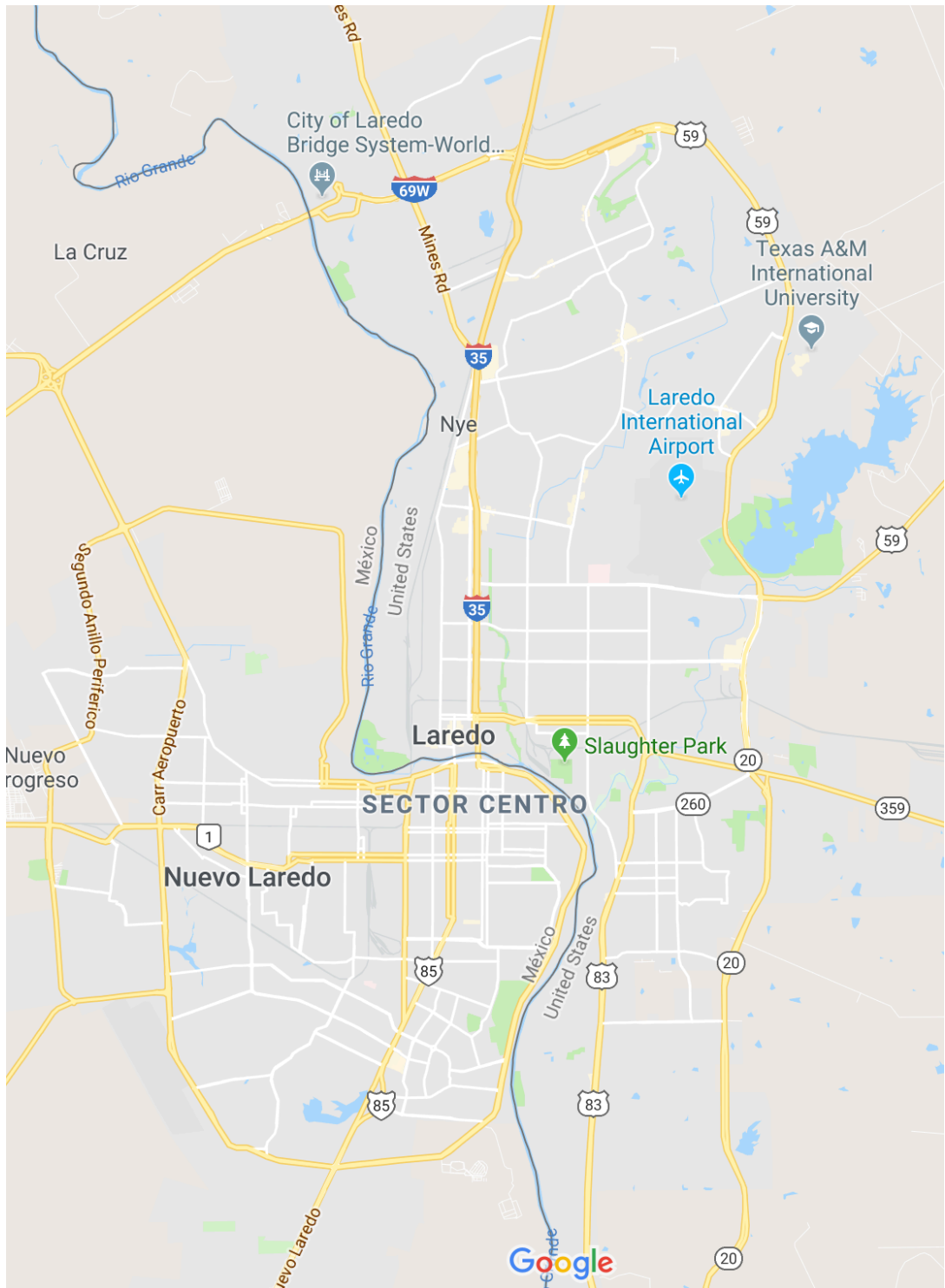


Figure 7.1. Map of Laredo

raised made her more connected to her students and sensitive to their needs; Julia sees herself reflected in them (Franquíz, Salazar, & DeNico, 2011).

Guadalupe began the conversation and asserted that she did not think we judge people by what language they speak in Laredo. In fact, she thinks people would only get judged outside of Laredo for speaking Spanish—Laredo, she maintains is a place where Spanish and English are interchangeable. However, the other maestras were quick to contradict Guadalupe’s assertion. Unlike Guadalupe, the rest of the maestras were raised in South Laredo and believed that the differences between north and south were class and language based. Indeed, those who had been brought up in South Laredo were the most vocal about why that is so.

Guadalupe: I don’t think we see it (racism) as much because we are on the border. If you’re like in the northern areas then yeah. It might be a little different because you can’t speak a certain way or they look down on you in a certain way. But here it’s like....

Julia: It goes back to like what Lorena was saying about her groups of friends.

Guadalupe: I guess maybe like yeah you do see it more than what I do cause I don’t see that barrier

Julia: Is it because you grew up in one area and your friends even up to now are from that area? Compared to like us we went to school together to the same elementary schools to the same high school so our friends from the south are different from the friends from the north. We do see the difference if you grew up in the south and you have friends just from the south up to now.

- Guadalupe: And I guess mine were just a mix of everywhere. So, I never really felt it. To tell you that the people that I grew up with are still in my life, they aren't. Like my best friends are my teacher friends.
- Nancy: See, you see the difference between the south to the north. I see it just from central Laredo to the north. I grew up I went to Milton to Lamar to Nixon.
- Julia: But now imagine how more drastic it would be from the south instead of the north.
- Nancy: I go to college and I meet people from United... and those are my friends now. And they are different for me. Like when we get together one of them is mostly English and her father is from Puerto Rico and she's mostly English and the other one is Spanish she's mostly Spanish so when we get together her and I are like "nombre buey..., buey..., buey..." and I don't use the word buey. I use it when I'm with her. And with this one "dude... dude..." but the three of us are at the table talking to each other and I see the difference from central Laredo to the north.

According to the teachers, within Laredo there is a difference in the spaces they inhabit even within the city. Guadalupe was the one teacher who was born in the North Laredo, a native English speaker, but sought to reclaim Spanish. She sees these language differences not something that would happen in Laredo because she herself translanguages and embraces her bicultural identity. When speaking about her brother, she did not understand why he was so against his own culture and one time said, "he is ashamed of his culture." She knew this because of his loathing of going to mass in Spanish and certain Mexican restaurants in Laredo. Guadalupe also stated that she would only surround herself

with people who would speak like her and with whom she feels the most comfortable speaking.

On the other hand, Julia, who grew up in south Laredo, was quick to note the difference between north and south Laredo. She is speaking in terms of language and linguistic practices. She notes that her friends from the south are different from her friends from the north. In her statements, Julia includes Lorena who grew up in the same part of town. This divide for them is not only a linguistic one but in Laredo the southern part of the city tends to have more low-socioeconomic people living there.

Nancy, who grew up in central Laredo and attended school in central Laredo was quick to emphasize that she too sees the distinction. Going to college took her out of her circle of friends and with new ones who attended United, a school in north Laredo. This is the first time we see that college is part of the transcending of spaces. Importantly, Julia makes the comment “now imagine how drastic the difference is between south and north.” In other words, if you think that there is dissimilarity of the people from central to north, it becomes that much more apparent when you are from southern part of town.

The teachers have imposed a racial geography onto Laredo: the Spanish south, the English north. However, when one enters Laredo, the linguistic dexterity of the residents obfuscates these perceived boundaries. These alleged differences are significant, however. In Chapter Five, the maestras correlated being spoken to in Spanish with inferiority. Yet, with the exception of Nancy, none of the maestras have left the Spanish south. The paradox therein is the same as the production of Aztlán, upon which Chicana/o identity is built. On this, Saldaña-Portillo states “Aztlán was produced not only through the melancholic and manic representational incorporation of lost indigeneity but also through the figurative incorporation of indigenous territoriality (p.197). In other words, there is this romanticized notion of indigeneity while simultaneously excluding indigenous people. The paradox

ingrained in the maestras' minds is that of excluding themselves from their native Spanish while also living in spaces that is predominately Spanish speaking—they are neither and are the indio bárbaro.

From the Outside Looking In....

The conversation took place at our last convivio and provides insight into how they conceptualize and understand their lived experiences and the space they inhabit. At this convivio, I had the maestras read Anzaldúa's (1987) chapter *Toward a Mestiza Consciousness*. The teachers did not agree with the chapter and spoke back to the author by stating that “she seems to have a political agenda...” a “...call to arms....” Indeed, Anzaldúa (1987) states that the new mestiza can jolt herself out of *nepantla* and into a *Mestiza Consciousness* that “break[s] down the subject object duality that keeps her prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended” (p. 102). In so doing, the new mestiza creates a world in which she learns to be both the serpent and the eagle.

These maestras did not apprehend the world Anzaldúa (1987) speaks about. Specifically, they contested the idea that they are an oppressed people. They thought maybe Anzaldúa is being too political and questioned Anzaldúa's methods. Nancy commented that sometimes it's better to “build a bridge and get over it.” While Anzaldúa's theorizing has had a profound impact on borderland studies and Chicana feminism, the maestras felt that she did not speak to them because they are the rightful owners of the land they inhabit. Furthermore, they did not feel like they had been oppressed and did not identify with the political struggle. Below are their comments that articulate their thinking.

Julia: I don't think so cause we are the majority here.

Nancy: Yeah, I've never felt like the minority

Noemí: She was saying that our culture was bad but that's who we are its not going to get lost. We enjoy it we like it, it's us.

Nancy: There is nothing wrong with corrido here and there.

