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Los Retos and Opportunities del Transnational Translanguaging in English-Language Teaching Programs in Mexico

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Abstract

Nuestro principal objetivo en este ensayo es promover el uso del translingüismo como una alternativa para la formación de profesorado bilingüe en universidades mexicanas. Defendemos esta postura no simplemente por las ventajas pedagógicas del translingüismo, sino como una imperiosa necesidad ante la multiculturalidad y transnacionalismo de los futuros docentes de lengua inglesa en México. En otras palabras, en este ensayo promovemos el uso de translanguaging as a reaction towards the reproduction of systemic oppression which occurs in many English language teaching programs in Mexican universities regarding nativism, raciolinguistics, neocolonialism, and irreflective neoliberalism.

Keywords: Translanguaging, transnationalism, Mexico, nativism, neocolonialism, neoliberalism, raciolinguistics

It was a relief and a challenge to be a white professor from the U.S. centering the coloniality of English language teaching con mis alumnos en el estado de Hidalgo. “Quién soy yo?” to be doing this decolonial effort delante de estos alumnos who are first generation, some of whom are Indigenous, nearly all of them longing for a bootleg or mexicanizado American dream of a house and cars y salidas a la playa durante las vacaciones. It was impossible for me not to translanguage at that time. But the Whiteness I wear and the lack of fear of institutional repercussions provided every sort of freedom. A la vez, I needed to shout my inconformidad about restrictive monoglossic language ideologies I had lived through on ambos lados de la frontera—en ambos de mis idiomas. It was an urgency. (Sue, 2021).

Como lo expresa Sue, nuestro principal objetivo en este ensayo es promover el uso del translingüismo como una alternativa para la formación de profesorado bilingüe en universidades mexicanas. Nos damos cuenta de que language separation continues to be the dominant approach to English language teacher professional development in los programas universitarios de México, un reflejo of how colonizing language ideologies continue to reproduce themselves. Defendemos esta postura no simplemente por las ventajas pedagógicas del translingüismo, sino como una imperiosa necesidad ante la multiculturalidad y transnacionalismo de los futuros docentes de lengua inglesa en México.

En otras palabras, en este ensayo promovemos el uso de translanguageing as a reaction towards the reproduction of systemic oppression which occurs in many English language teaching programs in Mexican universities. While educators in these programs in Mexico may feel anxious to break with this pretentious approach to the “pure” use of strictly English, including its attending latent racializations of whose language is “best,” we appeal to a sense of asking why we teach and for whom. If we want to co-construct the Zapatista sense of “un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos,” or Gloria Anzaldúa’s “mundo zurdo” (1987) where difference is normalized, allowing space for the subaltern use of language challenges issues of power and whose versions of language matter toward creating a more inclusive society. With this purpose, this essay is divided into four different sections.

First, we explain nuestras experiencias y trayectorias en la formación de pre-service language teachers in Mexico. Later, in the second section, we discuss some ideological contentions that prevent the use of translanguageing in English language teaching programs in this country regarding historical, raciolinguistic and academic factors.

In the third section, basamos nuestra propuesta sobre translingüismo en relación con las características transnacionales de las poblaciones de futuros docentes de inglés, en especial en relación con aquellos pre-service whose indigenous and transnational trajectories challenge monolithic conceptions of Mexican pre-service English language teachers. Finalmente, la última sección de este ensayo tiene como propósito enfatizar la importancia del translingüismo como herramienta para contrarrestar las ideologías monoglossicas arraigadas en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua adicional en las universidades mexicanas. Because of the multicultural and transnational characteristics of Mexican pre-service language teachers, we propose the use of translanguageing as a fraternal and social-justice oriented alternative in English language teaching degrees in Mexican Public universities.

