IDEOLOGICAL RECKONING & TRANSLANGUAGING REIMAGINING: AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATOR'S CRITICAL AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

IDEOLOGICAL RECKONING & TRANSLANGUAGING REIMAGINING: AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATOR'S CRITICAL AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

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A limited body of research has investigated English language teacher educators' positionalities and pedagogies (Peercy & Sharkey, 2018; Yazan, 2019), particularly with respect to translanguaging. To that end, the purpose of this critical autoethnography, or what I will later describe as a *nos/otras* autoethnography (Anzaldúa, 2015), is for me to examine my ideological reckoning and translanguaging reimagining as a language teacher (LT) and language teacher educator (LTE) based on the following questions:

1. How did my ideological stance as a language educator shift across my pre-service and in-service LT experiences as well as my first years as an LTE?
2. How did my interactions in a *nepantla* contact zone catalyze and sustain my ideological reckoning and translanguaging reimagining as a White, English-dominant speaking, U.S.-born, beginning LTE?

I frame this study within the narrative traditions of Gloria Anzaldúa (2012, 2015), whose work consistently defied linguistic conventions and critiqued the U.S. history of linguistic terrorism and settler-colonization. I draw upon her theorization of *(des)conocimientos, nos/otras,* and *nepantla* (Anzaldúa, 2015) in order to (1) reckon with the influence of assimilationist language ideologies (Irvine, 1989; Wollard, 1998) on my own language learning and teaching, and (2) reimage my language pedagogy through more heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981; García, 2009) and translanguaging (Williams, 1994, 1996; García & Li Wei, 2014) perspectives. Specifically, I bring together Anzaldúa's (2015) theorization of *nepantla* with the notion of

contact zones (Pratt, 1991; Canagarajah, 2013) to describe the collision, fracturing and transformation that emerged through the intentional juxtaposition of beliefs, identities, language practices, and experiences as a part of my participation in a collaborative self-study group named Transnetworking for TESOL Teachers (TTT).

I begin by tracing my "Ideological Starting Point," narrating my language and educational history from childhood through my undergraduate teacher preparation program; I also provide a brief account of my eight years as an LT and my first two years as an LTE (1985-2018). Next, I narrate my "Ideological Reckoning" through consideration of data generated during my early experiences as a LTE before zooming into my experience as a part of TTT, a collaborative self-study group committed to exploring translanguaging. In the final findings chapter, I describe my "Bodymindsoul Transformation," which overlaps with and extends beyond my interactions with TTT to more closely explore my personal self-study as a LTE.

This study illustrates that the overlapping and iterative self-study conducted as a part of TTT emboldened me to contend with my complicity in perpetuating English language education as white supremacist settler-colonial enterprise and to pursue new opportunities to expand my own translanguaging capacity. Hence, this study suggests critical self-reflexivity and collaborative inquiry in what I am calling *nepantla* contact zones (Pratt, 1991; Canagarajah, 2013; Anzaldúa, 2015) can galvanize white, English-dominant LTs and LTEs to reckon with their own positionalities and reimagine English language education. I conclude with implications for translanguaging, autoethnographic approaches to research, and language teacher education.

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To the woman for whom I am named,
who taught me that the heart of community is the *cucina,*
that food is for remembering,
and that all we need is to live with love, kindness and respect:
Maria Josephine Falbo Ponzio
September 29, 1924-December 9, 2013

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I open my dissertation with this quote from Gloria Anzaldúa (2015): “We discover, uncover, create our identities as we interrelate with others and our alrededores/surroundings. Identity grows out of our interactions, and we strategically reinvent ourselves to accommodate our exchanges” (p. 75). To this end, this critical autoethnography and the identities I have constructed throughout the process of composing it—as a language teacher educator and scholar—have been made manifest through the relationships and communities that are central to my story. I am humbled and grateful for these connections.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

FEGU Fellowship to Enhance Global Understandings

LT Language Teacher

LTE Language Teacher Educator

NES Native English Speaker

NNES Non-Native English Speaker

TTT Transnetworking for TESOL Teachers

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We discover, uncover, create our identities as we interrelate with others and our alrededores/surroundings. Identity grows out of our interactions, and we strategically reinvent ourselves to accommodate our exchanges. Identity is an ongoing story, one that changes with each telling, one we revise at each way station, each stop, in our viaje de la vida (life's journey). (Anzaldúa, 2015 p. 75).

