Messiah University

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Faculty Educator Scholarship

Education

2021

Story Shaping Ideology: Majoritarian Stories of English Learners

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Chapter 1
Story Shaping Ideology:
Majoritarian Stories of English Learners

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ABSTRACT

Using interviews, artifacts, email correspondences, and lesson plans collected from six white, female, preservice teachers during their student teaching, this chapter focuses on the stories that shaped their ideologies of the emergent bilingual children in their classrooms. The findings indicate the preservice teachers, while having diverse lived experiences, held some common majoritarian stories concerning English learners. In addition to those majoritarian stories already established in the field, there were three additional stories uncovered in this study that significantly influenced the ideologies of emergent bilingual students. The chapter concludes by encouraging teacher educators to unpack story and use it as a vehicle for addressing teacher ideology of emergent bilingual students.

INTRODUCTION

We are shaped by story. Stories told to us during our childhood, stories reinforced or ignored in our own education and stories we hold in our professional lives as educators impact us. Not only do these stories shape us, they are also fundamental in how we make sense of the world and our 'Others' (Bell, 2010). These collective stories, often subconsciously, make and influence our teaching ideology (Marx, 2009). As teachers, the power of our stories affects students in our classrooms. The purpose of this study is to understand the stories six White, female, preservice teachers held

in reference to emergent bilingual children in their student teaching placements. The findings indicate the preservice teachers were influenced by their stories. In addition to eight stories already established in the research, there were three additional stories uncovered that significantly impacted the ideologies of emergent bilingual students. This is of importance as the racial, linguistic and potential ideological disconnect between teachers and their multicultural, multilingual, diverse students may remain masked and unexamined.

Story and Power

Language and storytelling is not simply a means of expressing an idea or a tool to communicate; language is an instrument of power (Bourdieu, 1977; Motha, 2014). The power behind story can support and reinforce the status quo, or can challenge it. When considering stories that have contributed to the ideologies of teachers, we need to examine two types of story; majoritarian and counterstories. Majoritarian stories are multilayered stories that "privilege Whites, men, the middle and/or upper class, and heterosexuals by naming these social locations as natural or normative points of reference" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28). It is widely documented that preservice teachers enter classrooms with mainstream, majoritarian stories that contribute to deficit thinking about their students of color. Eight common majoritarian stories documented in the literature (Bell, 2010; Herrera & Morales, 2009; Howard, 2006; Love, 2004; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003; Marx, 2000; Mitchell, 2012; Mitchell, 2013) include:

(a) colorblindness/post-racial society reflects the idea that race does not impact society, (Atwater, 2007; Gordon, 2005; Nieto, 2000);

(b) difference is deficit suggests the perceived difference between individuals create deficits, (Mitchell, 2013; Shapiro, 2014; Valencia, 2010);

(c) English is ALL that matters is a belief that a teacher's highest responsibility is to teach English, (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003; Mitchel, 2013);

(d) equal opportunities in schooling reflects the idea that everyone is given an equal chance and opportunity to succeed in school, (Delgado, Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Love, 2004);

(e) fairness in the classroom takes into account the idea that assignments, assessments and instruction are inherently fair for all student, (Valencia, 2010; Viesca, Torres, Barnatt & Piazza, 2013);

(f) meritocracy and the American dream notes individuals can rely on hard work along to become successful, (Viesca, Torres, Barnatt & Piazza, 2013; Love, 2004);

(g) nativism is privileging the interests of native born citizens over immigrants, (Howard, 2006; Huber, 2011; Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, Solórzano, 2008);

(h) save emergent bilingual students from their first language assumes first languages are a detriment to students, (Furumoto, 2008; Thiong'O, 1986; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003; Marx, 2009).

These stories are a result of a history of privilege and function to maintain these systems of oppression as simply 'natural' (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28).

In contrast, counterstory telling is defined as "a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (ie, those on the margins of society)...a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). These stories emerge from the margins of society and challenge the normative beliefs. Often as a means of survival, counterstory telling is centered in the experiences, struggles and triumphs of communities of color. Additionally, counterstories often expose injustice, transform individuals and challenge the validity of majoritarian stories.

Examining Teacher Ideology

The ideology of a teacher impacts the pedagogical teaching tools selected thereby influencing student achievement (Arias, 2012; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Macedo & Bartolomé 1999; Marx, 2000). Therefore, a teacher unaware of this impact creates a climate where the cultural norms in the classroom inhibit the learning of diverse students (Marx, 2009). This "ideological baggage" if left uninspected creates a classroom where emergent bilingual children suffer academically and emotionally (Martinez, 2000). In teacher education programs the examination of these common-sense beliefs, or ideology can take a back seat to learning strategies to best 'help' minority students (Bartolomé, 1994; Howard, 2006). However, these unchecked attitudes contribute to teacher's motivation to successfully teach ELs which influences learning (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Kyles & Olafson, 2008). Therefore, the unpacking of teacher ideology is a vital, necessary first step in developing equitable educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students.

Olson (2012) examined the impact the highly politicized environment surrounding ELs in Arizona had upon the beliefs and perceptions of preservice teachers in regards to ELs. She found while preservice teachers did indicate they wished to teach students for "good intentions" (p. 178), they lacked the ideological clarity to see past deficit thinking and actually have an impact. She concluded before even stepping into the teacher education classroom, preservice teachers held the state's ideology of using structured English immersion as the method for teaching ELs.