Our Positionalities

Las ideas que planteamos en este ensayo están basadas en nuestras experiencias como profesores en programas multilingües, nuestras ideologías lingüísticas, y nuestras jornadas transnacionales. David considers himself a Mexican (trans)national. He has worked as a language teacher educator for more than 10 years in different public institutions in Mexico and the United States. David was initially raised and educated in Mexico. While pursuing his licenciatura in English language teaching, he was granted a scholarship to finish his degree in an Australian University. Later, under the sponsorship of Fulbright, David continued with his academic preparation in East Lansing, Michigan. But it was not until he worked with historically marginalized transnational students in Mexico and in Texas, where he did his Ph.D., when he understood the relationship between transnationalism, translanguaging, and social justice. Because of his teaching and students' experience in Mexico, but also because of his skin color, accent and national origin, David has struggled to navigate the English language context in his own country, por lo que ha hecho de la frontera, su nuevo hogar. Sue is a bilingual white woman from working-class West Virginia. She has lived and worked off-and-on in Mexico for a total of six years and y está criando a sus hijos a ser multiculturales y bilingües (Spanish and English) and took them to live for a yearlong Fulbright Award in Hidalgo, Mexico, where she taught pre-service English teachers from 2017-2018 en la Universidad Autónoma de Hidalgo. She has been researching transnational, Mexican-origin youth and advocating for greater awareness around recognition of their life experiences in formal education spaces for over a decade (Kasun, 2013). Peter is a White Anglophone Canadian who lived and worked for many years training TESOL teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico, and San Antonio, Texas. He also completed a Fulbright in Puebla in 2011, as many families returned to the area from the U.S. during the economic crisis, y colaboró con profesores de una escuela intercultural-bilingüe (lengua náhuatl) con el fin de integrar los alumnos transnacionales a través de clases de inglés. Su better half es oaxaqueña, y a través de visitas frecuentes a Oaxaca, se están criando sus dos hijos (transnacionales) a ser bilingües y biculturales. Our trajectories, challenges, and privileges have influenced the way we have approached English language teaching programs in Mexico. While we have experienced different scenarios in Mexican universities in terms of confronting nativism and racial expectations, our perspectives concur in the need of proposing alternatives (por ejemplo, el translenguaje) to disrupt some of the most prevalent ideologies in language teaching degrees in this country.

Current Monoglossic Challenges in Mexican Language Education

In the following paragraphs, we explain some of the reasons behind monoglossic ideologies that prevail in English teaching programs in Central Mexico. To this end, we examine some historical, political, academic, neocolonial and neoliberal reasons that have permeated the preparation of pre-service language teachers in this region in this country.

La Raza Cósmica and the Subjugation of Multiculturalism and Multilingualism

Aunque la educación bilingüe en México ha estado presente durante varios siglos (Castañeda, 2006), la normalización de ideas monolingües—es decir, que solamente promueven un solo idioma—y monoglosicas—o ideas which opposed to Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia

(1984) y que no toman en cuenta la diversidad de acentos, styles and other communicative features within linguistic systems—ha permeado dicho proceso desde la colonia. Aunque durante el imperio azteca el idioma náhuatl was considered as a *lingua franca*—es decir, como una lengua común entre las diferentes naciones indígenas subyugadas por el imperio azteca—, no fue hasta la caída del imperio Mexica y la posterior colonización de México en donde, poco a poco, las ideas colonialistas hicieron que el español tomara un lugar preponderante dentro del proceso educativo mexicano. De esta forma, la consumación de la independencia mexicana tuvo lugar dentro de ideologías monolingüistas: “El Plan de Iguala” (1821), the first document of Mexico as an independent nation, was written in Spanish in spite of the active participation of indigenous nations during the 11 years of fight against the Spanish Crown (Miranda Arrieta, 2018). With a few exceptions—such as the recognition of native languages by Maximiliano de Habsburgo, the Second Emperor of Mexico in 1862, monoglossic and discriminatory practices were prevalent in Mexican education during the 19th century.

However, probably the most salient factor in the development of monoglossic behaviors in Mexico relates to the creation of the José Vasconcelos’ concept of the Raza Cósmica, or Cosmic Race, promoted during post-revolutionary times (1917-1929). To unify the Mexican nation after the Mexican revolution, the Mexican State fostered mestizaje, or the mixture of races, as the ideal stage of racial, cultural, and social development (Vasconcelos, 1966). En este sentido, la “raza cósmica” enarbolaba el mestizaje entre indígenas, europeos, africanos, y asiáticos para homogenizar las diferencias lingüísticas, regionales y étnicas entre poblaciones que poco tenían en común para crear a unified Mexican identity (Pérez Rodríguez, 2012). According to Martínez Buenabad (2015), aun cuando hubo proyectos lingüísticos que pretendían legitimar las lenguas indígenas para la inserción de dichas poblaciones como parte esencial del Estado Mexicano (por ejemplo, el “Proyecto Tarasco” durante la presidencia de Lázaro Cárdenas del Río en 1939¹), monoglossic perspectives are prevalent in Mexican education, especialmente en universidad públicas (Levinson, 2001; Martínez-Prieto, 2023).