As a teacher educator and researcher, I have focused my inquiry on addressing the incongruity within English language education among the predominantly white, monolingual English-speaking, U.S.-born teaching force and the increasingly racially, culturally and linguistically diverse school-aged population (Motha, 2014). More specifically, I focus on fostering greater educational equity, inclusion, and justice for language-minoritized learners[1] in the U.S. by challenging ideologies, or taken-for-granted assumptions, that position language practices other than White Mainstream English as deficits rather than assets for learning. To that end, across my work as an emerging scholar and teacher educator, I have situated my work in the burgeoning field of *translanguaging,* a language theory and pedagogy that can challenge educators to problematize deficit-based beliefs about diverse language practices and adopt pedagogical practices that truly sustain language-minoritized learners' dynamic meaning-making practices (García & Otheguy, 2019; Paris & Alim, 2014). However, in order for the critical potential of translanguaging to be realized, language teachers (LTs) and the language teacher educators (LTEs) who educate them must pursue the enactment of translanguaging pedagogy as a form of critical *praxis,* a term used by Freire (1999) to refer to the overlapping and iterative

[1] I adopt the term "language-minoritized learners" to describe students whose language practices are "marginalized and portrayed as deviations" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 2) from the white English "standard" within U.S. schools and society. This term includes, but is not limited to, students who would be classified as "English learners," or ELs, according to federal U.S. guidelines and would be considered eligible for English language services by a TESOL- or bilingual education teacher. Students identified as ELs in the U.S. are those who qualify for language development services based on two measures: (1) a home language survey of their language practices and those of their immediate family, and (2) a state-adopted language assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

process of building awareness and taking action in pursuit of social emancipation—in this case, with respect to English language education. To that end, the purpose of this critical autoethnography, or what I will later describe as a *nos/otras* autoethnography (Anzaldúa, 2015), is for me to examine my ideological reckoning and translanguaging reimagining as an LTE.

LTs' and LTEs' pedagogies are influenced by their identities, beliefs and dispositions, and past teaching experiences (Sharkey, 2018), all of which are constructed in relation to broader ideologies and social power structures. Hence, their pedagogies are never neutral, but can reinforce or resist dominant discourses, such as the monolingual bias, native speakerism, raciolinguistic perspectives, and white supremacy (e.g., Flores & Rosa, 2015; Motha, Jain, & Teccle, 2012; Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2016; Varghese, Motha, Park, Reeves, & Trent, 2016). Thus, LTs and LTEs who have not contended with the problematic role of English language education in perpetuating imperialism, colonization and settler-colonization are likely to reproduce hegemonic ideologies and marginalizing language pedagogies. Therefore, LTs and LTEs must develop a critical and reflexive lens to reckon with their own ideologies in order to reimagine more transformative and transgressive language pedagogies, like translanguaging (Dinkelman, 2003, 2011; Kubota & Miller, 2017; Morgan, 2004; Peercy et al., 2019; Ponzio, 2020; Ponzio, Robinson, Kennedy, Ceballos, Tian, Crief, & Lins Prado, forthcoming).

While self-study has gained increasing prominence as a methodological approach for teacher educators to critically examine their own pedagogies (e.g., Dengerink, Lunenberg & Kools, 2015; Sabatier & Bullock, 2018), limited research has employed self-study among LTEs (e.g., Golombek, 2015; Morgan, 2004; Peercy & Sharkey, 2018; Yazan, 2019). Self-study methodologies, including autoethnography, offer LTEs a rigorous approach to develop situated theories based on the lived realities and "messiness" of language teaching (Mckinley, 2019),

where “local” knowledge informs public scholarship (Geursen, de Heer, Korthagen, Lunenberg, & Zwart, 2010; Sharkey & Peercy, 2018). Furthermore, self-study can embolden TEs to explicitly contend with competing sociopolitical tensions that influence their professional identities and pedagogies (Korthagen, Loughran, & Lunenberg, 2005; Loughran, 2014; Sabatier & Bullock, 2018), particularly when conducted collaboratively (Boyd & Harris, 2010; Dengerink et al., 2015; Green & Pappa, 2020; Peercy, Sharkey, Baecher, Motha, & Varghese, 2019; Viczko & Wright, 2010). Believing that “a critical self-reflexive lens is crucial to the work in LTE,” (Peercy et al., 2019, p. 2), I employ autoethnography in this study to contend with my positionality and trace my shifting pedagogy as an LTE. Specifically, I ask the following:

1. How did my ideological stance as an LT emerge and evolve across my pre-service and in-service teaching experiences as well as in my first years as an LTE?
2. How did my interactions in a *nepantla* contact zone catalyze and sustain my ideological reckoning and translanguaging reimagining as a White, English-dominant speaking, U.S.-born, beginning LTE?

I frame this study within the narrative traditions of Gloria Anzaldúa (2012, 2015), whose work consistently defied linguistic conventions and critiqued the U.S. history of linguistic terrorism and settler-colonization. Specifically, I draw heavily upon her work in *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, which is understood to be Anzaldúa’s unfinished dissertation. Written during the last decade of her life (1994-2004), the text came to publication through the curation of Anzaldúa’s close friend, AnaLouise Keating, who edited the text.