Julia: Yesterday I took Ari downtown. So I took Ari to one of the stores and you go up to them... and you're going to pay. I guess they try to make an effort to speak Spanish so they're like "es todo ma'am." "Yes, this is it," I responded. Y ella terca to speak Spanish to me, right. I've already spoken ten sentences to her in English and she still speaking Spanish to me. Yesterday, it's the same thing. I understand what she was saying they make an effort. She's speaking to me in Spanish and I'm speaking back to you in English. You know? I get what you're saying. And you know?

Not to this extreme.

I don't feel like this.

Julia: I don't think or can relate to it to this extreme. Who is going to judge me? Even in the community, who here?

Nancy: It's not going to make me go out into the court with signs and have a rally.

Julia: All of us are here and you one, it's the other way around she should feel.

Noemí: I don't remember being oppressed by the whites.

Nancy: Well the whites are the minority here.

Julia: so they might feel this way, not us.

Laughs

Nancy: yup

Julia: I don't see my life as a struggle.

Noemí: Yeah, I don't see my life as a struggle

David: And you all think it's because of that: cause we are the majority here.

Nancy: I think so. Maybe if we lived in San Antonio....

Julia: I guess I've never experienced racism cause I never left the border.

Noemí: We've never had that

Nancy: It's normal to go back and forth from English to Spanish. Like with him he has to concentrate to listen to Spanish. I don't and I can back and forth he doesn't understand how I can do that he has to stop ok now speak Spanish. And to me its automatic. I don't feel like I learned two languages I just feel like I learned to speak.

In this excerpt they mention several important topics. The maestras begin by questioning this idea of racism. Specifically, who in Laredo would be racist to them and mention several times that they have never had to struggle. Most of this conversation comes from their speaking back to Anzaldúa's (1987) notion of the white oppressor and them not feeling like they were oppressed. They did not feel like in Laredo there would be anyone to judge them in regard to their race or language. That said, it is evident from the other chapters that they do not have to have someone else surveilling them, rather they surveil each other. The pervasiveness of the hegemony of whiteness enables them to surveil each other.

At the same time, there are spaces in which the speaking and language practices of people from the border speak back to the hegemony of English. For example, Nancy states that she never felt that she lost one language or the other because of the prevalence of both languages. Furthermore, she does not see these languages as distinct but as her language.

She then talks about how there are outsiders that have to conform to speaking practices in Laredo. Nancy's husband is an example of this type of dance other speakers have to do when learning to live in Laredo. She says her husband has difficulty understanding her not the other way around.

Similarly, Julia's example at the store downtown. There Julia speaks to the Chinese woman in English but the lady insists on speaking to Julia in Spanish. Julia presumes that the woman is not a native of Laredo considering her phenotype and accent. It is telling that the woman acculturates into Laredo society by learning what might be her third language considering Spanish predominates in the downtown shops. And yet, despite that the store owner is making attempts to learn Spanish, Julia is bothered by the fact that the woman will not speak to Julia in English. Again, both are instances of the scene/seen of the *indio bárbaro*. Where Nancy's example completely asserts her advantage in the space, Julia is trying to rid the scene of the *indio bárbaro*.

In taking ownership of the land, they own the multiple colonial legacies that have become part of their imaginary. This is the legacy of the "landed" families I referenced in Chapter Two whereby the "landed" families who disposed the indigenous people felt entitled to the space (Hinojosa, 1983; Piñon, 1985). In their minds, Laredo operates outside the Spanish/English binary because they are neither completely culturally "American" nor completely Mexican but both—exemplifying the hybridity of their culture and language (Anzaldúa, 1987). While I give examples of how the racial geography map out in Laredo and outside of Laredo. I also want to demonstrate that the teachers feel that only in Laredo could their language practices be understood by others.

The history of Laredo plays such a unique role in their thinking. They have internalized the racial geography of the spaces as a byproduct of the history of Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism. At the same time, the historians noted that the "landed"

families—that is the families who were granted land grants from the viceroy of Spain—never fully relinquished control of the city to the Anglos. According to Hinojosa (1983), it was the immigrants who came to Laredo, from France and Italy, who found ways to assimilate with the Spanish elite. Few Anglos chose to intermarry and harbored more racist attitudes towards the Mexican. I would argue that in this type of thinking, the rest of the city has adopted a mentality that this space is neither here nor there but both. Laredoans like to say “we didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us.” This is powerful statement in that taking ownership of the land allows for them to feel free of the burdens of racism and linguicism although, they also participate in it. The maestras understand Mexico to be a *bárbarous* state and Laredo—by being on the U.S. side—not part of that barbarity. Then the maestras also project the same idea on Laredo when they map out the different parts of the city linguistically. And then again when they speak about Laredo and the rest of the state in terms of their bilingualism. In this sense, what is hegemonic in this space is what they say. Considering this ideological thinking, the teachers then see bilingual education in the same manner: on the one hand they answer to the what is expected from the macro structure of the United states but end up being subversive because they know what the students need. I argue in the next section that they think from the dichotomies rather than dichotomize the world.

According to Saldaña-Portillo (2016)

Racial geography as a theory of space and hetertemporality as a theory of history allows us to graph the various scenes/seens at once: the legal/cultural/psychic landscape of the border is full of Indians; the legal/cultural/psychic landscape is devoid of Indians.

I use this theory to speak about the way Spanish is used in this section. Mignolo (2000) states that Spanish became a marker of the third world when Latin America was

formed. In that sense, it is a marker of the indigeneity associated with mesitzaje. When considering the racial geography of the United States and Mexico, Spanish becomes a manifestation of the indio bárbaro as it represents the language of brown people that of the third world. As such, when the teachers refer to their bilingualism in certain spaces and about certain people, they are also participating in the juxtaposition of the various scenes/seens in which they are both associating and disassociating with the indio bárbaro. In some ways it is to their benefit to associate with Spanish when operating in spaces outside Laredo. Their bilingualism provides them with a type of social currency in which they can navigate between Anglos and Mexican nationals. At the same time, in Laredo they have mapped out the city in terms of racial geography through language and how they associate certain people and the spaces where they grew up. They noted a difference between their central and south Laredo upbringing in relation to the north side of town where there is more affluence and English speaking. Although there is push back, it is the they perceive these spaces that are their legacy of colonial pasts that became part of modernity and the current global designs.

THE RACIAL GEOGRAPHY OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

...the figure of the indio bárbaro is not representative of any historical actors. He does not reflect the fabled Chichimecas of the Aztec Empire nor the monile traders of New Spain's northern frontier; he does not reference the equestrian people of the Great Plains nor even the Apache or Comanche warriors who militarily staved off the British and Spanish colonialism and fought wars of expansion against the United States and Mexico. Rather it is precisely the catachrestic nature of the indio bárbaro that accounts for its long afterlives. Untethered from any historical referent yet encompassing all of these, the indio bárbaro floats across time and space, conditioning our repetitive futures.

(Saldaña-Portillo, 2016, p. 235)

The maestras articulated a racial geography of Laredo in which the indio bárbaro is part of and rid of the scene/seen. In this section I argue that bilingual education in the schools of Laredo is a manifestation of that type of thinking in which they are trying to rid children of the indio bárbaro by stamping out the Spanish. However, here I also show how the teachers push back against that and articulate their ideas about bilingual education should be. I argue that the teaches have learned border thinking and think from the dichotomies.

No Quieren Batallar: Discourses of Transition

In speaking about bilingual education in Laredo the maestras critiqued the transitional model of bilingual education. The maestras were fully aware Spanish succumbs to English when operating from a transitional model, hurting the very students' bilingual education purports to serve (Flores, 2013). The transitional model I argue is part of the racial geography of the United States in which the outcome is to rid children of the indio bárbaro and leave Spanish behind in lieu of the purity of English. Nancy described how problematic this is in one statement where she contends that if bilinguals are not ready to transition, they should be allotted more time. Nancy stated:

I think academically the bilingual program... they are in Pre-K, K and 1st, half the semester in 2nd in Spanish and then they transition to English. Like you said, whether or not they are ready to. I have had students who have been Pre-K, K first retained in first, gone to second grade and still nonreaders in Spanish. Then they get to level 4 or 5 and mid semester they have to transition because they've been with us since pre-k. He only leaned how to read in level 5 in Spanish and now he's going to start all over again in the second semester to get them ready for 3rd grade because he has to pass the STAAR. He can't read in his own language much less

learn how to read one semester in English. Then those kids are retained. So, I mean we want them to be... I think if the bilingual program was “a bilingual program” and the purpose of it is to learn their native language, then transition when they are ready to transition to English. Then if they are not ready until 3rd or 4th grade let them continue until 3rd or 4th grade you now. Don’t cut them off mid-year 2nd grade. Nancy’s argument is that students should be kept in the bilingual program until 3rd or 4th grade or until they have reached proficiency in the native language with respect to their literacy skills. Nancy used the term non-readers and spoke about how damaging it is for children to be transitioned without having achieved a certain literacy skill. Although, she knows that transitioning bilingual students early is detrimental to their learning, Nancy participates in the discourse of transition (Palmer, 2011) where bilingual education is a means to an end. That is, ultimately, bilinguals will leave Spanish in lieu of English. Saldaña-Portillo’s (2016) theory of racial geography undergirds these sentiments. She states

“The lost racial object once incorporated into the psyche proliferates cultural identity. It is a melancholic structure to be sure, given the ambivalent attachment of Mexican Americans to their indigenous heritage. How could this attachment to their indigenous heritage be anything *but* ambivalent, when both the Mexican and US Racial geographies conspired to produce their indigenous identity along the Mexico-U.S. border as the *indio bárbaro*? Especially in the case of annexed Mexican Americans, the *indio* came to symbolize their exclusion from U.S. citizenship and nation” (p.232).

In Nancy’s statement, the *indio* continues to haunt through the ambivalence of the discourse of transition. As Saldaña-Portillo (2016) points out, this ambivalence persists because the *indio*, like Spanish, epitomizes “exclusion from U.S. citizenship and nation.”