History of English Language Teaching in Mexico: The Reproduction of the Native Speaker Fallacy

Mexican universities have historically perpetuated monoglossic ideologies en la formación de futuros docentes de inglés because of the (mis)adaptation of linguistic theories conceived during the second half of the twentieth century. Durante los 1960-70s, las universidades mexicanas crearon los primeros centros de aprendizaje de lenguas. Las ideas de Noam Chomsky, en donde el análisis de estructuras sintácticas era (es) esencial para entender el funcionamiento del lenguaje, have prevailed in many English Language Teaching programs since then.

The Chomskian controversial idealization of the “native speakers” as the linguistic authority “in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors” (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3) has permeated generations of language learners and teachers in Mexico. En otras palabras, la percepción monoglósica del lenguaje, donde la gramática óptima era aquella producida por un hablante nativo “puro,” es relevante para entender las ideologías lingüísticas que prevalecen todavía dentro y fuera de los programas universitarios en

¹ El Proyecto Tarasco fue uno de los primeros intentos del México postrevolucionario de promover sistemáticamente la educación bilingüe en el estado de Michoacán (Swadesh, 1939).

la enseñanza del inglés. An English teacher from Oaxaca, who had recently graduated from a licenciatura program and was working in a small village, recounted the following story about trying to get a job at a small college in the capital city:

Me dijo la secretaria: “Sí pero lo que pasa es que no están contratando maestros... o sea nomás puro americano (sic)” dijo ella. Y le dije “¿Por qué?” “No pues no sé, y la verdad es que no sé, solo que, este, me dijeron que nada más quieren americanos” (sic). Y le dije “Bueno pues busco en otro lado,” si es que no quieren contratar paisanos, pues chingan su madre, ¿verdad? Digo, no lo dije así, because I didn't want to insist, but later on I found out that Pablo Figueroa is teaching there [compañero from same TESOL licenciatura program]. And I thought “Well maybe they liked Pablo's English, you know, since his English is more sort of American (sic). I mean, he's really fluent, but also his accent is like American (sic). Y que también es muy güero el guey. (Hilario Gutierrez, TESOL graduate from Oaxaca, recounts his experience to Peter, 2006)

Hilario's experience of discrimination in hiring is hardly unique in Mexico (i.e., see the experiences of Garcia-Ponce et al., 2017 or Martínez-Prieto & Lindahl, 2020). What he articulates is the preference for English native speakers, which in Mexico is strongly associated with being a white U.S. citizen, o por lo menos alguien como Pablo Figueroa que se aproxima ese “ideal,” apareciendo y hablando con un acento güero (see Figure 1 below). In this sense, the reproduction of monoglossic ideologies relates, in part, to the reproduction of nativist raciolinguistic ideologies— which is, according to Alim et al., (2016), the intersectional construction of race and language— among pre-service and in-service language teachers in Mexico.

Figure 1

Anuncio de una Escuela de Inglés



Raciolinguistic ideologies of native speakerism: An advertisement from a popular national English language center in Mexico

As in Figure one, where all the participants in the advertisement resemble white and upper middle-class Mexicans, English language teaching and learning in Mexico is embedded as part of a colonial construction of race and language (López Gopar, 2016) in which the (white) native speaker is considered as the ideal teacher.

Los Paradigmas de la Profesionalización y la Perpetuación de Monoglossic Ideologies

After 1992, as the North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was being implemented by the recommendation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Secretaria de Educación Pública (SEP) designed a plan to professionalize current English Language Professors who were teaching in Mexican public universities. Además de las necesidades del mercado, una de las principales razones para que la SEP implementara políticas para mejorar el nivel de enseñanza del idioma inglés tuvo que ver con el crecimiento en la matrícula en programas de enseñanza del idioma inglés: from 1985 to 2002, the number of programs offered degrees in English language teaching expanded from 2 to 25 at the national level (Ramírez, 2007).

De esta manera, la SEP and the British Council² crearon conjuntamente el “Proyecto de Profesionalización de Maestros de Inglés” (1992). El propósito de este programa era preparar profesionales que pudieran ejercer la carrera docente a nivel universitario. En términos cuantitativos, el propósito fundamental de este programa se cumplió cabalmente: muchos profesores mexicanos obtuvieron títulos de licenciatura y posgrado en universidades británicas y australianas a través de programas en línea y semi-presenciales durante más de 20 años que, incluso, se mantienen hasta la actualidad (Martínez-Prieto, 2023).