As a U.S.-born, fourth-generation immigrant, heterosexual cis female, able-bodied, white, English-dominant speaking scholar, I am challenged by Anzaldúa to acknowledge my complicity

in perpetuating English language education as a white supremacist and settler-colonial enterprise. Among these multiple positionalities, the most relevant for purposes of this study are my racialized identity, language practices, and country of origin. Given these positionalities, I attempt to engage with Anzaldúa's theoretical perspectives—borne from her experiences as a queer Chicana feminist who grew up on the Mexico-Texas border—in a spirit of criticality, care, and self-reflexivity. I center Anzaldúa in an effort to decenter White, often male, Eurocentric theoretical and methodological approaches to language scholarship. Her theorization of nos/otras, or "nos (us) and otras (others)" (p. 63) helps me interrogate who I am at the divide as both colonizer/colonized as an LT and LTE. While I cannot experience reality outside my own privilege, I can critically examine the mechanisms that promulgate settler-colonization in English language education today and my complicity therein. But acknowledging my complicity is only the beginning. According to Lau, Juby-Smith, and Desbiens (2017),"To be reflexive is to set in motion a recursive process of renaming and retheorizing (Freire, 1970), engaging in an active process of questioning and evaluating our own critical practices....to cultivate stronger self-awareness as a first step to effect social change" (pp. 104-105).

Resonating with Freire's (1970) *conscientizacao* and Anzaldúa's (2015) *conocimiento*, this awareness has moved me beyond empathy to action—to contend with my privilege as a white, U.S.-born, English-dominant speaker in order to center the racialized identities and meaning-making practices of language-minoritized learners through. In my analysis, I consider what inner, or embodied, resources emerged from my struggle to achieve "equilibrium between the outer expression of change and [my] inner relationship to it," specifically with regard to my positionality, past experiences, and pedagogy (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 127). This struggle was both catalyzed and supported by my engagement in a collaborative self-study group named

Transnetworking for TESOL Teachers (TTT), established based on our shared inquiry into translanguaging. Iterative cycles of my individual self-study and collaborative inquiry with the members of TTT emboldened me to contend with my complicity in perpetuating English language education as white supremacist settler-colonial enterprise and to pursue new opportunities to expand my own translanguaging capacity. Hence, this study suggests critical self-reflexivity and collaborative inquiry in what I will describe as *nepantla* contact zones (Pratt, 1991; Canagarajah, 2013; Anzaldúa, 2015) can galvanize white, English-dominant LTs and LTEs to reckon with their own positionalities and reimagine English language education. In what follows, I share this process of reckoning and reimagining not as a generalizable example, but as a theoretically-grounded study that can contribute to larger "chains of inquiry" in LTE (Peercy & Sharkey, 2018).

CHAPTER 2: COLLECTIVE AND PERSONAL SHADOWS

> Besides dealing with my own personal shadow, I must contend with the collective shadow in the psyches of my culture and nation—we always inherit the past problems of family, community, and nation...If I object to my government's act of war I cannot remain silent. To do so is to be complicitous. But sadly we are all accomplices. (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 10).

The Collective Shadow: English Language Education as Empire

In following Anzaldúa's wisdom, I first contend with the long collective shadow the English language casts across continents and decades of imperialism, colonization, and settler-colonization, specifically through the lens of assimilationist language ideologies (see Canagarajah, 2010; Phillipson, 1992, 2006 2009). As defined by Phillipson (2006), the collective shadow of "linguistic imperialism" refers to "the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages...that ensure the continued allocation of more material resources to English than to other languages and benefit those who are proficient in English" (p. 347). Occurring alongside the establishment of nation-states, the privileging of English has resulted in the eradication of other named languages as speakers are forced to shift to using English as the dominant language. Thus, the dominance of English dovetails with other forms of dominance—economic, political, and cultural (Phillipson, 1992, 2006, 2009), resulting in the association of the English language with privilege, opportunity, modernity and whiteness. Just as the construction of race and white supremacy first emerged to justify the transatlantic slave trade as a part of a developing capitalist system (Kendi, 2016; Ortiz, 2018), so, too, has linguistic imperialism been used to create hierarchies between named language systems as a way to justify land seizure, religious missionary indoctrination, and epistemic violence and assimilation through forced schooling (e.g., Canagarajah, 2013; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Motha, 2020). Skutnabb-Kangas (2012) uses the term "linguicism," which is similar to racism or sexism, to refer to the "ideologies, structures and practices which are used to

legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (p. 13). Similar to the emergence of racism (Kendi, 2016), linguicism emerged to rationalize unequal division of power and resources through imperial expansion. In other words, by deeming the language practices of certain communities as inferior, often alongside discrimination of their racialized identities and cultural traditions, colonizers and settler-colonizers could justify the subjugation of those communities.

The Embodied Costs of English Language Education

The domination of English language within and beyond the U.S. has resulted not only in structural and material inequities, but also emotional and spiritual costs to those subjugated in contexts where English education has been—and continues to be—deployed as a colonial and settler-colonial enterprise. In his account of the history of linguistic imperialism in Africa, Ngũgĩ (2005) describes how language, like a bullet enforcing physical subjugation, can be weaponized for spiritual subjugation. Through "[t]he domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations," the colonizer can achieve "domination of the mental universe of the colonised" (Ngũgĩ, 2005, p. 16). In Ngũgĩ's view, schooling serves as an extension of this weapon, alienating children in colonized contexts from the languages of their families and homes. By annihilating their "belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves," children in colonized contexts come to "see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement" and "to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves...with other peoples' languages rather than their own" (p. 3). For Ngũgĩ, the experience of linguistic imperialism through schooling results in long-term embodied trauma, where the colonized child's experience with

learning is experienced only in the mind, and not in the body. As a result, learners like young Ngũgĩ have been conditioned to "to see the world and where he stands in it" according to the "language of imposition" (p. 17). In other words, through linguistic imperialism, learners experience disassociation between their minds and bodies, homes and schools, and the "language of imposition" and their own languages.