Through the media, the power structure of the state was reinforced and presumed valid in the latent ideology of these preservice teachers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical race theory (CRT) provided a lens in uncovering the connections between a lived experience, story and ideology of emergent bilingual children. CRT, with roots in feminism, post-structuralism, and critical legal studies (Bell, 1992; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011), offers the field of education a chance to examine education through the lens that American society is highly racialized (Delgado 1995, Ladson-Billings 1998, Leonardo, 2009). This framework provides the language to examine the intersectionalities of EL's many identities such as race, ethnicity, language, immigration status, and religion. In investigating the ideology of the participants in this study, CRT provided a framework needed to view how systemic racism and the power structures of majoritarian stories affect ideology and in turn influence the educational experiences for emergent bilingual children.

METHODOLOGY, PARTICIPANTS, DATA SOURCES

In the tradition of narrative research, this study purposefully intended to uncover the links between the personal lived experiences of participants and their professional teaching ideology. The participants for this study were six White female undergraduate preservice who were completing their student teaching semester.

Prior to this study, the student teaching placements were already established by the education department chair at Midhurst College (pseudonym). Given the list of placement schools and classrooms, the researcher called or emailed each school's ESL teacher to determine if ELs were students in any of the placement classrooms. Once student teaching classrooms were identified as having at least one EL, a list of eligible participants was created. Only student teachers placed in classrooms with at least one emergent bilingual student were considered. Out of the potential 44 student teachers, only seven classrooms had ELs, and all seven potential participants were White and female. The list of participants was shared with the education department chair. She assisted in nominating and selecting six participants. The researcher spoke with each of the selected prospective participants in person, explained the study and asked if they were interested in participating. All six agreed, and they read and signed the consent letter to participate in this research.

Participants were enrolled in a dual certification program for early childhood, grades pre K-4 and special education K-8 certification at Midhurst, a small, private

liberal arts college in Western Pennsylvania. The participants student taught at one of three schools: Covington Elementary School, Heritage Elementary School, and Southside Elementary School. These schools were all within a 30-minute drive from Midhurst, yet had significant differences. Covington Elementary School was in the same town as Midhurst and was 99.5% White and 0.5% Other, and had two of 352 students as ELs. Heritage Elementary was 30-minutes west of Midhurst and was 33% White, 30% Black, 26% Hispanic, and 11% multi-racial, and 40 of 581 students were ELs. Lastly, Southside Elementary School was thirty minutes north of Midhurst and was 76% White, 12.5% Multi-Racial, 11% Black with seven of 318 students as ELs. Table 1 indicates the six participants in relationship to the demographics of the English learners in their respective classrooms.

The following sources were used: two one-hour interviews, two artifacts, seven email correspondences, and two lesson plans. Triangulation of all data was an important aspect this study as it allowed to move past superficial binaries seeking to understand the complexities and sites of contradictions within all participants (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). The collection of data from a variety of sources was also helpful to present the participants as complex, multifaceted individuals with unique narratives, yet simultaneously, operating within the majoritarian culture. Using Polkinghorn's (1995) criteria for forming a narrative and the data sources collected, I wrote individual narratives for each participant. Participants had two opportunities to read and revise these narratives co-creating these teacher narratives. The second lens of data analysis examined the commonalities in these narratives and how these narratives of preservice teachers impact their ideology of diverse students,

There are limitations to this study. First, in the interpretation of a person's life, there is much ambiguity and also recreation. "As we write about lives…we create differences, oppositions and presences which allow us to maintain the illusion that we have captured the 'real' experiences…in fact we create the persons we write about" (Denzin, 1989, p. 82). Therefore, when recounting a person's experience there were choices made that could cause a person's story to be misrepresented or decontextualized. Narratives are messy in this way. Munro reflected, "I know that I cannot 'collect' a life. Narrative does not provide a better way to locate truth, but in fact reminds us all good stories are predicated on the quality of fiction. We live many lives" (Munro as cited in Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 15). In realizing this, one is more careful in crafting interpretations that are co-created and are cautious not to jump to conclusions. In addition, the purpose of this research is not to generalize to the entire population of all preservice teachers.

Narrative research requires a small sample size, as the amount of time devoted to each participant is significant. This study is also limited as all participants are female. Also, in working with memory and perceptions there is this innate characteristic of dynamic evolution. Stories change. Just as stories are never told the same way

twice, likewise, they too are never heard the same way twice. Stories are predicated upon both remembered lived experience as well as present-day context. However, rather than a weakness, I believe it is importation to realize how one's ideology is built upon the shifting sands of those stories told to us and told by us.

Blair's Narrative

Blair grew up in an upper-class gated community in rural Western Pennsylvania. While she had few opportunities to interact with racially or linguistic diverse classmates, she said she had a curiosity in learning more about different cultures. She enjoyed learning Spanish in high school and considered a Spanish minor in college. During her student teaching at Heritage Elementary, she taught three female Spanish-speaking kindergartners. She did not know their language levels. In her classroom, she encouraged the use of Spanish in learning content. She took an active, vested interest in the lives of the ELs and their families. At the end of student teaching, she expressed increased confidence in her ability to teach students from a range of backgrounds and looked forward to future opportunities to experience diverse settings.