Guadalupe critiqued the colleagues at her school for not doing enough to teach children Spanish. Essentially, though she asserted the same discourse of transition as Nancy. As a first-grade teacher, she saw the lack of Spanish instruction as problematic. In the following anecdote she mentions that teachers no quieren batallar, they do not want to hassle, with teaching Spanish. Guadalupe lamented:

If you have students in the first grade right now that don't meet the criteria, leave our grade level go to second. They are going to do everything they can to push him into English, whether they are ready or not. And why? Porque no quieren batallar (They don't want to struggle). So. Ok, You're putting this kid at risk. Just because you don't want to sit aside and work with him in Spanish? Like, how does that help the kid? For a teacher sit's easy, because they only have to prepare for English, and that's it! But for that student, you're speaking Chinese. If they didn't understand you last year, they aren't going to understand you, this year. They are not ready. Or there are certain things for what they are not ready for. Unless you're going to find the time, to sit aside with him, and explain it—which chances aren't not—and sometimes, it's not their own fault. Maybe, they are teaching to the test or whatever and they don't have the time. But that, "I don't have time," I don't think they are aware that they are affecting the kids as much.

Guadalupe disapproves of her colleagues who do not do enough to teach children in their native language. She contends that this is a disservice to students. As a whole, the maestras are well versed in their understanding that students need a strong foundation in their native language to learn English. At the same time, it seems as if they have accepted this reality. To reiterate what Saldaña-Portillo (2016) stated, "The lost racial object once incorporated into the psyche proliferates cultural identity." In other words, the discourse of transition, leaving the indio behind is cemented in their psyche and yet they are Spanish

speakers with some varying degree of Spanish literacy skills. Guadalupe went on to say that in her dual language program there is more room for maintaining Spanish but that even that gets lost as the children get older because of the state assessment (Palmer & Snodgrass Rangel, 2011; Palmer & Lynch, 2008).

I Don't See this as Dual

The maestras not only questioned and participated in the discourses of transition, but they also questioned the dual language program in their school district. In questioning the districts dual language program, they also questioned their ability to implement strong dual language programs. Julia's son participated in a two-way dual language program from Kinder through Second Grade. Nancy was his Kindergarten teacher at the time. Julia though was most impressed by one of the teachers, Mr. Gonzalez. Julia stated "I don't see this as a dual. The way Eduardo did it, his was more of a true dual." She went on to say:

So [Eduardo] finished the dual program in second grade. Because he had Mr. Gonzalez, He was strong in Spanish for the reading and for the writing. I felt really good that he was finishing second grade and that he can read and write very well in Spanish. Something that I didn't know how to do. I saw the benefit of it but I never kept it going myself at home. But because he did have that strong second grade teachers that where he even knew how to write in Spanish.

For Julia, Mr. Rios represented a strong Spanish teacher. According to Julia, Mr. Rios was a Spanish high school teacher, thus he was the Spanish expert. By comparison, the current dual language program at the school they currently teach at is some haphazard assemblage of dual language/transitional model. Guadalupe referenced that teachers ultimately give way to English for testing. In the next section, Lorena—the 5th grade Spanish dual language teacher—admits to waiting until after the state assessment to teach Spanish. Nancy who

was Eduardo's kinder teacher in that program provided context to how that program was run. Nancy, stated:

I did English and whatever I did with my English class the next day, Villarreal would do the same thing in Spanish. That's how we rotated. So, everyone was learning, reading and writing, in English and Spanish at the same time.

According to Nancy and Julia that program was not offered beyond second grade despite the success they saw in the program. Eduardo, Julia's son, would have been the native English speaker in the class was successful in acquiring Spanish proficiency. Unfortunately, for Eduardo, Julia did not continue his schooling in Spanish.

The maestras make three points: First, based on the maestras' comments, the dual language teachers should teach the same content in both the English and Spanish. Here, the bifurcation of languages represents parallel monolingualism (Heller, 1999). Second, they do think there should be an English teacher and a Spanish teacher. In this case you need a strong Spanish teacher, like Mr. Gaujuca. With respect to their abilities to teach Spanish, in Chapter Five we saw that the maestras felt inadequate to teach Spanish, but Mr. Gonzalez who studied Spanish models appropriateness. Last, the maestras argument also suggests the need to protect Spanish against the hegemony of English. Standardized assessments pose the greatest threat to learning sustaining Spanish in dual language programs.

We are Mexican

The maestras also understood that there is an uphill struggle for getting students to appreciate their bilingualism and their heritage. Parents and students alike harbor aversions to the type of dual language programs that they think would be beneficial for students. Parents want to their children to learn English. And students have already internalized Spanish is bad. Even in the program the students have internalized a strict adherence to

parallel monolingual (Heller, 1999) norms in which one language can only be used in relation to the appropriate setting. That is, in English class and with the English teacher, only English is spoken. In Spanish class with the Spanish teacher, only Spanish is spoken.

In the exchange by Noemí and Guadalupe detailed how their students in Kinder and 1st grade dual language classrooms have internalized parallel monolingualism (Heller, 1999) stating:

Noemí: That happened to us last year in dual. Alaniz is the Spanish teacher and I'm the English teacher. We were talking about one of the students and she was like I never heard her speak in English to me and that's all she speaks to me in English.

Guadalupe: It's the same kids they talk to me in English and they and I'll even answer them in Spanish and they'll go to Lechuga or Garza they ask her in Spanish.

Noemí: The students did not want to talk to me in Spanish. I then want to talk to me in Spanish. I know she knows she's getting a zero she embarrassed to talk to me in Spanish.

The students in their classes know that there is a Spanish and an English teacher in the school. As such they know with whom they should speak with. The maestras were confounded by this phenomenon. I observed Guadalupe speaking Spanish with the students in order to get them to speak Spanish with her. As the English teacher, though, that does not matter as her students were already mindful of the separation of languages. Noemí had to get a student assessed by another teacher because she knew the student knew more than what was being said. This shows the teachers' willingness to at least make sure the student does well on exams and knows her students' strengths. Noemí does wish the

student would have spoken Spanish to her but Noemí, because of her internalized deficit of Spanish has not shown children that she too is a Spanish speaker.

In her dual language program, Noemí also mentioned that the parents are unwilling to let their children in the program and that she had to call parents to get them to do. They have difficulty it is like I don't want them to know Spanish you talk at home you speak it at home. Lorena added "Like they say *tienes el nopal en la frente*." In this sense Lorena was questioning that the parents' identity as if to say the parents are ashamed of Spanish and therefore don't want to teach their children. When one refers to having *el nopal en la frente*, or having the cactus on your forehead, you are indicating that you cannot pretend to be something that you are not. The nopal, or cactus, is imprinted on your forehead, like the one on the Mexican flag. However, Noemí alludes to the fact that parents think they can teach their children Spanish at home and would rather the teachers at school focus on English. The literature abounds with examples of parents wanting their children to go to school to learn English. Schools call these parent denials. As a teacher, Noemí has become an advocate for dual language after seeing its benefits as a kinder teacher. She also enrolled her son in the program at her school.

Lorena spoke about how her students have internalized the deficit ideologies of Spanish. It should be noted that Lorena does not focus on Spanish until after the STAAR. The lack of focus on Spanish likely contributes to the notion that Spanish is deviant. Even so, Lorena finds herself "defending" Spanish, commenting:

I had to defend the Spanish language in my classroom. This is after the STAAR, I admit it. "We're going to do Spanish today." And the students will reply, "We are not supposed to. We don't know Spanish." And "I'm like Spanish is a beautiful language. It's from our roots, like our Mexican American roots. And they'll say "but I'm not Mexican." I tell them, We've had this conversation. What do you

mean? Your last name is Vela. Hello! Be proud of who you are. Yes, we are American, Mexican American. Be proud of your roots. You had ancestors from Mexico or maybe Spain.” And we talk about the future and it’s better they will have better opportunities if you know both languages.

In Lorena’s defense of Spanish, she speaks about an ancestral connection to Mexico and Spain. She deems Spanish to be a beautiful language. Lorena also challenges her students’ notion that they are not Mexican, stating, “yes, we are American, Mexican American.” At the very end of this anecdote she couches bilingualism as a marketable advantage. At the same time, admittedly, Lorena does not focus on teaching Spanish until after the STAAR, conveying mixed signals about the import of Spanish. Rather, she attends to the science STAAR, which will be administered in English, succumbing to the pressures of accountability that influence language of instruction (Palmer, 2011).

The maestras were fully cognizant of the pitfalls of early-exit transitional bilingual education programs. Chief among the dangers is the insufficient amount of native language instruction. Dual language, if implemented and taught appropriately, they postulated was more effective than the current programs offered by their school district. At the same time the maestras description of dual language is couched in ideologies of parallel monolingualism. In that regard, the maestras do adhere to an academic Spanish but also question how necessary it is in Laredo. As previously indicated, the maestras realize that Laredo is a safe space. In sum, the discourse of transitional bilingual education has racial geographic implications insofar as “transitioning” divesting the children of Spanish is like ridding the scene/seen of the indio bárbaro (Saldaña-Potillo, 2016).

Considering how languages are positioned across the racial geographies, the teachers also spoke about how dual language can be used as a force for good. For themselves as teachers they have seen how their minds have changed and how bilingual

education made them think differently and helps them grow as learners. For example, Guadalupe spoke about how she and her partner teacher learn from each other. Guadalupe is not one of the teachers who speaks in English only but is native English speaker. As such, the formalities of Spanish are something she needs to learn. She stated:

My relationship for Garza worked out so well. With her, it was like the word stop. She would be like estop and I would be like no dude you are saying it wrong like listen its jus stop and I remember that was always a conversation between us. Because certain words that began with an s she started with an e. so it was stuff that or I would say something and she would say you don't say it like that in Spanish you say it like this. And I was starting the masters and we were typing out papers and stuff and I would proofread it and when she was writing was the prepositions is it on is it in. How do you know when to use what? I don't know it's just something you learn as you go I guess. Or if I had to write something in Spanish she would be the one to do it for me or vice versa it was a constant checking so I guess. That's why I always liked dual because its where you work better together.