Ngũgĩ's account resonates with Anzaldúa's (1987/2012) in *Borderlands: The New Mestiza,* where she weaves together her own personal trauma with the history of settler-colonization in Aztlán, the Southwest region of the U.S. and Mexico. Anzaldúa illuminates the embodied violence experienced by the children of the "original Americans" of Aztlán, whose lands and languages were stolen by White settler-colonists. As she explains, "We were jerked out by the roots, truncated, disemboweled, dispossessed, and separated from our identity and our history" (p. 29). She describes the extension of this oppression into the present—from the neo-colonial influence of U.S. companies, capitalism, and devaluation of the peso to continued discrimination, violent assimilation, and linguistic terrorism. One telling depiction comes from the chapter, "How to Tame the Wild Tongue," where Anzaldúa opens with an anecdote of her dentist's fight with her tongue as he attempted to clean her teeth, explaining that "[w]ild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out" (p. 76). She connects this anecdote to the linguistic discrimination she experienced at school, where her teacher hit her for speaking Spanish at recess. Forced to experience her culture "through an imposed and, sometimes, borrowed dominant language" (Macedo, 2019, p. 14), Anzaldúa came to see her language, culture, and identity as illegitimate. Through her account of linguistic oppression, or terrorism as she calls it, Anzaldúa carves into readers' minds and bodies the *felt* experience of linguistical imperialism and linguicism (Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012).

English Language Oppression throughout U.S. Education

Anzaldúa's account is only one of many that reveal how public education in the U.S. has been weaponized to force language-minoritized learners to adopt an idealized American identity in place of their marginalized culture and heritage, to speak "American" or English in place of their own language (García, 2009; Motha, 2014; San Miguel & Valencia, 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). In colonial U.S., Africans kidnapped from their homeland were kept separate from those from the same tribes, including parents from children, by slaveholders who systematically suppressed what resources were shared by those who were kidnapped—in this case, their languages—out of fear of insurrection (Barbian, Cornell Gonzales, & Mejía, 2017; Kendi, 2016). Under the Grant administration, the U.S. established boarding schools modeled after prisons, where indigenous children were "beaten for speaking their own languages, among other infractions that expressed their humanity" (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2015, p. 151). Each wave of immigrant children and families in the U.S faced similar experiences of epistemic violence and erasure despite their attempts to preserve their linguistic and cultural roots. For instance, though "German immigrant communities won the right to establish bilingual schools" in the 1800s, "their efforts were fiercely opposed by nativists keen to pass laws mandating English-only instruction" (Barbian et al., 2017, p. xvi). Instead, throughout U.S. history, children who grew up in homes where minoritized languages were used have been encouraged to speak English rather than their family's heritage languages. According to Cook and Bassetti (2011), this has resulted in the loss of most language minoritized immigrants' heritage languages within *two generations* in the U.S.

Today, language-minoritized learners continue to be forced to sacrifice fundamental elements of their identities and pressured "to adopt U.S. economic, political, religious, and

cultural forms," while being relegated to "the bottom of the socioeconomic strata of American society" (Tamura, 1994). According to Kendi (2016), today's critiques of African American students' use of Ebonics as "broken" or "non-standard" (p. 472) are echoes of accounts from the 1700s and 1800s where enslaved Africans were depicted as speaking "brokenly and blunderingly...like idiots" (p. 71). Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, xenophobic legislative policies in Arizona, California, and Massachusetts restricted bilingual education based on the faulty premise that English-only education would accelerate language-minoritized learners' English language development (Barbian et al., 2017, p. xvii). During this timeframe, other seemingly well-intentioned accountability measures, like high-stakes testing, were implemented to mitigate the "achievement gap" for students categorized as "English learners" through enforcement of No Child Left Behind and Every Student Succeeds Act (see U.S. Department of Education, 2016). These assessments continue to be used to lump together many language-minoritized learners into one essentialized subgroup, "regardless of their socioeconomic status, race, nationality, immigrant status, prior exposure to language(s), community participation, or other social positions and identities" (Hemphill & Blakely, 2019, p. 222). U.S. federal and state governments employ the terms "English learners" and "Limited English Proficient," which privilege English and relegate students' home languages as obstacles to overcome rather than resources for learning (Macedo, 2019, p. 11).