Emilee's Narrative

Emilee grew up in an affluent suburb of Pittsburgh. Her neighborhood was described as predominately White and upper to upper-middle class. Emilee taught two male EL kindergarteners at Heritage Elementary. She did not know their language levels. In her classroom, she found student behavior difficult to manage. She struggled to know how to approach the diverse students in her classroom and expressed feelings of "culture shock." While she expressed that she did not need to modify lessons for her ELs, at times they struggled academically. At the end of student teaching, she was critical of what she called her "sheltered" upbringing and felt it had not prepared her for teaching in a diverse setting. She completed student teaching expressing feelings of discouragement.

Marie's Narrative

Marie grew up in a rural area of Western Pennsylvania. She did not experience racial or linguistic diversity in her K-12 schooling, yet she chose to travel and lived abroad three times, each time involving learning another language (Spanish, Portuguese, Czech). Marie student taught in a kindergarten classroom at Heritage Elementary. She had three males and one female who were Greek-speakers, and one male student was a Spanish-speaker. She did not know their language levels. She described her biggest obstacle in her student teaching experience was lack of support in finding out how

best to meet the needs of the ELs. She was able to empathize with the difficulties associated in learning another language and often displayed more patience with her ELs than her cooperating teacher. At the end of student teaching, she was looking forward to living abroad and teaching at an international school.

Charlotte's Narrative

Charlotte was from a suburb of a large city in Eastern Ohio. Growing up, she had few opportunities to interact with racially or linguistic diverse classmates. Her student teaching in a first-grade classroom at Heritage Elementary was "eye-opening" as she had never experienced racial or linguistic diversity at that level before. She was unsure how many ELs were in her classroom. She believed there were two or three boys. She did not know their language levels. She felt she did not need to modify lessons for her ELs and desired for them to fit into the classroom. At the end of student teaching, she expressed she wished she had more opportunities to experience diverse settings in her teacher education program.

Serena's Narrative

Serena grew up in an economically depressed area of Western Pennsylvania. When she was in the fourth grade, she was sent to live at a racially and linguistically diverse residential school initially established as a home for orphans. She lived there until high school, after which she experienced instability in her living and school environments. She student taught in a third-grade classroom at Southside Elementary. She taught one female Arabic-speaker who was at the beginning levels of learning English. She felt a strong bond with her students and felt the other faculty harbored negative opinions of the children and their families. At the end of student teaching, she was more aware of racial and religious discrimination and felt more able to speak up against discrimination.

Taylor's Narrative

Taylor grew up in a middle to lower-middle class neighborhood near an economically depressed city in Eastern Ohio. She recalled interacting with classmates from a variety of racial and linguistic backgrounds. Growing up, she was aware of racism and linguicism and shared examples from her own lived experiences that demonstrated her experience with racism and linguicism. During her student teaching at Covington Elementary, she taught a third grade female German-speaking student. While she did not know her EL's exact language levels, Taylor noted she often struggled with academic language. She tried to teach in ways that met the needs of all of her

students. At the end of student teaching, she expressed an increased awareness of the role of race and class on equity in education.

FINDINGS

This study challenged the traditional notions of White preservice teachers as a monolithic group, as the examples of personal lived experiences were different between participants. These differences were significant, variable, and changed over time. The participants in this study were not invited to join the study because they had these diverse lived experiences. Instead, student teaching placements were created prior to the start of this research thus reflecting the diversity of the participants within the category. This highlights the reality that White female preservice teachers come with unique histories and stories.

However, just as remarkable as these differences were, the similarities, especially in reference to teaching ELs, were also evident. These findings complicated the binary between participants perceived as either deficient or promising. While all eight stock stories were represented in the course of the study with the participants as a whole, every participant did not explicitly express their belief in each stock story. Table 2 shows the connections between participants and eight stock stories.

For these six participants, three additional majoritarian stories emerged and shed light upon the ways they viewed the emergent bilingual children: (a) ELs should strive to 'fit in'; (b) the imagined EL; and (c) ELs must prove and advocate for their multilingualism. These three stories provide insights into the ways in which teacher ideology is shaped and an unspoken aspect of teacher identity informing practice. These stories were based in the participants' lived experiences. While the intent of this article is not to generalize these additional stories outside the Midhurst community, it does uncover the reality that each story is situated in the collective experiences, geographical, political, and historical contexts of individuals and institutions. These stories were believed because they made sense to the participant based upon her lived experience. For each of the three stories, examples as evidenced in the data as well as a sample story that explicitly uncover this thinking are provided.

Majoritarian Story 1: ELs Should Strive to 'Fit In'

One of the most evident common phrases used by participants was they desired for their ELs to 'fit in.' In interviews and email correspondences, all six participants used this phrase when they described how they actively looked for ways to help reduce the potential opportunities when ELs might stand apart from their peers.

They attempted to minimize the linguistic, cultural or familial differences of ELs to help the ELs "fit in."

The root of this story connected to participants' exposure to diversity in their upbringing. Participants discussed early seeds of racism. Marie noted, "I kind of grew up with [racist ideas] and because I didn't have a lot of interactions with African-Americans, it always kind of stuck in the back of my mind and it kind of still sticks in the back of my mind. It's like a bad taste." In an effort to separate one's self from the outwardly explicit racist views of family or friends deemed inappropriate, most of the participants this study took on views of colorblind individuality, a middle ground between keeping a relationship with the loved one and simultaneously presenting one's self as disagreeing with the message. As the participants grew older and began to consider race and racism as adults, this idea was solidified as "fitting in" under the premise of colorblindness and avoidance in discussing topics of race.