The “Proyecto de Profesionalización de Maestros de Inglés” was a success in quantitative terms: in addition to the professionalization of Mexican teachers, many programs in Language Teaching were created during 1995-2005 in public universities. In qualitative terms, however, our experience suggests that some scholars who graduate from these programs perpetuate native speakerism and colonialism during their academic practices in Mexican classrooms (Martínez-Prieto & Lindahl, 2022). Nativist and colonial ideologies are passed uncritically on to the next generation of Mexican language teachers who rely on the academic guidance of their British and Australian trained educators, for which nativist ideologies are still salient in and outside public universities (Martínez-Prieto, 2020; Sayer, 2012). En términos de justicia social, el “Proyecto de Profesionalización de Maestros de Inglés” ha fallado: los programas de preparación de futuros profesores de inglés promueven ideologías nativistas, colonialistas e irreflexivas (Martínez-Prieto, 2023).

En pocas palabras, además de la subyugación del multiculturalismo y de la monoglosia histórica en la construcción del Estado Mexicano, la preparación de profesores mexicanos en instituciones que reproducen ideas colonialistas y nativistas agrega un nuevo elemento en el desarrollo de docentes de inglés en universidades del centro de México.

Neoliberal Monopolization of the Market: Teaching for the Certification Test

Phillipson (2011, 2016) emphasized how former colonial powers use English language teaching as a way to perpetuate their power in former colonies. He suggested English language teaching—along with the idealization of the “native speakers” as the ideal teachers—is embedded in a context of racism, neocolonialism, and imperialism. When the power of former colonies is not enough to influence the educational and linguistic policies of former colonies, other world-wide

² The British Council is a non-profit organization affiliated with the British government charged with promoting English language education and British culture, with offices in over 100 countries.

agencias (i.e., the World Bank) will foster policies as part of their socio-economic agenda. This is the case of education and English language teaching in Mexico.

Después de una serie de severas crisis económicas, en 1982 México aceptó préstamos del Banco Mundial para paliar los problemas derivados de manejos deficientes en las inversiones petroleras y en la tremenda corrupción del Estado Mexicano. Una de las condiciones del Banco Mundial para otorgar dichos préstamos al gobierno fue modificar el sistema educativo con el fin de crear mano de obra calificada a través de instituciones de educación técnica y satisfacer las necesidades del mercado (Torres, 2009).

Éste cambio en las políticas educativas ha influido no solo en las políticas de inglés a nivel básico, en donde la educación bilingüe (meaning English language instruction) se promueve desde nivel básico a nivel nacional (Sayer, 2015), o en la implementación de planes de inglés a nivel nacional como el Programa Nacional de Inglés (PRONI) que, a pesar de sus buenas intenciones (as explained in Sayer, 2015), fracasó en muchos estados debido a las pobres condiciones laborales de los profesores de lengua (ver Martínez-Prieto, 2023). Las políticas educativas propuestas por el Banco Mundial han permeado paralelamente en los programas de formación de maestros de inglés: English language education is now guided under the neoliberal tenet of accountability (Martínez-Prieto, 2020, 2024; Sayer, 2019).

To keep an accountable track of English language instruction, certifications (such as TOEFL and Cambridge) have become a common goal among Mexican programs who train future English language teachers. The irreflective use of certifications—for example, Martínez-Prieto & Lindahl (2020, 2022) explained how schools ask language teachers to periodically “certify” their English proficiency regardless of their university education—has caused many English language teaching programs to focus on achieving higher scores in these evaluations. Unfortunately, these certifications provide little chance to move away from nativist and monoglossic practices: test takers are assessed on their knowledge of one specific and “prestigious” English variation.

The neoliberal orientation of the Mexican English education has served to monopolize the market in English language teaching programs. This paradox (neoliberalism should, in theory, provide market alternatives for the consumers) has caused most of English language teaching programs to rely on materials from one or two publishing houses only. This dependence on a few providers from, mainly, the United Kingdom, relates to the importance that is given to certifications in these programs: Publishing houses sell books to prepare for their own certifications. En otras palabras, en lugar de promover la reflexión y resistencia lingüística, en muchos programas de enseñanza mexicanos, debido al afán neoliberal de cuantificación, se prepara a futuros docentes para (solamente) pasar certificaciones basadas en ideologías nativistas y monoglósicas.