Assimilationist ideologies manifest in the lived experiences of today's language-minoritized learners in U.S. schools, whether explicitly through English-only classroom restrictions or implicitly through additional annual high-stakes assessments to measure their English language development while ignoring their bi/multilingual capacities (Perez, Vasquez, & Buriel, 2016). Such accountability measures not only take away valuable instructional time, but

also pressure teachers to adopt so-called “best practices” to produce “commodified, measurable learning objectives,” while ignoring “the historical role or colonizing functions of English and English language teaching in the world” (Hemphill & Blakely, 2019, p. 222). Here in my home state of Michigan, the state department of education has advanced the SIOP Model, or the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2012; Michigan Department of Education, 2017) for over a decade as a professional development model to equip teachers to support the growing number students who qualify as English learners; the SIOP model treats teaching as a lock-step linear process to facilitate learners’ acquisition of English as quickly and efficiently as possible (Crawford & Reyes, 2015). Unprepared to “de-fetishize” formulaic teaching methods, like SIOP, many teachers reinforce deleterious ideologies (e.g., English-only classroom policies, White monoculturalism) that “devalue, dismiss, and dehumanize” the linguistic and cultural practices of language-minoritized learners (Macedo, 2019, p. 11). Without opportunities to trouble the nature of settler-colonization in English language education in the past and present, many teachers continue to reprimand and even punish language-minoritized students today for using their home languages in the classroom (Benavides, 2017; Edwards, 2017; Zehr, 2003), often claiming it will help them learn English, pass high-stakes assessments, and acquire the necessary capital to navigate U.S. society.

The Personal Shadows of an Language Teacher Educator

As a former LT and now LTE, I have been complicit in upholding English language education as a settler-colonial enterprise in the U.S., a point I will return to later. In order to pursue a decolonial approach to English language education in the U.S., I look to Anzaldúa (2015), who suggests that decolonization “consists of unlearning consensual 'reality,' of seeing through reality’s roles and descriptions” (p. 44). Her assertion is consistent with Freire (1999),

who contends that “people must first critically recognize [oppression’s] causes (p. 47). To that end, the previous section is meant to be a brief accounting—for myself as much as for readers less familiar with this history—of the oppressive experiences of linguicism, where language-minoritized learners’ minds, hearts, and bodies have endured and continue to endure violence perpetuated through English language education. Later, in the first part of my findings, I will outline my own personal shadows as an LT and beginning LTE as a part of my ideological reckoning and the development of the critical consciousness necessary to reimagine my teaching and "create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of fuller humanity” (Freire, 2000, p. 47). How, then, do we move forward from this reckoning to a new reality within English education?

To that end, I now consider the need for teacher educators (TE), and more specifically, LTEs, to contend with their personal shadows (i.e., their identities, beliefs, and dispositions) in order to reject English language education as a colonizing enterprise and reimagine a more humanizing praxis. In what follows, I review the scholarship that has explored teacher educators’ (TE) development and the contributions this scholarship has made to the field. I also provide a general outline of the role self-study methodology has played in expanding the knowledge base of TEs’ development, specifically in support of TEs’ critical engagement with their own positionalities, ideologies and pedagogies. Finally, I narrow my focus to LTEs’ self-study research.

Teacher Educator Development

TE development is a process of perpetual becoming (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Dinkelman et al., 2006; Loughran, 2014). Becoming a TE “involves a knowledge of teaching about teaching and a knowledge of learning about teaching and how the two influence one another” (Loughran,

2008, p. 1180). TEs' identities are multiple, even conflicting and contradictory (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2013), encompassing sub-identities as schoolteachers, teachers in higher education, teachers of teachers, and researchers (Swennen, Jones, & Volman, 2010; Viczeko & Wright, 2010). TEs are influenced by external and internal influences (e.g., governmental and institutional policies, hegemonic ideologies, individual identities and experiences), both past and present, which may be in tension with each other (Loughran, 2013, 2014; Viczeko & Wright, 2010; Zhang & Yuan, 2019). Often, new TEs draw upon their past learning and teaching experiences (Boyd & Harris, 2010; Goodwin, Smith, Souto-Manning, Cheruvu, Tan, Reed, & Taveras, 2014), which are themselves shaped by traditional power dimensions that reify racial, gendered, classed, and linguistic hierarchies. That said, "even amidst institutional constraints and ever-shifting policy contexts, teacher educators always will hold considerable power to compose their professional identities" (Dinkelman, 2011, p. 321). Hence, beginning TEs are in a unique position to construct new identities and resist traditional hierarchies.

Much of what is known about TEs' development builds upon commonalities between teaching and teacher educating, such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) knowledge of practices framework. In this framework, they distinguish between knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice, and knowledge-from-practice, where the latter supports the development of teachers' "inquiry as stance." Goodwin et al. (2014) propose an adaptation of Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) framework based on their mixed methods study of nearly 300 TEs, where they found that many TEs report feeling unprepared to support new teachers in understanding or developing a commitment to diversity and equity. Hence, in their adaptation, Goodwin et al. include a fourth element: “Diversity, social justice, and multiculturalism must undergird the pedagogy of teacher education” (p. 298). This fourth element complements Cochran-Smith and

Lytle's (1999) "inquiry as stance," which suggests that teachers and TEs draw upon "conceptual and interpretive frameworks...to make judgments, theorize practice, and connect their efforts to larger intellectual, social and political issues" (p. 213). In order for TEs to critically examine their own practice in the context of broader sociopolitical issues, Goodwin et al. (2014) argue that they must "become conscious of their own biases and subjectivities, develop skills and sensibilities that can support social justice teaching and researching, build confidence as advocates for all learners and communities, and actively resist hegemonic practices and policies" (p. 298). Therefore, through interrogation of their personal biases and subjectivities, TEs can innovate critically-conscious and bottom-up approaches to teacher and TE learning, where their local knowledge and personal theories of teaching and learning can inform public, shared theories (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Goodwin et al., 2014; Korthagen et al., 2005).