Participants shared they often did not know how to approach topics of racial and linguistic differences let alone racism and linguicism as teachers in the classroom. Emilee's student teaching classroom was an almost even split of one-third White, Black, and Latinx students; she was keenly aware of the racial differences yet unsure of how to talk about them. Further, she was surprised that others talked openly about these racial differences. Emilee experienced an internal dilemma, asking herself "'How do you approach this?' In my head I was like, do we make it known that they're different and do we make it known that they're not different?" She struggled when her default position of colorblindness or language blindness was laid bare because the children were in fact racially different from one another.

Emilee shared her surprise when she observed her cooperating teacher conduct a read-aloud about Martin Luther King Jr. and segregated schools, followed by a discussion on race and racism with the class. Emily reflected:

[The students] talk very openly about, yes you are black and yes you are white. Does it make you any different? No. That was just awesome to me. I was just like, "It doesn't matter."…you can talk about differences but it doesn't have to be a bad thing. [Race] was always one of those things where I beat around the bush…I never knew how to approach it, and I never knew if it was appropriate or not to talk about it.

Emilee was grateful to observe the teacher engage in this conversation and open up her mind to discussions about race.

Emilee's experience reflects the beliefs of colorblindness or language blindness many of the participants had been taught growing up that were then transferred into their teaching. Blair reflected in her weekly journal on being in the kindergarten classroom during a celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday:

I do not think that the students can necessarily relate to the stories of racism or segregation, but rather that they were surprised by them. Seeing as this was probably one of the first times they had talked about MLK and what he fought for, I think they just could not understand the idea inequality and people being treated differently.

Blair felt the students did not understand racism. Yet this same participant in the second interview, relayed stories of students noticing race, and even making discriminatory comments to Black classmates. She said:

Well, there's one student in particular that's a girl and she's white. And she just – I don't know. It must just be like the way she was raised. But I've heard multiple comments from her. Like she was the one with the skin story...they all have a square on the carpet that they sit in. And this little girl had a black student who's supposed to be sitting beside her. And she said, "Oh, come on. You can sit next to me. It's okay. Even if you're black, you can sit next to me." And so, it looks like she's not saying anything like – I mean she's so young. She really doesn't realize it I don't think. She's not really saying it in a bad way. She's just pointing out like, "You're different but it's okay. But you are different." And she's probably one of the only ones that I've heard say anything like that. And it's funny too because when she draw us pictures, she'll draw the black students brown. And she'll leave the white students and the Hispanic students not colored in. And it's, you know, it's just what so many of our kids don't notice anything. She's just one of the early ones...But she doesn't comment on the Latino students in the class (Blair, Interview).

The children in this classroom are thinking about and openly expressing their beliefs concerning race and racism. This young White kindergartner was, by her own drawings, making a distinction between her Black classmates and what she considered to be the normative White and Latinx students. However, the participant was unable to see this expression as a common majoritarian belief as she blamed this child's drawings and racist comments on the child's individual upbringing. The participant did not know how to disrupt this thinking nor did she challenge the story that was already established in the mind of this five-year-old. She falsely believed her students did not "notice anything" and was unable or unwilling to offer counterstories to help the class make sense of their inequitable world.

Participants shared they appreciated completing their student teaching in a racially diverse school as it served to "open their eyes." Charlotte wrote:

[My experience] has opened my eyes to a completely different way of life. All students [including ELs] have so much to bring to the table in the classroom and it should

not be denied. I think that this experience has made me a lot more comfortable in dealing with those who are different than myself!

Charlotte recognized her upbringing created a barrier to understanding the children and adjusting to a diverse classroom. She reflected:

I would catch myself saying something simple like "mom and dad" before realizing that many kids in my class live with a grandparent or other family member. Growing up, everyone around me lived a similar lifestyle and typically had both parents involved in their life.

The participants talked about the significant impact of these eye-opening experiences with diverse students because the experiences were so different from their own lived experiences. When reflecting on aspects of her lived experiences that caused difficulties teaching ELs, Emilee shared:

Limited exposure really...Because I didn't have a whole lot of experience, even just with diversity I think that was a big thing. Even though I'm not racist or prejudiced or anything, just being around that many African-Americans was a total culture shock for me.

She acknowledged the completely different environment in the classroom and seemed worried the perception of her may be viewed as negative, stating she was not racist.

When topics of race, or acts of racism, emerged Blair, Emilee, and Serena did not know how best to help their students. Participants ascribed to the belief that assimilation will protect ELs from potential oppression. Participants expressed reluctance to ask students to share about their culture, language, or personal life, as these potential differences would be viewed as in opposition to class norms. This included not asking students about the languages they could speak, which led to not knowing which students were English learners. Participants expressed they did not feel equipped to have the conversation.

This story seemed to arise from a combination of lived experiences of equality and fairness in schools and racial isolation and notions of assimilation that did not sufficiently provide the counterstories needed to challenge these majoritarian stories. Participants believed the best way to help their EL students was to encourage them to completely assimilate into White English speaking norms by "fitting in". They did not have models from their lived experience that demonstrated how communities of color could both be successful and retain their uniqueness. Many did not have opportunities to be a part of a multicultural or multilingual classroom as a student

and did not have models of teachers who created classroom atmospheres that celebrate diversity. Yet all of the participants noted as a result of the weekly emails and interviews, they looked at the ELs in their student teaching classroom differently. Participants noted the student teaching experience was a first step in understanding difference or seeing discrimination. It also added another layer to a counterstory and added a child's face to the issue.