In this anecdote she details how she would help out her partner teacher with English and vice versa when learning Spanish grammar. She stated this in relation to her dual language teaching and how they learn from one another. For Guadalupe the benefits of dual language are in learning from you partner teacher and making connections with her students, having a greater understanding of Spanish. This is significant in that she shares this story with everyone that not only tells us about who she is as a learner but something that we do not consider all the time when thinking about the astounding effectiveness of dual language—that the teaches can also have greater outcomes in their personal growth. Lorena affirmed this response by stating, “And you work harder but because you're growing your learning your feeding your mind more information in Spanish.” Although

Lorena did not share an anecdote in which she benefited from her dual language classroom she knows that learning Spanish enables for greater capacity otherwise.

Another example of someone whose mind changed as a result of teaching dual Language is Noemí. As a third-grade teacher for 12 years, Noemí assumed that students were behind because they were not immersed in English and believed that if only the teachers in lower grades would immerse children in English, they would be better off. Now that she is a kindergarten teacher, she thinks differently and advocates for children to be placed in dual language and realizes her error in judgment. She now contends that the reason students are behind is because they were not given enough time to develop their Spanish literacy skills. Moreover, she admitted her error in judgment and stated that:

I think I was better off knowing English and not Spanish. At the beginning I saw Spanish as poverty as lower class. And even at school the girls that were there from nuevo Laredo they were low class there was a separation. Now I hear someone who knows Spanish and they're talking I'm like teach me I want to know.

Noemí's has transcended her internalized deficit ideologies and she wants to learn from others. This is a significant paradigm shift in her thinking. At the convivio, Noemí stated that teaching kindergarten and realizing that students needed to learn English, had a profound impact on her thinking about teaching Spanish. Socially, her peer group—the teachers she associates with—translanguage. Known as the *gringa* of the group, it is likely that they too have influenced her thinking. In summation, dual language can have a positive effect for teachers as well as students. To an extent, they come to terms with their linguistic identities. The *indio bárbaro* is made known, “untethered from any historical referent yet encompassing all of these, the *indio bárbaro* floats across time and space, conditioning our repetitive futures” (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016, p. 232).

ON BORDER THINKING & BILINGUAL EDUCATION

...border thinking is located at the intersection of local histories enacting global designs and local histories dealing with them. That is why border thinking can only be so from a subaltern perspectives, since the enactment of global designs is driven by the desire for homogeneity and the implicit need for hegemony.

Mignolo, 2000, p. 310

According to Mignolo (2000) border thinking emanates from subaltern perspectives and how those perspectives have internalized global designs through their local histories. In the previous sections I showed how the history of colonialism has created a racial geography (Saldaña-Portillo, 2016) that has been internalized by the maestras. They have mapped out their linguistic differences according to the racial geophagy. Spanish plays a significant role in the same way that the indio bárbaro is ever-present in that in the history of bilingual education attempts to rid the scene/seen of Spanish in the same way the colonizers purportedly erased indigenous populations from the scene/seen. To combat the pervasiveness of the hegemony of English and neoliberal agenda that privileges bilingualism for majoritized speakers, scholars (Palmer & Martinez, 2013; Cervantes-Soon, et al., 2017; Cervantes-Soon, 2019) have theorized what pre-service teachers need to be equipped with in order to be social justices advocates for bilingual learners. In this study, the maestras exhibited border thinking as another tool for how bilingual educators make cracks in the global designs.

In Chapter Five the maestras demonstrated that their language ideologies are in nepantla—contradictory and ambiguous ambivalent to those contradictions. In Chapter Six the maestras revealed how their abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015) enable them to bilanguage love (Mignolo, 2000). The maestras' border thinking, therefore, is one of ceaseless navigating and negotiating of their identities and subjectivities. One way that

Nancy's border thinking manifests in her classroom is through navigating and negotiating what is best pedagogically for her students. Nancy for example spoke about how she plans her instruction. Specifically, she spoke about how she feels the need to teach against the grain. Nancy stated:

I always teach against the grain. If they need more reading I'm going to concentrate more on reading. If they need more math I'm going to concentrate more on math. Have I gotten in trouble for it, sometimes? Yes. Have they called my attention to it? Yes. Have they told me don't do it? Yes. But I still do it. Am I still there in the classroom? ((giggles)) Yes. For me it works to do what they (her students) need. They (administrators) tell us we have to do que the, whatever things they tell you to do. I would do them, but that wasn't my focus. My focus was what they (the students) needed.

In light of the surveillance of teachers, and top down approaches, Nancy states that as a teacher she has to do what is best for her students. In her classroom, I saw an example of this when she spoke Spanish with her students even though as a reading interventionist, she should only be speaking with them in English. This was detailed in Chapter Six in which Spanish can be used for literacy instruction. The teacher also spoke about how they use code-switching to go back and forth between languages to make instruction comprehensible but also to make connections with her students. Nancy points out that what her students "need" takes precedent to what is mandated by the school district. This is a way of navigating the educational terrain and playing the game (Urrieta, 2010).

While Nancy's border thinking emanated through teaching against the grain, Guadalupe gave an example from her classroom in which she actively disrupts the negative stereotypes of Spanish. She shared the following anecdote.

With me, because like, given right now that I'm... I'm the English language arts and math teacher, I carry the stress of bilingual education daily, and it is making sure that I show my bilingual kids the importance of their language. That, I told you. Like I have the recent immigrant that, you know, I could very easy turn around and say "Math is only done in English and I don't have to talk you in Spanish" type of thing. But what impression am I going to give that kid. That he is not important? That his language doesn't matter? That his culture doesn't matter? That's something I wouldn't want to transmit to him. So, que me cuesta a mi, to help him out in that sense. Like as today that was shapes, and I kind of got stuck, with certain words. I made out a point to sit with him, and make sure that he understood what he was doing. So. That where I kind of feel that...ok, my ...that bilingual education steps in or the importance of bilingual education, to make sure that there are understanding, like that feedback, to make sure that they are understanding, what is it that they are doing.

The most salient line in the story is "a mi que me cuesta." She knows as the English teacher in the dual language program that she is obligated to model appropriateness for the students but realizes that sometimes Spanish makes its way into the classroom and that that is ok. What does it cost her to speak Spanish if she knows the language? Guadalupe is speaking back to global designs in a manner that is predicated on her lived experiences, part of the local history where Spanish is accessible and an acceptable form of knowledge (Mignolo, 2000). Her border thinking comes from her upbringing whereby she was taught English but reclaimed Spanish as she got older. She knows that at times she gets "stuck" with certain Spanish words but recognizes the need to conference with the students to ensure that learning continues. In this case, it is about what the student needs rather than adhering to strict separation of language policy.

Another way that the maestras employ border thinking is through the act of what Mignolo (2000) calls bilanguaging which is “not precisely bilingualism where both languages are maintained in their purity but at the same time in their asymmetry” (p. 231). For Mignolo (2000) bilanguaging “is not a grammatical but a political concern as far as the focus of bilanguaging itself is redressing the asymmetry of languages and denouncing the coloniality of power and knowledge. (p. 231). Like Garcia and Wei’s (2013) concept of translanguaging, Nancy articulates the definition of these concepts, stating:

The thing is we learn both at the same time. Spanish is my language. English is my language so how can I can I feel like you stole my language in English or in Spanish. Like they are both mine I don’t feel like one is more than the other.

Nancy’s conceptualization of language is telling and reflective of her border thinking. As previously mentioned, these maestras operate within a transitional model that privileges English. Considering this border thinking, the maestras open up spaces for student agency. They themselves believe that language is just that, language. Because both languages are theirs, they do not adhere to the hierarchical or stratified nature of English. They play the game in schools because that is what is expected but disrupt the global designs when they insert Spanish or translanguaging into those spaces. In that sense, the maestras also serve as a mentor text for living in nepantla.

Carrillo and Cervantes-Soon (2016) argue that translanguaging is central to border thinking. They state:

The practice of translanguaging not only focuses on disrupting ideologies of monolingualism and linguistic purism that shape much of the language pedagogy and language education policies that Latin@ students face today (García & Leiva, 2014). It also has the potential to foster the emergence of new identities and students’ border thinking (Mignolo, 2000).

That said, translanguaging aims to disrupt the global designs by decentering the privileging of monolingual norms proclaimed by nation-states. For bilingual educators, this is especially important if they seek to undo the hegemony of English in the classrooms (Palmer, Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, & Heiman, 2019). As I noted earlier, the students in the maestras classrooms have internalized the strict separation of language policy and deficit views of their linguistic practices. But the maestras comprehended that the separation of languages is not their norm. Rather, the maestras professed that translanguaging or bilanguaging as their norm. For instance, Nancy expressed that she does not have two languages but a language where neither one is better than the other. Their students, though, have internalized monolingual/monoglossic norms because that is what is modeled and expected at school. While outside the scope of this study, I would venture to say that they should not surveil language as much in their classrooms.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

...the figure of the indio bárbaro is deployed over and over again, concisouly and unconsciouly, for imperial pursuits along the border an far beyond theis region. One could say U.S. imperialism initiates and extends its like under the shadow of the indio bárbaro. Because the indio bárbaro can haunt two places at once.

Saldaña-Portillo, 2016, p. 258

In this chapter I discussed the ways in which the racial geography of Mexico and the United States plays out in Laredo and in the ideological thinking of the teachers. The indio bárbaro haunts the scene/seen through the use of Spanish as it is a marker of the indigeneity and mestizaje of a barbarous state—Mexico. Bilingual education allows for the indio bárbaro to live on in the same way that the language of transition seeks to erase one language in lieu of another. It is in bilingual education that we learn to come to terms with indio. The maestras ideas about their bilingual abilities in different spaces seeps into

their ideas about bilingual education in the schools they teach in. Border thinking (Mignolo, 2000) therefore, becomes a way to combat the hegemony of English in schools where the teachers are expected to transition children to English as quickly as possible.