A Transnational Translanguaging as an Alternative: Towards the Promotion of Social Justice

Hasta el momento, hemos discutido algunos de los retos que enfrenta la preparación de futuros docentes de inglés en México. Desde nuestras perspectivas y experiencias, sostenemos que las ideologías monoglósicas presentes en las instituciones mexicanas son multifactoriales y que, lamentablemente, están relacionadas con fenómenos de colonialismo, neoliberales, racialización y nativismo. Ante tal panorama, creemos que una alternativa para promover la inclusión y la justicia social es la incorporación de prácticas transnacionales-translingüales durante el desarrollo de futuros profesores de lengua inglesa. Subrayamos el transnacionalismo porque these cultural practices that span borders, even when cuerpos do not cross them, transgress otherwise limiting frontiers and often monolingual national expectations that come to be constructed through narratives

of nation-states and nationhood (e.g., Kasun et al, 2020; Kasun et al, 2022). Sue, in this context, reflected about her use of translanguaging during her experience as a visiting professor at an English Teaching Program in the Mexican state of Hidalgo:

These students were not used to translanguaging in the official classroom space, pero yo si lo hacía como ejemplo that there's nothing pure, que no es nada malo el mixing, que de hecho es un strength. And we talked about translanguaging as a class eventualmente, y si estaban de acuerdo that it's a strength, pero me quedé con la duda if they would ever really do the translanguaging in their own aulas como maestros propios del inglés. A veces you leave semillas, a veces you wonder if they matter. Would the students seguir con un sueño conformista of being clase medieras, o seguirían la corriente de la idea que otro mundo si es posible? Would those turn into hybrid seeds, perhaps? (Sue, 2021)

Las reflexiones de Sue reflejan nuestro propósito en este ensayo: promover el uso del translanguaging como una herramienta para una educación más justa y socialmente inclusiva. Ante tal panorama, creemos que una alternativa para promover la inclusión y la justicia social es la incorporación de prácticas transnacionales-translingüales durante el desarrollo de futuros profesores de lengua inglesa. In practice, we envision overt discussions in courses related to applied linguistics about colonization, power, race, situated histories, especialmente el intento de extinguir los cientos del lenguas originarios en México, incluyendo, por ejemplo, el uso de llamarlos “dialectos” cotidianamente as a way to minimize their value each and every time they are incorrectly described as dialects and not as languages. We also envision overt instruction of gramáticas de translenguaje para que los maestros puedan valorar el uso único of these complex structures as well as the increased level of creativity provided by allowing espacio para expresión entre idiomas. After all, “él que habla dos idiomas vale por dos” as the saying rightly goes. Finally, we note that we have also enjoyed increased student engagement de nuestros alumnos en México (y más allá) cuando hemos enseñado sobre los relacionados a la inmigración entre México y los Estados Unidos (y los inmigrantes who come up from Southern Mexico, as well). We have connected language usage overtly to transnational Mexicans and found transnational students (who are legion in these interior Mexican classes) to be immensely relieved to finally be *seen* for who they are in cultural and linguistic practices.

En los siguientes párrafos, justificamos nuestras perspectivas desde tres ángulos. En primer lugar, expondremos el marco teórico del translingüismo como herramienta de justicia social e inclusión. Después, expondremos la relación entre el translingüismo y audiencias que tradicionalmente han sido segregadas dentro de los futuros docentes de lenguas: los estudiantes transnacionales y las poblaciones indígenas. Finalmente, hablaremos de la manera en que el translingüismo puede ayudar a romper con la perpetuación de ideologías que ayudan poco al desarrollo del pensamiento crítico dentro de las instituciones mexicanas.

Translanguaging as a Framework

As explained by Tian et al. (2020), defining the concept of translanguaging is complex and refers to pedagogical and theoretical aspects. However, in spite of the complexity of the term, we understand that translanguaging practices have the following characteristics:

- 1) El sistema de translingüismo tiene como propósito fundamental la creación de significado (Vogel & García, 2017) utilizando el capital lingüístico, simbólico y social de los hablantes más allá de limitaciones monoglósicas (es decir, sin “separar” sistemas lingüísticos de forma abrupta).
- 2) Translanguaging challenges native/non-native dichotomies, especially in monoglossic learning environments which suppress the voices of minorities (García & Leiva, 2014). Because, as we explained before, nativist dichotomies are usually the result of colonial, racial, and discriminatory practices, translanguaging appears as a teaching alternative to advocate for the achievement of linguistic and cultural social justice.
- 3) El uso del translingüismo promueve comunidades de aprendizaje horizontales. Es decir, el uso del translingüismo ayuda a que tanto educadores y educandos sean partícipes de un aprendizaje común (García et al.2018).