TE Self-Study

In the past two decades, scholars have increasingly called for TEs to critically examine their own identities and pedagogies through self-study methodologies (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Dengerink et al., 2015; Korthagen, 1995; Loughran, 2010, 2014; Sabatier & Bullock, 2018). In fact, Zeichner (2007) recommends that self-study be a basic requirement for learning to be a TE, arguing that "[t]hose who work in TE programs need to think consciously in the same sort of self-study and critique of their practice that they ask their students to do" (p. 123). Through self-study, TE researchers are challenged to develop situated theories based on "local" knowledge and to place those theories in conversation with public knowledge (Geursen et al., 2010). TEs can choose to seek out "experiences that most nurture that professional sense of self" that support them in constructing those identities "in context, in practice, and over time" (Dinkelman, 2011, p. 314). When they conduct self-study in collaboration with "critical friends" (Schuck &

Russell, 2005), TEs may be further challenged to acknowledge the competing sociopolitical tensions that influence their professional identities and pedagogies (Boyd & Harris, 2010; Dengerink et al., 2015; Goodwin et al., 2014; Dinkelman, 2011; Korthagen et al., 2005; Loughran, 2014; Sabatier & Bullock, 2018; Viczeko & Wright, 2010).

Self-Study in Language Teacher Education

Among language teacher educators, or LTEs, self-study research reflects a fundamental shift in language education away from the "fetish over methods" with its emphasis on prepackaged and structured techniques (Bartolomé, 1994) to what Kumaravadivelu (1994) describes as the post-method orientation and more recently, the social turn in second language studies (De Costa & Norton, 2016), which consider how facets of teachers themselves (i.e., their identities, ideologies, emotions, agency) shape their pedagogies. Given that their identities are inseparable from their pedagogical practices (Morgan, 2004; Motha et al., 2012; Olsen, 2008), LTEs who adopt a critically reflexive approach to self-study interrogate the dialectical relationship between who they are and what contextual factors they must negotiate in language education with implications for the larger field (Sharkey & Peercy, 2018). Building from Clarke (2009), Miller, Morgan and Medina (2017) invoke Foucault's (1983) notion of ethical self-formation to advance the critical identity work needed for educators to negotiate competing discourses and ideologies in the LTE field. While LTEs' ethical self-formation "does not entail freedom from power," their work "on the self by the self (i.e., our bodies, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors)...can be regarded as the productive exercise of power" to not only become aware of dominant ideologies in language education, but to also reimagine them (Miller et al., 2017, pp. 92-93). Hence, through self-study, LTEs can call into question ideological assumptions, like the belief that being a Native English speaker is necessary to being a good LT or LTE (Sharkey,

2018). To that end, a recent *Teacher Education Quarterly* special issue edited by Zuniga, Lachance, Aquino-Sterling, and Guerrero (2019) centers the voices and experiences of bilingual LTEs. Collectively, these studies make the case that, for non-native English speaking LTEs, self-study has affirmed their identities as bilingual speakers, emboldened their sense of agency, and galvanized them to reject hegemonic language ideologies, like native speakerism (see Fall, 2019; Díaz & Garza-Reyna, 2019; Rodríguez-Mojica, Briceño, & Muñoz-Muñoz, 2019; Yazan, 2019; Zúñiga, 2019).

Adopting a collaborative approach, Peercy, Sharkey, Baecher, Motha, and Varghese (2019) examined the intersection between their LTE identities and pedagogies. Their shared inquiry challenged them to "make more clear to us the dimensions of our professional and social identities that we let show, the ones we hide, and the ones we can agentively leverage in ways that create entry points to challenge dominant discourses and enhance our work with teachers, schools, and communities" (p. 11). In other words, the juxtaposition of their individual positionalities and experiences as a part of their collective narrative inquiry revealed more clearly the multifaceted dimensions of their social identities and how they were positioned as normative or non-normative in their professional contexts. Through this juxtaposition, they argue that they were better able to name what they were unable to see in their own teaching as well as instances where they had been "domesticated" with a greater degree of what Kubota and Miller (2017) have called "hyper self-reflexivity" (Peercy et al., 2019, p. 4). With respect to "domestication," they refer to the pressure they face to comply with dominant discourses, such as White supremacy or monolingualism. To that end, one of the questions they pose to the LTE field to consider is, "How are we, as teacher educators, complicit in maintaining structures and discourses that produce and reproduce inequities?" in language education (Peercy et al., 2019, p.