In this space where there maestras contend with the legacy of Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism, they figure their own way to understand what it is like to be bilingual. Imbue in their language ideologies, therefore, are the legacies in which they see Spanish as having less status than English when they map out the racial geography of Laredo. Simultaneously, however, they also recognize the privilege of their language experience when they are positioned as experts and are brokering for monolingual Spanish and English speakers. Moreover, they contend that there really is no distinction between Spanish and English in Laredo, they are pretty much one in the same. Neither language can really take over the other, and it is outsiders who have to come to terms with the language practices in Laredo. I argue that this is the effect of the racial geography of the border, that their language ideologies are also Indian Given in that they are coming to terms in different spaces with their own identities as both Mexican/American, Spanish/English, Indio/European.

For bilingual educators, this means that they must navigate that space with their border thinking. Because of the racial geography of the space of Laredo, the maestras discern for their students a mode of living that is rooted in border thinking. In thinking from the dichotomies, they have to answer to the schooling practices which aim to detach the students from Spanish. However, they themselves are unable to disassociate themselves from Spanish. As such they admit to having to push back against the deficit thinking surrounding Spanish. Additionally, they make space for Spanish and recognize that they will do what is best for their students regardless of what is asked of them. In doing so,

border thinking is the act of resisting and coming to terms with the legacy of the indio bárbaro.

Chapter Eight: Fin

Nosotros los Chicanos straddle the borderlands. On one side of us, we are constantly exposed to the Spanish of the Mexicans, on the other side we hear the Anglos' incessant clamoring so that we forget our language. Among ourselves we don't say nosotros los americanos, o nosotros los españoles, o nosotros los hispanos. We say nosotros los mexicanos (by mexicanos we do not mean citizens of Mexico; we do not mean a national identity, but a racial one). We distinguish between mexicanos del otro lado and mexicanos de este lado. Deep in our hearts we believe that being Mexican has nothing to do with which country one lives in. Being Mexican is a state of soul not one of mind, not one of citizenship. Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders.

Anzaldua, 1987, p. 84

In the process of writing this dissertation, it became clear to me that we—as academics—choose to write stories that are uniquely part of our inner struggles (Urrieta & Noblit, 2018). Evan, Teresa, and Marisa cross my mind often. My experience teaching in Laredo taught me that while I knew deep in my heart, they were me and I was them, that I wronged them by unknowingly perpetuating the hegemony of English. That is to say, this study in many ways was an attempt to grapple with my own language and literacy ideologies and how I had been schooled, like Anzaldúa to privilege, or aspire to whiteness through language. In this dissertation I presented the stories of six maestras from the border, friends with whom I also taught. Their stories depicted the complexity of learning to read and write on the border. And not just reading and writing in the schooling sense but reading and writing in the ways that Anzaldua (1987, 2015) and Friere (1970) speak about—reading and writing a world through experience in order to navigate and negotiate oppressive structures. In this chapter, I review the findings from Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Then I discuss the conclusion of this research and what it means for bilingual education. Specifically, I discuss the ways in which our language and literacy ideologies are part of a

colonial legacy that *fronteriza* bilingual maestras have internalized but that in their subtle ways disrupt and unsettle by virtue of their lived experiences on the border. After, I consider the implications of my study for the field of bilingual education practice, policy, and research. Lastly, I contemplate the future directions for research with respect to methods, bilingual education teacher preparation, and in-service bilingual teacher professional development.

REVIEW OF FINDINGS

The Storied Lives of Fronteriza Bilingual Maestras: Constructing Language and Literacy Ideologies in Nepantla portrays the lived experiences of six *fronteriza* bilingual maestras—Nancy, Guadalupe, Julia, Noemí, Maria, and Lorena—who were born, raised, and educated on the border. The purpose of this study was to ascertain how the lived experiences of these maestras illuminates their language and literacy ideologies to better understand how language and literacy ideologies informed their conceptualization of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education. Chapter Five and Six findings chapters detailed how the maestras' lived experiences are reflected in their language and literacy ideologies and answered the first research question: how do the lived experiences of *fronteriza* bilingual maestras illuminate their language and literacy ideologies? Chapter Seven responded to the second research question: how do *fronteriza* bilingual maestras language and literacy ideologies inform their conceptualization of bilingualism, biliteracy, and bilingual education? To answer these questions, I used Anzldua's (1987, 2015) theory of *nepantla*, Mignolo's (2000) concept of *bilanguaging* lived, and Saldaña-Portillo's (2016) racial geography to think with the data. Through these theoretical frameworks, I claim that colonial legacies imbue the maestra's language and literacy ideologies but that there is resistance towards global designs because of their local histories.

In Chapter 5, “*Taming*” a *Wild Tongue*, the maestras illustrated very complex language ideologies that I argue are part of their lived nepantla. That is their language ideologies are contradictory and that they are ambivalent to those contradictions. Anzaldúa’s theory of nepantla comes from the Nahuatl word that signifies being caught between two worlds. The borderlands are a literal, physical nepantla—a contact zone in which the third world grates against the first and bleeds (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 3). The maestras’ languages, cultures, and nation-states come into contact and clash. Consequently, their language ideologies resemble this clashing. I named the chapter after Anzaldúa’s chapter *How to Tame a Wild Tongue* to demonstrate that, indeed, a wild tongue cannot be tamed.

In childhood the maestras were told that their language was bad. One way this happens is through schooling in which four of the six maestras were labeled bilingual students but never received bilingual education. Lorena shared a story in which she was ridiculed for her mispronunciation of the word chair, which she pronounced “shair”. Noemí associated Spanish with the all things Mexican are impoverished and corrupt narrative (Vila, 2000) and preferred to detach herself from Spanish. Nancy, from working in retail, internalized that her Spanish was insufficient when she could not understand Mexican national’s vernacular. The others agreed with this sentiment. The one hopeful in the group was Guadalupe who as a native English speaker sought to reclaim her Spanish through conversations with her abuelita. Altogether, we began to see how the dynamics of growing up along the border are complicated as continue to experience linguistic terrorism (Anzaldúa, 1987).

The contradictions manifest in their adult lives at home and in their community. The maestras shared stories about wanting to teach their children Spanish. For them, teaching their children Spanish is a struggle. Nancy claims that they do not model Spanish

to their children; she and her husband speak to one another in English. Lorena attributed the struggle to messages from their children's peers that Spanish is not important. However, the maestras present opportunities for their children to learn Spanish through church. The church is a site where there is a disruption of the hegemony of English. Nancy stated that her "God speaks Spanish." In fact, the others—with the exception of Noemí—stated that for them church is a Spanish enterprise. Lorena added to this that Spanish is significant because there is just more oomph to the language. In other words, one can better express their emotions and love through Spanish.

Even so, the contradiction to these statements was how they felt perceived when others spoke to them in Spanish without being signaled to do so. To this the maestras took offense. They perceived someone speaking Spanish to them as if they were thought of as uneducated and less than. Vila's (2000) double mirror metaphor aptly describes why this phenomenon persists. He states that people on the border judge themselves by what others perceive them to be and to be a Mexican is to be coupled with the negative stereotypes of Mexico. This extends raciolinguistic perspectives because although they the maestras themselves are ethnically Mexican, they use language to distinguish themselves from their Mexican brethren and aspire to the whiteness of English (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017).

In their classrooms the maestras both buy in and push back against the hegemony of English. Nancy, for example, silenced her students to compel them to speak English. The others, however, use Spanish and their bilingualism to make connections with their students. Maria for example, in reviewing for the STAAR—a state assessment—told her students to use their bilingualism to their advantage.

As such, nepantla, the idea of being caught between two worlds, facilitates our understanding of how the maestras can hold competing and contradictory ideologies in their minds. They both take up and push back against the hegemony of English.

In Chapter Six, *Bilanguaging Love through Bi/Literacy*, I analyzed how the maestras experiences enable them to bilanguage love. Mignolo (2000) defines the bilianguaging love as thinking not only between language but between epistemologies. For Mignolo, certain epistemologies have been left out of the production of knowledge that is often associated with European and colonial languages—English being the predominant language in the modern world. I argue that through abuelita epistemologies which taught them the important of their culture and language, they learned to make schooling more humanizing and loving.

Again, stories from their childhood painted a reality that privileged functional English literacy. One of the ways this was done was through their parents taking them to the library. The maestras, therefore, could not think of what literacy entails outside the idea of reading and writing for school. However, we also saw how the maestras teach their children that language and knowledge production does not just happen in English but in Spanish. They did this through bilingual books and continuing through contemporary storybooks what used to be oral stories of La Llorona and El Cucuy. In that sense, they are making cracks in the global design as Mignolo (2000) would say. Cracking the global design, therefore happens, in very subtle ways in light of the pervasiveness of hegemonic English.

The maestras learned abuelita epistemologies from their family elders. Gonzales (2015) defines abuelitas epistemologies as the knowledge that is passed down from abuelitas in which you learn to embrace your culture, language, and traditions. In doing so, you are better equipped to combat a world of hegemonic whiteness. Guadalupe described

the role her grandmother had in modeling strength and religion. Her grandmother also provided consejos when she needed them. Julia talked about her mother and learning at a young age, through her mother's death, about how to be a more caring and nurturing person. Julia attributes this to her becoming a teacher. Noemí also mentioned how her mother now is the model of Mexican culture for her son RJ. Thus, abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015) become what Mignolo (2000) says is the "necessary corrective" to a world that privileges hegemonic English and whiteness, a type of authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999) that is needed for subtractive schooling practices.