To help teacher educators uncover the ideology behind this majoritarian story, an example of this stock story might include a teacher commenting she is so proud of an EL student. She might say, "He is doing so well, no one would even know that he speaks Spanish. I bet that his peers couldn't have guessed that English wasn't his first language because he fits in so well." While these comments appear to be compliments, behind them is the belief the child must hide his language and culture to fit in. In addition, if this child were to share his culture or language with his peers he would not be accepted, and it would be his fault for not conforming to the norms.

Of course, teachers should desire to have classrooms where everyone belongs. This is not the same as 'fitting in." The connotation behind this belief is it requires the EL to conform to the normative White English speaking classroom. It negates the rich cultures, languages, and assets ELs bring to the classroom. Therefore, the more an EL conforms to White English speaking norms, the more successful the child will be. In return, the teacher would not need to address uncomfortable topics like race or linguicism in the classroom.

Majoritarian Story 2: The Imagined EL

The second story that emerged is a profile for an emergent bilingual student that imagined the child would be silent, not yet speaking English, shy, and unintelligent. Prior to meeting their students, participants were told they would have at least one emergent bilingual student in their class. After spending a few weeks in the class, each participant noted the emergent bilingual children did not behave as they had imagined. This was surprising to them. The actual children in their placements were often described as remarkably talkative, social, and bright. While this realization is beneficial, it resulted in the belief these students did not need additional language nor academic support. When the emergent bilingual students fell outside of the imagined profile, the participants discounted their need for additional linguistic support.

This stock story was evident in the initial days of their placement. The task of identifying the individual ELs in their placement was difficult for four participants. Before beginning student teaching Charlotte said, "I think I have this image in my mind of them (ELs) maybe not ... This almost stereotypical, like they don't know any English. She also noted she had a difficult time identifying the ELs during her first week of teaching as they blended into the already diverse classroom. She wrote

"I could not figure out which students in my class were ELs this week! While my class is extremely diverse, none of the students really stuck out to me as possibly speaking another language." In the final interview, Charlotte noted she may have found another bilingual student in her class who she was unaware existed. She said:

And I'm like, "Oh, do you – do you speak Spanish at home?" And he goes, "Oh, like a little bit. My mom does but not a lot." Like he said he knew a little bit. So, then thinking I don't know if that's – would that be considered another …I'm not sure. But…he really said - mentioned that. So – and I didn't know about that one. So, there's that one.

Some participants commented at times even their cooperating teacher was unsure of the students' language abilities. This uncertainty led participants to develop their own strategies to determine language levels.

For example, four participants described looking for clues to indicate their students spoke languages other than English. Charlotte commented she looked at the students' names, especially unique surnames, to try to discern if a student was an EL. Maria wrote she realized "a few of them speak that language at home -like my one Greek student goes by 'Maria' at school but at home she has a 'Greek name.'" The fact that this student used a "Greek name" at home seemed to confirm for her this child did in fact speak Greek with her family.

Other participants noted listening to the accents of their students and their families for cues that another language was used at home. Blair commented, "I got to meet the parents at parent-teacher conferences. I mean you can tell which parents come in and have an accent, which ones – like I can see them speaking to their child in Spanish." While this may have been successful in some instances, in other occasions listening for accents resulted in inaccurate appraisals of a person's language. Five of the participants expressed having a difficult time identifying the children who spoke multiple languages.

Another factor complicating the identification of ELs was all of the children in this study could speak some English. The image in participants' minds of ELs was a child who is newly arrived and in the silent stage of language acquisition. Participants continued to revert back to this image of ELs. Marie expected the ELs to be shy or timid. Once she met the students she found the ELs were not timid and rather blended in with everyone, stating "they are friends with everyone. They're not left in the corner by themselves. Everyone is just friends and were a community together." Serena asked her cooperating teacher for assistance when she couldn't identify the EL in the class. She was surprised she couldn't automatically pick out the student, particularly since she had engaged in conversations with the student. She further explained,

[She was] socially with the other kids, totally on par. And then once... I had learned that she was [an EL], I started paying attention to her more. And I noticed the kids during recess would ask her, "How do you write my name in Arabic?" or, "How do you say my name?"

Participants expressed feeling caught off guard when the ELs were able to hold basic conversations and interact with their peers.

At times, the realization that ELs could speak some English led participants to believe these students did not really need support. Marie shared, "They're so bright and they're so capable of doing so much. Because their language is so developed…I don't have to do so much work almost with them." She later shared due to their levels of English, she did not need to adapt lesson plans or think about the fact they spoke other languages at home.

Participants also expressed a sense of general confusion over language levels and proficiency. They did not know their student's proficiency test scores in reading, writing, speaking, or listening. They were unsure of their students' strengths or needs in terms of second language acquisition. Only one participant, Serena, commented she checked students' files for language test data to gauge students' language acquisition stages. However, the classroom teacher did not encourage this, and she was only permitted to briefly look at the scores. She did not have a chance to take her time with the report and wished she could have reviewed the data more thoroughly.