12). Spurred forward by their question, my critical autoethnography is rooted in the “hyper self-reflexivity (Kubota & Miller, 2017) of these aforementioned LTE self-studies and specifically the collaborative design of Peercy et al. (2019).

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

> [T]ogether we can alter cultural beliefs, behaviors, attitudes about their meanings. These identity categories—categories based primarily on history, biology, nationality—are important aspects of personal and collective identity; however, they don't contain our entirety, and we can't base our whole identidad on them. It's not 'race,' gender, class, or any single attribute but the interaction of all of these aspects (as well as others) that creates identity...Conventional, traditional identity labels are stuck in binaries, trapped in jaulas (cages) that limit the growth of our individual and collective lives. (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 65-66).

(Des)conocimientos

Anzaldúa (2015) uses the metaphor of "the shadow beast" to refer to *desconocimientos*, or "the ignorance we cultivate to keep ourselves from knowledge so we can remain unaccountable" (p. 1). By this, I understand Anzaldúa to mean, at least in part, the taken-for-granted assumptions, or ideologies, that circulate within society to maintain the privilege of some through the oppression of others. This includes knowledge of the collective shadows described in Chapter 2: U.S. settler-colonization, nationalism, white supremacy and "linguistic imperialism" (Phillipson, 2006). According to Anzaldúa, this path "leads human consciousness into ignorance, fear, and hatred," creating a state of "separation and domination" that justifies our use of "force and violence to socially construct our nation" (p. 19). Thus, by remaining willfully ignorant of the binary constructions used to separate and dominate, we conform to dominant ideologies, assuming our place within socially-constructed hierarchies and adopting a stance of "self-righteousness" that forms an "abyss" between ourselves and others (p. 19).

Like a "light" in the dark, Anzaldúa offers the term *conocimientos,* which directly translates to "knowledge" in Spanish. Described as "the more difficult path," *conocimiento* requires us to actively and courageously resist dominant ideologies, resulting in expanded awareness of their presence and our complicity in perpetuating them (p. 19). Thus, this awakening is painful, drawing our attention to the personal and collective wounds that result

from the aforementioned systems of oppression. *Conocimiento* is also relational: it is through our wounds, whether "physical, psychic, cultural, and/or spiritual," that we connect with others, building a "bridge" across difference through our "compassionate interactions" with others (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 19). In what follows, I extend Anzaldúa's *(des)conocimientos* to three other constructs—namely, language ideologies, translanguaging, and contact zones—in order to theorize the *(des)conocimientos* of LTs and LTEs. I also introduce two additional Anzaldúan constructs, namely *nos/otras* and *nepantla*, to further theorize the process of reckoning and (re)imagining that I propose must be undertaken by LT and LTEs in order to realize liberatory possibilities within English language education.

Our Ideological Shadows

The term *language ideologies* will be used throughout this study to identify taken-for-granted assumptions about language, conforming to the binaries described at the opening of the chapter by Anzaldúa. As defined by Irvine (1989), language ideologies are "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (p. 255). They represent the explicit or implicit linkages that "underpin not only linguistic form and use but also the very notion of the person and the social group, as well as such fundamental social institutions as religious ritual, child socialization, gender relations, the nation-state, schooling, and law" (Wollard, 1998, p. 3). In other words, language ideologies link together language forms with other social constructs, such as identity, power, or race (Schieffelin, Wollard, & Kroskrity, 1998). From a poststructuralist perspective, these ideologies function as a "regulatory force" (Baxter, 2016, p. 37), determining our various subject-positions as they relate to our language practices as well as other ideological positions (i.e., racial, citizenship, class).

In what follows, I define various language ideologies that will be used throughout this study with particular consideration of the fluid, context-dependent, and intersectional nature (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016) of the ideologies and the positionalities of who I write about in this critical autoethnography. First proposed by legal scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), the term *intersectionality* refers to the overlapping axes of social division that inform one's positionality and privilege with respect to broader systems of power. These axes can include one's gender, sexual orientation, or class (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016); with consideration of the language ideologies listed below, I am primarily interested in the intersection of racialization, language practices, national origin and citizen, specifically with regard to native or non-native language use. Importantly, intersectionality is tied closely to critical race theory and LatCrit theory (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016), and although I do not draw explicitly upon these frameworks, the influence of scholars from within both traditions (e.g., Bell, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2015; Leonardo, 2013; Yosso, 2005) undoubtedly informs the theoretical perspectives at the center of this study.