In the maestras classrooms and schools, it became clear that the privileging of functional English literacies takes precedent. That is, there exists a constant surveillance of them by their administrators and the discursivity of hegemonic English. Even so, the maestras crack the global design by utilizing translanguaging which Carrillo and Cervantes-Soon (2016) maintain is a border thinking pedagogy. In addition to that I contend that their abuelita epistemology forces them to humanize and show love of translanguaging in order to disrupt the global design. Julia, Guadalupe, and Nancy offered examples of this with their lessons in which they used translanguaging as a pedagogical practice.

Lastly, in Chapter Seven, *Looking at the Mirror at the Indio Bárbaro*, I use Saldaña-Portillo's (2016) theory of racial geography to illustrate how the maestras ideologies are a function of Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism in which the goal was to rid the scene/seen of the indio bárbaro. Bilingual education, I argue is emblematic of indio in that it haunts those who sought to rid the scene/seen of Spanish. Spanish is the constant reminder of the barbarianism associated with Mexico.

The maestras mapped out their bilingualism in Texas and Laredo. By that I mean that they use these racial geographies to associate spaces with specific languages. For

example, outside Laredo they considered themselves bilingual but in Laredo, they are not. Then in Laredo they mapped out the city as Spanish south and English north. The ramifications of this is that the maestras have learned to associate their language with spaces in which their language is or is not accepted. They both take up Spanish when necessary but also disassociate from Spanish in the same way that colonizers tried to erase the indio. Accordingly, bilingual education for them is also that enactment of the haunting of the indio.

That said, they saw Laredo as a safe space in which their languaging is accepted. Nancy eloquently stated that Laredo is a place where there is no Spanish and English language but where there is just language. Again, this is illustrative of the translanguaging as a border thinking (Cervantes-Soon & Carillo, 2016; Mignolo, 2000; Nuñez, 2018) practices that are needed in bilingual education.

CONCLUSIONS

The struggle is inner: Chicano, indio, American Indian, mojado, mexicano, immigrant latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.

(Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 109)

Anzaldúa tells us that the struggle is inner. One must first come to awareness before change can happen. Freire echoes this when he speaks about critical consciousness. While Anzaldúa is speaking of identity, Freire speaks about pedagogy and how we can undo oppressive systems. One of the main take-aways from this dissertation is that there is a colonial legacy on the border in which people are caught in nepantla. My dissertation

demonstrated that the teacher language ideologies are illustrative of the *nepantla* they live. Through Spanish the *indo bárbaro* makes himself known. It is a legacy that haunts the borderlands. Yet the *maestras* in their own way embraced the *indo bárbaro*. I argue that bilingual education functions in the same manner.

The *maestras*, through their language ideologies and because of their lived experiences are caught in *nepantla*. Anzaldúa (1987) speaks about a *mestiza* consciousness in which one can be jarred out into a new understanding in which one decolonizes a colonized world. However, these *maestras* did not see themselves as having that role. Because they live in Laredo, they saw themselves to be in a safe space. That said, there are repercussions for having an ideology that is stuck in this contradictory and ambivalent space. One example is the way that Nancy silenced her students when he wanted to tell a story about his parents. Nancy, who self identifies as a Spanish speaker, did not realize in the moment she was silencing her students. In fact, moments earlier she spoke in Spanish with a coworker. This was something that was not reconciled, even at the *convivio* when Lorena asked “deep inside are we ashamed of our roots?”

Like other scholars, I determined that bilingual teachers’ ideologies are multiplicitous and contradictory. The *maestras* in this study, though, are unique in that the border has taught them to straddle two worlds. One reason that *maestras* continue to live in ambivalence can be explained by Vila (2000) theory of the double mirror. In his study of El Paso, he argues that *fronterizos* identities are judge themselves by looking at the mirror on both side of the border: One in which there is Mexico and the other the United States. Vila argues that to be Mexican is both an ethnicity and nationality. As such, the *fronteriza* *maestras* detach themselves from Spanish in an effort to detach themselves from Mexico the nation-state in which there is a trope of impoverishment and corruption (Vila,

2000). In that sense, raciolinguistic statements, like when Nancy stated “I’m not that dark”, can be understood as an aspirational whiteness that is also imbued in citizenship.

At the same time, I demonstrated how in very subtle ways that there are cracks in the global design. Thinking about bi/literacy as not just a functional literacy practices but also through how we are taught to read and write world through our experiences is was an essential component of my dissertation. Mignolo (2000) theorizes the notion of bilanguaging love as the idea of thinking between languages and epistemologies. Their abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015) became a function of their bilanguaging love. Abuelita epistemologies enable the maestras to do what they think is right for their students, as such make schooling a more humanizing and loving place. Similarly, Delgado-Bernal (2001) writes about pedagogies of the home that “often serve as a cultural knowledge base that helps students survive and succeed within an education system that often excludes and silences them” (p. 623). In short, subaltern epistemologies rebut the hegemony of Eurowestern ways of knowing.

The maestras translanguaging becomes is a component of how their abuelita epistemologies manifested. Similarly, Carrillo and Cervantes-Soon (2016) contend that translanguaging exhibits as a border thinking pedagogy. I make the connection to abuelita epistemologies because that is how the maestras learned to read the world. Their elders taught them through consejos and to be more human. Through their translanguaging Nancy, Julia, and Guadalupe did this for their students. I argue that this also serves as mentor text for how to read the world. At the convivio, Maria and Nancy felt they had to explain their use of translanguaging and said that their administrators do not understand. Nancy and Maria contended that this is the only way to get through to their students, to not only make content comprehensible, but also to make a human connection. They wish they had been afforded a teacher who could translanguage like they did. The maestras did not

overtly employ *concientización* as Friere (1970) would have us do, but they are in a very subtle way cracking the global design that is the hegemony of English.

On bilingual education, I argue that it operates in very much the same way that the *indio bárbaro* operates in Saldaña-Portillo's (2016) book, *Indian Given*. There she argues that colonial legacies from Spain and the United States attempted to purge the scene/seen of the barbarous Indian, this elusive enemy. She postulates that we understand the racial geography of the United States and Mexico in very much the same way. Mexico's adoption of *mestizaje* is a reminder that the *indio* lives on even though *mestizaje* is itself an erasure of indigeneity. I connect this to how we understand the *maestras'* language and literacy ideologies in which the hegemony of English and functional literacy practices is the racial geography of the United States, this purported purity of English and whiteness—free of the *indio bárbaro*. As such, Spanish serves to remind the *maestras* of the legacy of the *indio* and the transitional bilingual education model serves to again purge you of the *indio*.

As such, bilingual education demands that we employ border thinking. Border thinking (Mignolo, 2000) is the use of subaltern knowledge to straddle worlds. For Mignolo, local histories enable subaltern peoples to live within and out of the global designs brought about by colonization. Translanguaging is one way that border thinking can be employed in bilingual education as it allows one to be subversive in light of the hegemony of English. It is border thinking, born out of their lived experiences, that enable the *maestras* to constantly be negotiating and navigating an oppressive society. They themselves did not claim to be oppressed. However, it was evident that hegemonic English and whiteness pervades the borderlands. To that end, border thinking can be the necessary corrective to that.

To reiterate, Anzaldúa (1987) says that the struggle is inner. One must come to understand the reality of one's life in order to effect change. My dissertation shows that to

decolonize oneself one must begin to reflect on one's lived experiences and how it is connect to larger structures of power. The maestras demonstrated great insight into their own lives but fell short of connecting their lived experiences to those larger structures that have oppressed so many. Because of that, like me in my classroom with Evan, Teresa, and Marisa, we perpetuate, unintentionally, dominant ideologies of English that also privilege functional literacy ideologies. Where there was little resistance to the hegemony of English, it came from their lived experiences on the border—where “neither eagle, nor serpent, but both. And like ocean, neither respects borders” (p.). In that sense, living on the border taught the fronteriza maestras to survive. They understood this in that they know Laredo is a safe space. They did not seem themselves connected to the oppression of others. Because of the fluidity of language, and because of the history of Laredo, they felt deeply connected to the land. Consequently, the maestras have learned to survive on the border, but have not learned to how jar themselves out of ambivalence. To that end, while the maestras in my study inherited the tools to survive in nepantla, one must commit to engaging in anticolonial practices—vis-á-vis mestiza consciousness (Anzaldúa, 1987) and Xicana Feminist Frameworks (Cervantes-Soon, 2018)—to be transgressive and dismantle colonial legacies.

IMPLICATIONS

The philosophical and ideological underpinnings of their practice i.e. how they thought about themselves as teachers and how they thought about others (their students, the students' parents, and other community members) how they structured social relation in and outside of the classroom, and how they conceived of knowledge, revealed their similarities and points of congruence.

(Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1995, pp. 162-163)

In the time since Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) wrote her book *Dreamkeepers* many have cited her work as an inspirational piece of literature about working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Her theory of culturally relevant pedagogy has even been reworked and built upon into culturally responsive pedagogies (Cazden & Leggett, 1976; Gay, 2000) and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris, 2012), each with the aim to transform classroom pedagogies. This quote, however, I maintain is the crux of all good teaching. Good teaching is not necessarily about best practices—not that examination and improvement of best practices is not important—but that we must first come to terms with the inner struggle (Anzaldúa, 1987) and be fully aware of we believe, think, and know about the world. Freire (1970) tells us that teaching is a political act (Ayers, 2004). Bartolomé (1994) cautioned educators about our obsession with methods. Thus, this study aims to ascertain how we can use our lived experiences to better understand how teachers think about language and literacy ideologies and what the maestras ideologies mean for bilingual education.

In his study with 6th grade bilingual students, Martínez (2009, 2013) found that the students exhibited contradictory ideologies about their linguistic practices. Martínez contends that these contradictions serve as a starting point for unpacking dominant monoglossic ideologies and can lead to “transformative dialogue as part of an overall process of critical literacy development” (Martínez, 2013). Indeed, the maestras often mentioned that the pláticas and convivios served as therapy sessions, making them reflect on their lived experiences. While my goal was not to therapize or have them be self-reflective, at our last two convivios, they began to share stories about how they were thinking about their language in everyday interactions. Therefore, self-reflection began to happen and could be used to better understand how their teaching is influenced by their language and literacy ideologies.