None of the participants spoke with the ESL teacher for suggestions or reached out for other district resources. ESL teachers were mentioned as simply the people who came and pulled the ELs from class, and at times they weren't available due to other administrative responsibilities. Two participants shared the ELs did not receive ESL services for over a month due to state testing responsibilities. Marie commented when the students were in ESL class she did not know what was taught or how she could support them. She said, "I wish I knew what was going on in there (ESL class) and I have no idea with that."

Due in part to this lack of connection with the ESL teachers, participants relied on their own judgment or the information that their cooperating teachers shared to determine ELs language needs. One participant described how she and her cooperating teacher struggled to understand why the ELs in her class could not rhyme. Together they surmised that rhyming words must not exist in Spanish, the first language of their ELs. They then concluded it made sense that the children struggled rhyming in English. The participant noted her cooperating teacher had been previously baffled by this phenomenon.

Each participant confused conversational English, intelligence, social openness, or curiosity for higher levels of English ability. Only Serena actually knew the language

levels of her EL. Relying on the first majoritarian story of "fitting in" participants believed students did not really need additional linguistic support.

Yet at the same time, five participants commented their ELs struggled academically. These academic difficulties were not understood as being potentially connected to the child's acquisition on English. Rather, participants blamed their academic struggles upon the students' personality, attention seeking behaviors, and need for speech and language testing. The participants relied on the story of meritocracy expecting ELs to work harder or pay closer attention to the instruction. Marie described one of the ELs and her assessment of his academic struggles:

As far as my Hispanic student, he struggles academically. He does go to "tutoring" weekly…He is a typical active boy, he plays with his peers, sometimes has a hard time focusing which can lead him to get in trouble. I don't know if he doesn't enjoy school or is disinterested because sometimes he doesn't care to finish his work. But oh boy, when you compliment him, his face lights up. He laughs a lot and likes to make jokes.

Marie was comfortable attributing the Spanish-Speaking child's academic struggles to his personal "disinterest" in school or active characteristics of being a "typical boy."

An example of this stock story is a teacher who described her EL in this way: "She is so social and bright. She has so many friends and can tell me everything she did over the weekend. I really don't think that she needs any additional support or adaptations because her language skills are so developed. She knows English! However, when it comes to her writing, she really needs to do a better job of focusing. I think that she would do a better job if she only tried harder." In this example, the meritocracy story and belief in fairness caused the teacher to mistake the social language of her EL for academic language skills. This teacher did not understand the stages of second language acquisition. She discounted the child's need for additional support and attributed her struggles in writing to her work ethic.

To further perpetuate this ideology, participants did not necessarily teach in schools that modeled culturally responsive instruction nor instruction appropriate for second language learners. The schools noted their ELs did not receive ESL services for weeks, sometimes months because the district ESL teachers were pulled from their duties to assist with state-wise testing. In addition, four participants did not have an opportunity to witness their cooperating teacher advocate for ELs. Participants frequently described how their cooperating teachers grew impatient with ELs and did not always believe ELs possessed language skills in their first language. The cooperating teachers also appeared not to know the ELs' language levels or have strategies to assist them in learning English in the general education classroom. The

cooperating teachers, who may not have had professional development on second language acquisition or culturally relevant teaching, were the main model that the preservice teachers followed during student teaching. Thus, the cycle of deficit thinking, and inequitable educational environments for emergent bilingual students was perpetuated to another generation of teachers.

Majoritarian Story 3: ELs Must Prove and Advocate for their Multilingualism

The most subtle story that emerged was the belief the responsibility to advocate for language rights rested upon the multilingual children not the teacher or school. While none of the participants explicitly expressed this idea, their observations and actions reinforced this concept. For example, in five of the classrooms ELs rarely used their first languages; languages other than English were forbidden or only mildly appreciated. This phenomenon was interpreted in one of two ways. Participants believed the children could not actually speak another language or believed the children did not want to speak another language in school.

Participants said they gauged their ELs' first language proficiency by how frequently they spoke their first languages in the classroom. Given the reality that ELs did not use their first language at school, four participants did not believe the ELs could actually converse in their first language. Charlotte shared, "But I'm not sure how much they know or how much they use it (Spanish) -I never hear it at school." Similarly, Marie wrote, "I don't know/think it (a child's difficulty learning) has anything to do with his language acquisition -I've never heard him speak Spanish and haven't seen him reach out to other Hispanics in kindergarten." Taylor was surprised when the German-speaking child brought in a German textbook. She remarked, "Wow, you really did like learn all this." Participants seemed to need the ELs to prove their first language abilities before it was believed, and cooperating teachers echoed this sentiment. Charlotte's cooperating teacher told her, "...while the first student I mentioned says he speaks Spanish at home, my teacher was not sure if he really does." This premise is rather distorted as in three classrooms the ELs were the only students in the room who could speak the language. This, paired with the reality that teachers did not encourage first language use, makes this belief even more interesting.

The stock story that English is all that matters only reinforced the idea children may rightly believe speaking their first language was taboo or unwelcomed. Children would therefore choose not to use it. Marie seemed aware of this dynamic. She noted that some of the Greek students spoke Greek with some of the Greek teachers in the school but not with each other or in the classroom. She said, "I'm kind of mad because I would love to be able to listen to it…. I think their families really want

them to be fully integrated in to English. I think they say…school is English. Home is Greek." Taylor noted the German-speaking EL might have felt embarrassed to speak her first language since she was the only person in the class able to speak German. Participants commented they knew the parents spoke limited English, yet they did not question that certainly the child was speaking in another language with their parents at home.