In the last decade, TESOL scholars have emphasized the relevance of translanguaging as a tool to counter hegemonic concepts such as “target language” and “standard language” (Blackledge et al., 2014). In addition, translanguaging has been proposed as a tool to counter rigid ideologies of rigid national identity (i.e., Cenoz, 2017; Creese & Blackledge, 2015), such the ones promoted in the Mexican identity created in the post-revolutionary era. While the enactment of translanguaging practices seem to occur naturally amongst transnational populations (i.e., Li & Zhu, 2013), the academic literature has documented some cases that suggest a certain linguistic discrimination of transnational students when they translanguage, due to the fact that this discursive practice does not align with the precepts of national monoglossic identity (i.e., Sultana, 2022). Particularly in the case of Mexico, despite the artificial creation of a national monoglossic and monolingual identity in the last centuries, the cultural diversity of the people who inhabit this territory, whether due to their indigenous origin or through the so-called national states in the present, suggests that heteroglossic and multilingual practices are frequent and inherent to Mexican populations. Or, in other words, transnational and multicultural linguistic practices of Mexicans have resisted the artificial imposition of monolingualism embedded in the creation of the Mexican state (Martínez-Prieto, 2025). In terms of the preparation of future language teachers of Mexican transnational origin, translanguaging has served to embrace the linguistic and cultural capital of bilingual communities in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas (Musanti et al., 2020). Unfortunately, translanguaging in Mexico is still an area of opportunity regarding the preparation of future language teachers. With some exceptions (i.e., Morales et al., 2020), the use and research of translanguaging appears to have been ignored by many Mexican scholars. Como explicaremos en breve, nosotros estamos convencidos de la utilidad del translanguaging como un puente de entendimiento ad hoc a la multiculturalidad de las poblaciones mexicanas que se extienden más allá de las fronteras geográficas de la República Mexicana, ya que responde a sus características culturales y lingüísticas de dichas comunidades.

Translanguaging, Transnationalism, and the Mexican Multilingüismo

Nosotros proponemos que el uso de acercamientos translingüales dentro de los programas de preparación de futuros docentes de inglés could help reverse las condiciones de nativismo, monoglosia, neocolonialismo y prácticas monopólicas presentes actualmente en las instituciones públicas mexicanas, especialmente en el centro del país. Dentro de este marco, nuestra propuesta no pretende la imposición ideológica de estas prácticas. Por el contrario: creemos que las prácticas

translinguales son, a pesar de siglos de ataques al multiculturalismo, innatas en la pluralidad de sociedades mexicanas—México es un país donde el multilingüismo tiene relación con la historia de las naciones indígenas y con una historia de contacto y movilidad con los Estados Unidos. El transnacionalismo de las poblaciones mexicanas, en este contexto, es un elemento esencial para nuestra propuesta: Linguistic transnationalism, or the linguistic practices of pre-service teachers who “navigate” different nations—meaning pre-service teachers who come from indigenous nations within Mexican borders, or those who migrated and came (back) to Mexico from the United States—are key to recognizing the meaningfulness of translanguaging. More often than not, these pre-service teachers have learned the complex skill of translanguaging, pero sienten que tienen que esconder sus conocimientos relacionados con “el otro lado,” incluyendo su inglés o su translenguaje. Entonces lo más básico de su ser, el cómo uno habla, se convierte en algo que buscan esconder (Kasun & Mora-Pablo, 2021). El espacio que se puede prestar a que su habilidad de translanguaging sirva como ejemplo para otros transnational students—and for students who might challenge notions of a fixed sense of nation-state and the myths which ought to be questioned at times—is thus negated before they can even open their mouths. To prepare students for a changing world and to create the communities which transcend borders we sorely need, we call for a transnational translanguaging to be taken seriously.

Indigenous Nations and Translanguaging as Linguistic Resistance

Earlier in this essay, we focused on the imposition of Spanish during the colonial years, post-independence, and post-revolutionary times. Despite the homogenization policies that have taken places in the Mexican territory in the last five hundred years, Mexico is a multinational, multilingual, and multicultural country due to its indigenous origin. The influence of indigenous nations is such that the Mexican government recognizes 68 indigenous languages as official languages of the Mexican State.

Las naciones indígenas, en este sentido, están lejos de ser homogéneas. Debido a su historia, ubicación, cultura y relación con las naciones hegemónicas (dícese el Imperio azteca, la Corona española, o el Estado mestizo mexicano), cada una de estas naciones ha experimentado diferentes formas de adaptación, resistencia, y supervivencia. Dichas diferencias también se ven reflejadas en las identidades de futuros docentes de inglés de origen indígenas (Sayer, 2012) en donde los docentes de lengua en formación han demostrado diferentes perspectivas de su indigenismo en relación con la mayoría mestiza en México, or even the one portrayed in Mexico American discursos (i.e., Chicano and Chicana), al enfatizar su origen multinacional—vs. la idea prevalente de los aztecas como la nación prehispánica prevalente.