Similarly, the maestras also exhibited what Nuñez (2018) coined literacies of surveillance. In Nuñez's study of transfronteizo children, she examined how they adopted literacies of surveillance, knowing when, where, and with whom language and literacy could best mirror their translanguaging practices. The maestras in my study acted as both border inspectors, surveilling their students' language but also felt surveilled (i.e. administrators not permitting them to speak Spanish with students). The maestras themselves were not border crossers like Nuñez's students but understand that surveillance is part of border life. How teachers negotiate their literacies of surveillance are in essence a way of modeling to children how to live on border.

There are also implications for practice vis-à-vis abuelita epistemologies (Gonzales, 2015). I was not in the classroom long enough to fully apprehend how the maestras used abuelita epistemologies to subvert the hegemony of English. However, there were examples of consejos that were given to the teachers that they would pass along to their students. One of these consejos was the one that Maria talked about when she expressed the importance of education and being an independent woman. This consejo was given to her by her mother, which she then passes along to her daughter and son, and to her students. I imagine that if I had, had more time in the schools bilingauging love (Mignolo, 2000) through abuelita epistemologies would have been more prominent than just being subversive through language.

With regards to teacher education, it is incumbent on teacher educators to think about how to begin to untangle the K-12 schooling experience. Britzman (1986) stresses that self-examination of pre-service teacher autobiography is "one such context is the historical experience of lives lived in compulsory education, since it is there that prospective teachers first experience the class room life to which they return as student teachers" (p. 452). Greer (2019), through the use of social media and pre-service teacher

reflection, posits that teacher educators must not only consider pre-service teacher autobiography (i.e. pre-service teachers past lived experiences) but also the pre-service present lives—and the connection between the two—in order to unsettle pervasive discourses of race, class, and gender. Critical reflexivity, in the Freirean (1970) sense must begin at the teacher preparation program (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Degollado, et. al 2019; Palmer & Martínez, 2013;). Within bilingual education, one way that this has been proposed is through a Xicana feminist framework as an anticolonial practice. Cervantes-Soon (2018) theorizes that,

Using a Xicana feminist framework in bilingual teacher education can offer the tools to create learning experiences and contexts that can truly build on the knowledge that bilingual preservice teachers of color bring to their training, and what is more, can help us reconceptualize bilingual teacher preparation toward intentional personal and social transformation.

The maestras in my study were veteran teachers, however, it was clear that they had settled into their practice and had not examined their lives in relation to their language and literacy ideologies. That said, Noemí, shows that teaches can be impacted by their circumstances. Noemí, who once thought children should participate in sink-or-swim education, through teaching Kindergarten realized that bilingual children need a strong foundation in their native language. Noemí had not considered where these ideas came from and could have benefited from a teacher preparation program in which she would have engaged in critical self-reflexivity.

For policy makers and teacher education programs, there are implications for grow your own initiatives (Valenzuela, 2016) and professional development. The maestras in my study were unique in that they were born, raised, and educated in the space where they now teach. Regional universities, like the on the maestras attended, end up preparing teachers

for the communities in and around the area where they are located. Considering this, regional universities potentially serve as a pipeline for transforming schooling or reproducing schooling. In order for grow your own initiatives to serve as a transformation process, Valenzuela argues that:

This requires that K-12 and higher education undergo transformation in the process, incorporating in an intentional manner the cultures, languages, intersectional identities, histories, and funds of knowledge in all their complexity. Consequently, the overall initiative should result in an increased presence of critically-conscious teachers who emanate from historically marginalized communities to which they return upon graduation from the university, with a teaching certificate in hand. (p. 2).

Because the maestras saw Laredo as a safe space and had never faced racism or linguicism from a person who was not of their ethnicity—or in a manner in which it has been historically portrayed in media and textbooks—they did not see their role in perpetuating large structures of oppression. As such, Valenzuela’s idea of intentionality in creating programs that seek to unpack the history and culture of a particular space becomes paramount to the success of grow your own initiatives and an anticolonial practice.

Similarly, the implications for professional development is that in-service teachers partake in professional development that engages them in critical theories and self-reflection. Palmer (2018) studied a group of maestras that participated in Proyecto Maestria which sought to bring back in-service bilingual teachers to the university to equip them with discourses and knowledge that would compel them to take a leadership role in their schools. For the maestras in Palmer’s study engaging in critical theories had a profound impact. According to Palmer (2018), “for the bilingual teachers, reflexivity allowed them to bring thither the deeply practice with the profoundly theoretical, in the interests of

forwarding radical vision for change. Reflexivity led to radical engagement with pedagogies of hope” (p. 70). Ek and Dominguez Chaves (2015) add that professional development in which educators can be self-reflective and engage with critical theories “provide[s] a space for the teachers to author them- selves as Latina/o bilingual teacher agents. In this way, the teachers integrated their personal and professional identities with bilingual-bicultural selves” (p.149). Fittingly, policy makers should take note that these programs offer more practical and transformative results and fund these initiatives.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

My dissertation was an examination of teachers’ stories about their lives to understand the connection between their lives and their language and literacy ideologies. Stories can tell us a lot about how teachers understand the world they live in which in turn informs practice and provides insight into what they think about students, communities, and schools. The study of language and literacy ideologies in bilingual education has been limited to their current thinking and current classroom practices. Literacy ideologies as a whole are understudied in education. Yet, how we think about schools, communities, and parents undergirds so much of our work. Studies have shown this time and again (Heath, 1986; Adair, Sanchez-Suzuki Colgrove, & McManus, 2017). Consequently, further examination of teachers’ language and literacy ideologies warrants further study.

Anzaldúa (1987) intimates that we take the border with us it is not just physical but figurative. We live the borderlands in our psyche. Because borders are crossed figuratively, how people take up border thinking in spaces outside the border is essential for future study. Most Latinx do not live in the borderlands but are expected to perform to their predisposed notions of what their phenotype suggests. As such, borders are created over and over in different spaces. In education, how we navigate those borders is especially

important as our student population becomes increasingly linguistic and culturally diverse. For Mignolo (2000), border thinking and bilanguaging love is that idea that one lives and knows between two or more languages and epistemologies. Border thinking is a subaltern knowledge. Some scholars (Nuñez, 2017; Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016) offer insight into border thinking as a pedagogical practice yet there is still work that needs to be done. Particularly, how pre-service teachers employ border thinking in their teacher preparation programs

Raciolinguistic ideologies are linked to colonial legacies. Rosa and Flores (2017) uphold that “contemporary raciolinguistic ideologies are an ongoing rearticulation of the processes of racialization at the core of nation-state/colonial governmentality.” In my dissertation the maestras couched their ideologies within nation-state/colonial governmentality to make a distinction between themselves and Mexican nationals. Yet, they also unsettled appropriateness by exercising their translanguaging. Embracing the nation-state/colonial governmentality legacy while at the same time unsettling appropriateness, I argue is a function of the maestras border thinking (Mignolo, 2000) inherited as a mode of *sobrevivencia*. Following that line of thought, we must consider how raciolinguistic ideologies inform border thinking for *sobrevivencia* (Prieto, 2009) or working from within (Urrieta, 2010).

Another future direction for research has to do with the study of *pláticas* and *convivios* as data collection methods. Chilsa (2012) states that “to illustrate a culturally responsive indigenous paradigm is to acknowledge the local histories, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems that inform them” (p. 161). In my dissertation, I used the *pláticas* and *convivios* as culturally responsive data collection methods as I worked with Mexican American women from the border. The *plática* and *convivio* are ways of constructing knowledge that seemed most appropriate to me as a cultural insider. As

previously mentioned, telling stories, oral histories, are so much ingrained in who I was as a child. Many days were spent at a Güela's house sharing stories (Gonzales, 2015). These data collection methods have the potential to decolonize the research process in that they are not centered on the researcher mining data. I shared many stories with my participants that are not included in this dissertation. My participants stated multiple times that these sessions felt like therapy. They cried at our pláticas. Stories were shared that are meant to be kept secret—only known to me and the participant. I could only have done this dissertation because of my relationship with these maestras. At the same time, I am fully aware of that my title as research is problematic and something with which I must also contend (Cervantes-Soon, 2014). Nonetheless, how we can use the plática and convivio to co-construct knowledge is an area that warrants further theorizing.

Similarly, Rodriguez (2018) utilized the convivio as an emancipatory practice with a group of young Latinx women. In her dissertation, the convivio was a transformative experience for these young women in that they also came to new understandings about themselves and the world in which they live. As such, we must also consider how the convivio can be used as a culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) and anticolonial practice (Cervantes-Soon, 2019) for professional development. In keeping with Mignolo's (2000) theory of cracking the global design, the convivios as professional development for in-service teachers would function to disrupt the negative experiences or burdens that educators bear in the profession.

Lastly, the maestras are making a spatial argument for understanding their language and literacy ideologies that necessitates further analysis. There was some analysis in my dissertation based on Saldaña-Portillo's (2016) concept of Indian given and the indio bárbaro. In her book she speaks about Lebfreves (1991) concept of space: spatial practice, representation of space, and representational spaces. Coloniality certainly played a role in

the maestras genealogy of thought. However, a critical ethnography would offer more insight into how the maestras ideologies reproduced or transformed spaces. How educators think about space, could help us better understand their teaching practices.

EPILOGUE

We go with our family, like my mom side of the family... we get together, carne asada... Ramon Ayala. You know what I mean. Ahhh, comfortable. I'm here with Ramon Ayala... I'm comfortable. Even my kids are like "oh that's carnita music." Like when we make carne asada. There's got to be like Ramon Ayala or Tejano or something.