Five participants did not use the ELs' first language in the teaching of content. The stock story of saving emergent bilinguals from their first language may have contributed to this practice. Only one participant was able to link first languages to teaching content. In Blair's email during the fourth week she wrote about an experience in her classroom:

The students were brainstorming U words as a class… and one of my ELLs, Angela, offered a Spanish word that no one had heard of. [My cooperating teacher] gave the class a short lecture about how we can learn from one another and had Angela explain to the class what her word was and what it meant…the word was a type of food that her family eats at home. I thought it was wonderful that Angela wanted to share…,that the class listened as they would to any other student, and that my cooperating teacher took the time to glorify this response.

Blair also noted,

Ava brought in a cardboard book in Spanish. I thought this was so great! We don't know the full extent of her ability to read because of her mutism, but she was one of the first students in the class to know all 52 of her letters and sounds. So this indicated she can read a book in Spanish.

Blair reflected on how her views of the EL's first language changed over the course of her student teaching placement. She said, "And so, even if I don't hear them speaking it (Spanish), they must, you know, understand it fluently." For Blair, it took time to see students could converse in their first language and then find ways to link Spanish to her teaching. The fact Blair also studied Spanish in college allowed her to make more connections with the ELs' first language.

By taking this stance, the responsibility for advocating for first language rights was solely placed upon the emergent bilingual child, some of which were kindergarteners. When groups of ELs who spoke the same first language did not converse with one another in that language at school, this was viewed as evidence that children did not want to speak their first language. None of the participants questioned the role of the school or teachers in intentionally or unintentionally limiting first language use. Five participants said their cooperating teachers concluded the children did

not even know their first language because they never heard the children using it at school. This caused participants to discount, or not even consider the benefit of first language use in the classroom because of the prevalent ideology of monolingualism.

Marie described how one of her Greek-speaking students accidently spoke in Greek to her, then shamefully put his hand over his mouth. At the age of five, this child already learned his school did not welcome his first language. While Marie remarked this story made her feel badly, she did not know how to respond to this experience. In the using of this story of requiring the EL children to prove and advocate for their first languages, the participants did not need to take responsibility for classroom environments and were able to enforce English only in the classroom while keeping their innocence.

Five participants expressed feeling it was not important to include first languages, and one participant, Blair, who was placed in a classroom that valued first languages, believed it was important. She stated she would encourage first language use in her future classroom. Blair described how the child who spoke the most Spanish was "proud" of her first language. She would frequently say words in Spanish and was willing to teach these words to the class. The cooperating teacher in this classroom encouraged a multilingual environment. Blair followed her lead and incorporated opportunities to use more Spanish in her lessons and in the classroom. Blair also had the benefit of studying Spanish in college and feeling comfortable using Spanish. In addition to race, topics of language were also silenced. In five of the classrooms the ELs never used their first languages. Yet, no participants questioned this reality. Emilee said the EL in her kindergarten classroom only spoke English, "because he claims he doesn't speak Spanish. I don't know if he does…he says his mom speaks Spanish at home." There existed an inability or inaction surrounding the presence of racism or linguicism experienced by the children.

This story was based in the lived experiences of the participants, their experiences during their student teaching placement, and their education at Midhurst. The lived experiences of four of the participants did not place value upon speaking another language. For the remaining two, Marie lived abroad in three countries, and Blair studied and enjoyed Spanish. The other four participants described their experiences learning another language as inauthentic and unhelpful. In their daily lives in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio, participants expressed they did not find the need to use multiple languages. The four participants who had not traveled internationally also lacked the appreciation for global ideas surrounding multilingualism. Additionally, having a cooperating teacher who modeled how to incorporate first languages into the classroom benefited Blair's practices. In their education at Midhurst, and in their student teaching, the participants did not have models, strategies, or practice creating lessons to encourage students to make connections between their first language and learning in school.

An example of this stock story might include a teacher thinking about her ELs in this way, "My ELs never speak to one another in Spanish in class. I bet that they do not even know how. English is better for them to use anyway, as I am sure that Spanish would only confuse them. I do not really feel comfortable in my Spanish abilities. So, what is the use for me to try to make any references to Spanish in class? Let's just stick to English, the ELs don't seem to mind."

Participants frequently grappled with how to recognize and approach linguistic difference. They also worried children may feel "singled out" if they drew attention to their EL's ability to speak another language. Singling out was viewed as a negative and led to the desire to encourage ELs to "fit in" and belong to a homogeneous group connecting back to the first majoritarian story. Participants seemed to value assimilation over individual differences especially in regards to a child's first language. Moreover, five participants did not acknowledge potential future benefits of bilingualism or parental aspirations for bilingualism for their children.

DISCUSSION

The participants in this study, while all White and female, came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, unique lived experiences, different connections with linguistically diverse communities, and differing attitudes towards language learning. Given the complexity and uniqueness of each of the participants, it became all the more vital to carefully analyze the impact of any similarities. The common threads uniting the participants is worthy of examination. There are structural ways White women are socialized to perform the act of teaching, and especially the teaching of culturally and linguistically diverse children (Leonardo & Boas, 2013). These similarities, in the case of this study, also speak to common geographical, historical political and curricular contexts. Other university contexts may experience different stories.