In regard to the relevance and multiculturalism of indigenous nations in Mexico, translanguaging can be used as an instrument to change the native/non-native dichotomies prevalent in English language teaching programs in different aspects. Due to its theoretical characteristics, translanguaging can disrupt monoglossic ideologies historically imposed in Mexican schools, particularly in English language teaching programs. Due to its theoretical characteristics, we believe translanguaging can disrupt monoglossic ideologies historically imposed in Mexican schools. By problematizing the native/non-native dichotomies still prevalent among Mexican professors and institutions who prepare English pre-service teachers, translanguaging can be an educational point of departure to move away from western-only knowledge (meaning European and white) to validate other conocimientos as valid (Kasun & López. 2017; Kasun & Saavedra., 2016).

U.S.-Mexico Transnational Pre-service Teachers: Translanguaging as Práctica de Hermandad

Mexican transnationals who lived in the United States and then came (back) to Mexico have been extensively researched due to the increase of anti-Mexican and xenophobic discourses in the United States in the first two decades of this century. After the dissertation research of Petró (2003)—who analyzed the identities of Mexican American educators who, regardless of their formal training, held positions of power in the Mexican state of Nuevo León—many scholars have focused on the identities and journeys of Mexican transnationals when they pursue an English Language Teaching degree in Mexico (i.e., Cortez Román & Hamann, 2014; Hidalgo Aviles & Kasun, 2019; Martínez-Prieto, 2021). In general terms, scholars have analyzed the reasons for which the adaptation of transnationals into the Mexican school system can be overwhelming and challenging, at least initially.

In the United States, where bilingualism and translanguaging are being promoted in higher education as a way to promote social justice of traditionally marginalized populations (i.e., Sayer & Ban, 2013), Mexican transnational pre-service language teachers face a two-fold monoglossic situation in Mexico. On the one hand, in programs where classes are predominantly taught in Spanish, the linguistic skills of transnationals are seen with deficit lenses (see, for example, the research of Domínguez, 2016 about Mexican transnationals' Spanish proficiency in Tlaxcala). By contrast, in other programs where most classes are taught in English, Mexican transnationals are able to navigate their programs without major difficulties as they take advantage of nativist ideologies embedded in their institutions and professorship.

Dentro de este contexto, creemos que el translingüismo es una alternativa que puede contribuir a minar las ideologías monoglósicas prevalentes en la formación de docentes de lengua inglesa en México. Por una parte, el uso reflexivo de prácticas de translingüismo puede construir un puente comunicativo y de conocimientos entre futuros docentes mexicanos y sus profesores, sean transnacionales o no. De esta manera, Sue recuerda sus experiencias al usar translanguaging with pre-service teachers in Hidalgo. Translanguaging discussions allowed English pre-service teachers to develop meaningful interactions to talk about lo más cotidiano, hasta el desarrollo lingüístico of newer slang from Spanish and mix it with English, like, “*Sí*, teacher, *es la* Netflix [*neta*], I’m telling you the truth!” In other words, translanguaging allowed pre-service teachers to express their transnational identities.

Este puente de conocimientos, en donde futuros docentes de inglés transnacionales puedan compartir sus experiencias y el conocimiento aprendido en sus comunidades (meaning home literacies), hará que la adaptación de alumnos transnacionales en el sistema educativo mexicano sea más fácil: muchas comunidades mexicanas en ambos lados de la frontera comparten cosmovisiones similares y el translingüismo puede, gradualmente, eliminar las barreras conceptuales y culturales entre poblaciones mexicanas que han sido ideológicamente divididas a pesar de sus orígenes comunes.

El Transnational Translingüismo Como Alternativa (Against Irreflective, Nativist, Neocolonial, and Neoliberal Practices)

En la primera parte de este ensayo hemos discutido los orígenes de prácticas monoglósicas en las instituciones de formación docente en la zona centro de la República Mexicana: estas

prácticas, tanto en inglés como español, tienen orígenes interseccionales. Partimos, así, de un análisis de supresión histórica de la multiculturalidad y el multilingüismo desde la conquista hasta la época posrevolucionaria. Después analizamos el origen de las ideologías nativistas, racializadas, neocoloniales y monoglósicas fuertemente arraigadas en la formación de profesores de lengua inglesa en México. Posteriormente, examinamos la influencia y reproducción de teorías cognitivas y (neo)colonialistas en la formación de docentes de inglés. Igualmente, examinamos cómo el mercado neoliberal ha relegado el pensamiento crítico a un lugar secundario y, en su lugar, ha preponderado la obtención irreflexiva de productos cuantificables para medir la proficiencia lingüística de los hablantes del inglés como lengua adicional.