Lorena, Convivio, 06/15/18

A lot of people they always... they always... When I say I grew up listening to Grupo Mas, to J Perez, to Gary Hobbs. I grew up listening to that music and they are like "you did"? because I speak a lot of English. To me that's music. And they are like I don't see you...my uncle was in a Tejano band, that's what he did, he played with Gary Hobbs, with J Perez he played with all these people so I grew up listening to the music he played They walk into my classroom and I'm listening to that music and they are like "huh, you like that music?"

Nancy, Convivio, 06/15/18

I mentioned at the begin of the chapter that as qualitative researcher we write about a struggle that is inner. Maybe we are trying to find out something about ourselves in studying how others live and understand the world. One of my apprehensions at the onset of writing this dissertation is that I would have to put my participants, who are my friends, under the proverbial microscope. In having them read this dissertation, I wonder how they will react to my theorizing of their words as I often suggested that maybe they disliked Spanish because of aspirational whiteness. Or maybe they had been so colonized that they did not understand their own colonization. And yet, their words in the aforementioned quotes suggest that in their minds, that they do not fully see themselves as aspiring to whiteness as much as they are straddling two worlds. Lorena's and Nancy's thoughts are

emblematic of “the more subtle ways that we internalize identification, especially in the forms of images and emotions”. (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 83). They maestras are caught between two worlds, loyal only to their land they live on.

This land was Mexican once

was Indian always

and is.

And will be again.

(Anzaldúa, 1987)

Appendices

APPENDIX A: LETTER REQUESTING PHOTOS

Hello all!

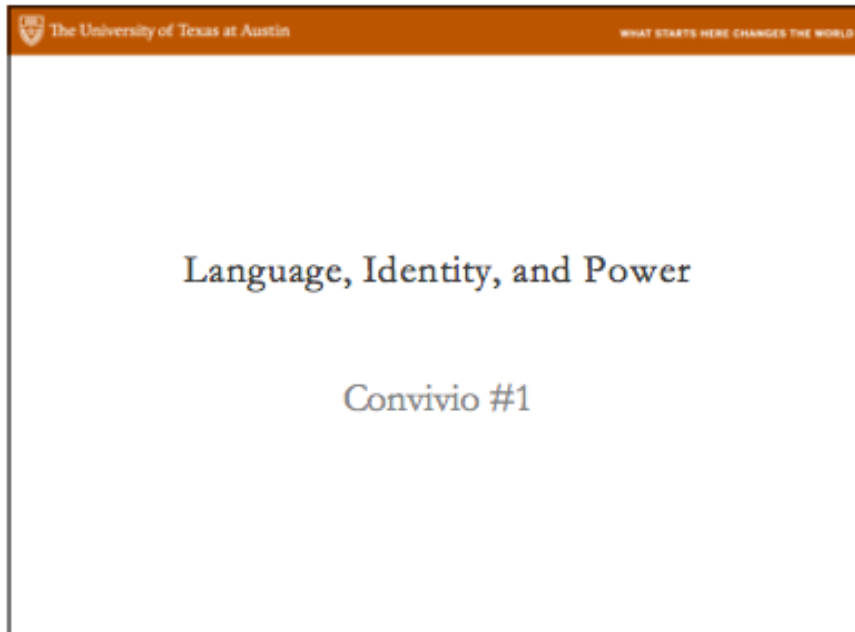
Thank you again for participating in my study. For this study, I am going to conduct pláticas, or one-on-one conversations where we will share our stories through photos. When we meet, please bring five (5) photos with you that you think represent who you are as a person. These photos can be about important people or significant events in your life. For example, below is a photo of me as a child playing school at my aunt's ranch house. This photo shows how school was always important to me and that I always wanted to be a teacher.

Looking forward to talking with you all!

Best,
David



APPENDIX B: SAMPLE POWERPOINT – CONVIVIO #1

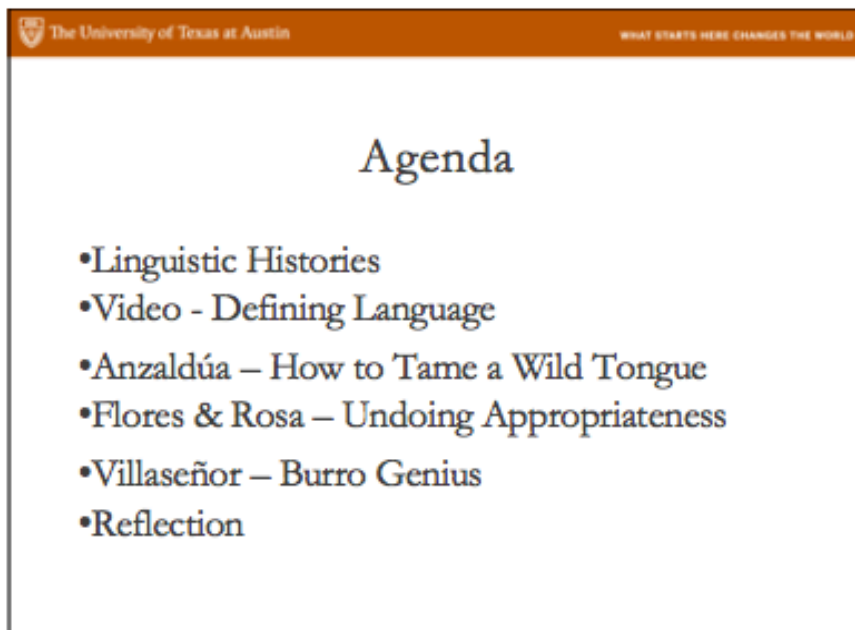


The University of Texas at Austin

WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

Language, Identity, and Power

Convivio #1



The University of Texas at Austin

WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

Agenda

- Linguistic Histories
- Video - Defining Language
- Anzaldúa – How to Tame a Wild Tongue
- Flores & Rosa – Undoing Appropriateness
- Villaseñor – Burro Genius
- Reflection

4/22/19

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1

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1

Linguistic Histories

- Purpose: to reflect on the role that language has played in our lives, based on the premises that
 - Language is socially constructed
 - Every person has a unique linguistic repertoire

Mi Historia Lingüística



Your Linguistic History

- What are the roots of your linguistic repertoire and language use?
- What has shaped and informed your language?
- How is your language tied to place, culture, people, race, identity?

¿Que es lenguaje?

- Escriba una definición de la palabra lenguaje.
- ¿Qué significa la palabra bilingüe?
- Hable con su compañero sobre lo que escribió.
- Como grupo escriban su propia definición de las dos palabras: lenguaje y bilingüe.

Definiciones

WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

- A way of communicating depending on how you feel most comfortable, your setting, your environment.
- At work you communicate and other places its more of an expression.
- Based on experience.
- Even within families language is different.
- whatever you need to relay a message.
- As long as you get your point across.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BILINGUAL?

- you don't have to be proficient according to our standards...
- considering ourselves outside Laredo
- As long as you can get by in two languages...

Defining Language

- https://www.ted.com/talks/iamila_lviscott_3_ways_to_speak_english
- ¿Cómo define lenguaje Jamila?
- ¿Cómo piensan que definirá bilingüe Jamila?
- ¿Se compara la definición de Jamila con la definición de ustedes?

How to Tame a Wild Tongue

- Watch Selena Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUZ5Yhwzz80&feature=youtu.be>
- Read Anzaldúa –
- Discuss: linguistic terrorism
- Think about:
 - How do Anzaldúa's concepts play out on the border, in our lives, and in our schools?
 - Are there any connections to our lives or our students?

Undoing Appropriateness

- Read: Flores and Rosa (2015)
- Think about:
 - What are white gaze, appropriateness?
 - How do we participate in propagating the white gaze?
 - How does this connect to Anzaldúa?

Burro Genius

- Read: Villaseñor (2004) Chapter 1
- Think about:
 - Is Villaseñor fair in his assessment of teachers?
 - Can we think of times where we lifted up/ our students linguistic resources?

Conexiones lingüísticas

- De las lecturas de Anzaldúa, Flores y Rosa, y Villaseñor has conexiones de:
 - Texto-a-texto
 - Texto-a-individuo
 - Texto-al-mundo

Discusión de conexiones

- Que conexiones hicieron?
- Comparen o contrasten como enseñan o como aprendieron ustedes en la escuela. Reflexionen en como aprendieron a hablar, leer, o escribir
- Hablen sobre uno ejemplos.

Reflexiona

- ¿Cómo cambiaron los pensamientos de ustedes sobre lenguaje?
- ¿Llegaron a un entendimiento nuevo?
Expliquen.



Discusión de conexiones

- Que conexiones hicieron?
- Comparen o contrasten como enseñan o como aprendieron ustedes en la escuela. Reflexionen en como aprendieron a hablar, leer, o escribir
- Hablen sobre uno ejemplos.



Reflexiona

- ¿Cómo cambiaron los pensamientos de ustedes sobre lenguaje?
- ¿Llegaron a un entendimiento nuevo?
Expliquen.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE ANALYTIC MEMO

Sample - Analytic Memo – Convivio #1

Nancy started speaking about her childhood and how she learned Spanish first. Then went to school and they had Spanish time, but everything is in English. She learned Spanish reading and writing at a church camp that was like girl scouts but informed by religious teachings. She and her sister and parents speak to one another in Spanish and then she speaks to her husband in English. She speaks about how she struggles to teach her kids Spanish despite wanting them to and attributes it to the fact that she and her husband speak to one another in English. Their school, a private one, only teaches them English.

Maria describes being like Nancy, her parents and grandparents only spoke Spanish. Maria said she had a hard time transitioning, they didn't want to do the same mistake. So my brother is all English dominant. He didn't even know what joven was... in college with his Spanish courses. Emily and my son who is 16 and up they are able to communicate somewhat in Spanish. But to them we just talk to them in English. my son refuses to speak in Spanish. she speaks about being frustrated. Just tell me in English.

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Vita

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