CRT lens was useful in uncovering individual and collective stories that exist teacher education classrooms. While it is true stories are told by individuals, there are also collective stories told and retold that become the fabric of the way we see the world. The participants internalized various stories that created the foundation to their ideology of emergent bilingual students. The use of CRT was useful in uncovering the connections between these ideologies and inequitable classroom practices. Parker Palmer (2008) noted we teach who we are, and majoritarian stories are a part of that picture.

RECOMMENTATIONS

As teacher educators, an important first step is to explicitly use stories as a vehicle to address ideology. This is a two-fold mission. First, it is vital to help preservice teachers name, unpack, and disrupt damaging stories before they enter the classroom and address their reoccurrences while in practicums. The task of uncovering and unpacking stories also involves the realization there may be stories unique or especially evident to our own institutions. Also noting these stories can be reinforced by curricular, structural, or geographic issues some of which we cannot control. As teacher educators, knowing the stories held by our students can influence our pedagogy. It gives insight into why preservice teachers make their decisions and understand their students in ways contrary to what we purposefully teach in the classroom. To change practice is to first understand then change ideology.

The second way teacher educators can use story is to realize the power behind counterstories. Many participants' lived experiences did not naturally expose them to counterstories of ELs that embraced the many forms of community cultural wealth they possessed (Yosso, 2005). For other preservice teachers, they can recall instances and stories that challenged the status quo but may have never had the opportunity to think deeply about the impact of these stories. Encouraging preservice teachers to further consider these stories and make sense of them within the larger framework of society is important. Teacher educators may also need to intentionally supplement the lived experiences of with opportunities to experience counterstories. Infusing class content with memoirs, poetry, interviews, short stories, video clips, guest speakers, or case studies that challenge the majoritarian scrips is important. Using narrative and storytelling as a foundational element to class design provides more opportunities for the transformative change needed to meet the needs of emergent bilingual students.

CONCLUSION

Understanding how stories mask or give voice to those oppressed is a powerful tool in analyzing how racism operates (Bell, 2010; Delgado, 1989). Preservice teachers must become aware of the stories they tell and believe as members of the dominant culture that function to both promote and sustain their power in society. Without careful examination, teachers are bound to reproduce the dominant culture in their own practice.

While this is a reality, essentializing the young women in teacher education programs as deficient and unpromising is not productive (Jones, 2009; Laughter, 2011; Smith, 2000). The participants desired to become effective teachers, they

worked hard in and out of the classroom to rise to the demands of student teaching. Yet, they experienced differing levels of success and frustration when teaching emergent bilingual children. Instead of labeling, perhaps understanding personal narratives as a starting point may prove helpful to foster the ability to embrace culturally relevant teaching. As presented in the research, there are many common stories used by the majoritarian class to mask their oppression. At the same time while unpacking these stories, teacher educators have the opportunity to provide access to many counterstories that can expose injustice, transform individuals, and challenge the validity of majoritarian stock stories thus creating equitable learning environments for emergent bilingual students.

Table 1. Participant student teaching demographics

	Blair	Charlotte	Emilee	Marie	Serena	Taylor
Student Teaching School	Heritage Elem.	Heritage Elem.	Heritage Elem.	Heritage Elem.	Southside Elem.	Covington Elem.
Grade Level	K	1	K	K	3	3
Children that have multiple languages spoken in the home	4/19	3/18	2/18	8/19	1/17	1/22
Total Number of ELs	3 Females (Mara, Ava, Angela)	2, Maybe 3 Males (Marco, Alec)	2 Males (Miguel, Jonas)	5, 4 Males, 1 Female (Darius, Mark, Sam, Eli, Sara)	1 Female (Haya)	1 Female (Anna)
Language Spoken	Spanish	Marco-Spanish, Alec-Greek	Spanish	Darius, Mark, Sam,Sara-Greek Eli-Spanish	Arabic	German
Birth Country of ELs	Mara, Ava-United States, Angela-Dominican Republic	Marco-Unknown Alec-United States	United States	Mark, Sam, Sara-United States, Darius-Greece Eli-Unknown	Thought Saudi Arabia, then discovered Palestine	Germany-American parents
Language Levels	Unknown, None receive ESL services	Unknown, None receive ESL services	Unknown, None receive ESL services	Unknown, All received ESL services	Beginning Levels Received ESL services	Unknown, Received ESL services

Table 2. Connections between participants and eight stock stories

	Blair	Charlotte	Emilee	Marie	Serena	Taylor
Colorblindness	x	x	x	x	x	
Difference is deficit		x	x			
English is ALL that matters		x	x	x	x	x
Equal opportunities in School	x	x	x	x		
Fairness in Classroom	x	x	x	x		
Meritocracy	x	x	x	x	x	
Nativism	x	x	x	x	x	x
Save emergent bilingual from first language	x	x	x	x	x	x

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Counterstories: Narratives that privilege the voices of individuals and communities that are marginalized.

Deficit Thinking: A set of beliefs that assumes that marginalized populations experience struggle due to their own weakness, decisions or intrinsic work ethic.

English Learner (EL): A person learning English as another language.

Ideology of Monolingualism: The belief that speaking one language is normative.

Intersectionalities: The convergence of multiple aspects of one's identity such as, but not limited to; race, gender, language, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, citizenship, ability, age, religion, education, and geographic region.

Majoritatian Stories: Often unexamined narratives that reflect the dominant culture as the ideal.

Teacher Ideology: The explicit and implicit beliefs that teachers hold which impact classroom practice.