In the second half of this essay, we briefly introduced some of the main tenets of translanguaging as a pedagogy of liberation and social justice. Later, we argued the prospective use of translanguaging in Mexican institutions not as a western-based (meaning U.S.-and-Europe created) framework but as a set of ideological constructs that fit the diversity of Mexican pre-service language teachers, particularly those que provienen de naciones indígenas. To explain, we believe that translanguaging practices are suitable to validate the multilingual knowledge of indigenous-origin pre-service teachers who speak one or more of the 58 indigenous languages of Mexico. We claim that translanguaging practices can provide legitimization to indigenous and cultural practices as well as ideological alternatives to move away from nativist and colonial perspectives still dominant in English language teaching education in Mexico.

In terms of Mexican transnationals who come (back) to Mexico to pursue an English language teaching degree, we claim that translanguaging can serve to dismantle the English language hegemonic ideologies to which transnationals were exposed in U.S. educational institutions (and which, otherwise, they would confirm and perpetuate in Mexican institutions), and to break monoglossic Spanish and English practices prevalent in Mexican academia. Mainly, we maintain that translanguaging practices can be useful to find common ground between Mexican national and transnational pre-service teachers and professors. In general terms, we explained that translanguaging is an alternative to challenge traditional nativist, monoglossic, and neocolonial practices in Mexican institutions.

Estamos convencidos que la promoción de prácticas translingüales, en particular aquellas que confrontan las ideologías nativistas, raciales, neocoloniales, y neoliberales, servirán como un contrapeso a las prácticas monopólicas de mercado. Debido a que las políticas neoliberales de cuantificación se encuentran interrelacionadas con ideologías nativistas, monoglósicas, y neocolonialistas, nuestro argumento se basa en que el uso del translingüismo se opone naturalmente al nativismo racial, la monoglosia y el colonialismo as it challenges fixed ideologies of national identity, the reproduction of native speakerism, and the imposition of monoglossic practices in Mexico through neoliberal practices (i.e., the imposition of certification exams as normative). En otras palabras, sostenemos que el translingüismo puede ofrecer espacios de deconstrucción ideológica que gradualmente mejoran las prácticas actuales presentes en los espacios de formación de docentes de lenguas inglesa en México. Para ilustrar nuestras ideas y propósitos fundamentales, hemos imaginado una interacción entre futuros docentes en una universidad pública mexicana:

Robert, alumno: Ok, pues, I'm getting better at writing mis ensayos en puro inglés. Se me hizo interesante que Maribel me ayudó because she said she learned so much en su high school in Clearwater about essay writing al estilo gringo.

Maribel, alumna: Pues sí, sirven de algo all those vueltas my family and I did from Pachuca to Clearwater.

Robert: You know, this whole licenciatura has shown me so much about the world and especially Mexico's relationship con los Estados Unidos. Even though I've never been there, I get why people are forced to go and that they pick up some stuff about being gringo and bring it back. Pues en el pueblo de mi tío cerca de Mezquitán, they are selling these pizzas right next to the taquería. And it's not so much competencia but like fusing who we are. We don't have to be afraid we're going to salir todos agringados and at the same time we can learn from all these transnationals. I'm starting to get it thanks to this program.

Maribel: Y sí, por fin en este espacio me siento yo. I can use my languages; I can even use some of my Nahuatl which I used to think I'd die if I said anything in Nahuatl before. I think English can be a way to really help our students in the future truly think differently and learn to be critical about all these cultures. If we're gonna be a raza cosmica, it's gonna be through our language, ¿verdad?

In this imaginary interaction, we aim to exemplify some of the ideologies that translanguaging can foster among pre-service language teachers in Mexico. In this way, we believe that translinguistic practices can build ideological bridges to foster a more inclusive and socially oriented teaching among transnational preservice language teachers. En otras palabras, sostenemos que el translingüismo puede ofrecer espacios de deconstrucción ideológica que gradualmente mejoran las prácticas actuales presentes en los espacios de formación de docentes de lenguas inglesa en México.

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