The *Herderian triad* refers to the linkage between a community's language and geographical place (see Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Blommaert & Verschueren, 1992), a connection that was reified through the rise of the nation-state (Canagarajah, 2013; Valdés, 2016). This ideology functions like a geographic border to determine one's belonging and privilege in a nation-state and manifests "in evaluative views about speakers and their language use" (Valdés, 2016, p. 323). Relatedly, *monoglossic ideologies* describe structuralist notions of languages as bounded, pure, and autonomous systems (García, 2009), which are used to determine who is positioned as an insider or outsider within a language community. Bound together with a defined community and place, a named language system must be distinguished as

unique from other practices and achieve a sort of "purity" in order to function as a border for belonging or exclusion—an ideology that has manifest in language standardization and purification (Canagarajah, 2013). In today's U.S. classrooms, the Herderian Triad and monoglossic ideologies are present whenever a teacher enforces an English-only policy, claiming it will help students learn English and become "American." Teachers who uncritically perpetuate these ideologies act from the assumption that "children who speak a language other than that of the state should be encouraged to abandon that language and instead take up only the dominant language" (García, 2009, p. 51), specifically White Mainstream English (Paris & Alim, 2014; Baker-Bell, 2019).

A related ideology, *Native speakerism* (Holliday, 2006) establishes a hierarchy of purity, authenticity, and ownership based on speakers' relation to a language. Kachru's (1986) "three circles model" is a helpful example of this with regard to English. In the model, Kachru defined the three circles according to the history and function of language varieties. The Inner Circle refers to speakers for whom English is their first and often only language for interacting; they are positioned as "owners" of the language and are used to determine the "norm" with regard to English use. Today, these include the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The Outer Circle refers to post-colonial communities where English has been adopted as a second language and where speakers have developed their own norms, such as in the case of Indian English or Nigerian English. Referring to countries not colonized by the British, the Expanding Circle refers to contexts that use English as a foreign language and are dependent on the language norms set by those of the Inner Circle. Under this ideology, native language varieties are considered more valuable, a perspective that underlies job postings for English language teacher positions that require native-speaker status (Jenks & Lee, 2019). Later in this study, I will

use the labels *Native English Speaker (NES)* and *Non-Native English Speaker (NNES)* to refer English speakers' ideological positions, consistent with Canagarajah's (2013) usage. While I adopt a post-structuralist perspective that our positionalities and language practices are flexible, mobile, and context dependent, I also acknowledge that we can "acquire labels and identities," like NES or NNES, which are "reified through language ideologies" and result in tangible material realities (Canagarajah, 2013, pp. 15-16). Where NESs are positioned as insiders in English-speaking contexts, they are outsiders among NNES. Likewise, the reverse holds true: NNESs may be positioned as outsiders in English-speaking contexts.

One's NES status can also be ideologically confounded by one's racialized positionality and variety of English. Echoing Holliday (2006) and Kumashiro (2000), Charles (2019) contends that those who are not white, but whose first language is English and come from Western societies, are positioned as the NES Other, meaning "that whoever does not fit within the category of White is abnormal and is not associated with the English language" (p. 4). The construction of the NES Other is influenced by *raciolinguistic ideologies,* which refer to the conflation of race and language (Alim, 2016, p. 1). These ideologies are present whenever "racialized speaking subjects" are positioned "as linguistically deviant even when they employ linguistic practices [that are] positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 150). According to Baker-Bell (2020), *raciolinguistic ideologies* perpetuate the Anti-Black Linguistic Racism enacted in U.S. classrooms where teachers assume that students who use Black language "are from a lower-class and are uneducated" (p. 22). Another example from the U.S. context can be found in Rosa's (2019) in-depth study of how the co-naturalization of language and race shapes the everyday experiences of Mexican and Puerto Rican youth whereby they negotiate how they identify themselves and

others with their expressive practices. Rosa explains:

> The projected tension between multicultural identity maintenance and assimilation organizes distinctions such as neighborhood high school vs. selective enrollment high school, gangbanger/ho vs. Young Latino Professional, race vs. ethnicity, Latina/o/x vs. Hispanic, Latin American vs. American, bilingualism vs. monolingualism, Spanish vs. English, Inverted Spanglish vs. Mock Spanish, legitimate reading/writing vs. outlaw(ed) literacies, and school vs. street.

In his analysis, these categories are in tension with each other as the youth in the study negotiate how they are positioned in proximity to Whiteness with respect to their languaging practices and racialized identities.

Drawing upon both *native speakerism* and "White saviorism," Jenks and Lee (2019) propose the term *native speaker saviorism* to describe the belief that language-minoritized students as the cultural Other might be "saved" by learning English, thus achieving proximity to whiteness (p. 6). Mutually reinforced by colonial and settler-colonial endeavors, such as enslavement and land seizure, these ideologies grew as justifications for racial, linguistic and cultural dehumanization based on the supposed inherent material worth, aesthetic value, linguistic validity, and moral good of one set of language practices over another. *Native speaker saviorism* is present in U.S. classrooms whenever teachers justify their decisions to prohibit languages or dialects, like Spanish or Black English, based on the assertion that students must be able to use White Mainstream English (Baker-Bell, 2019) to succeed in U.S. society.

In Foucauldian terms, the aforementioned assimilationist and White supremacist language ideologies function as regimes of truth, their power "produced in discourses" as a part of "a netlike system that circulates and produces knowledge" (Kubota & Miller, 2017, p. 134).

As previously discussed, these ideologies emerged as a function of nation-state and colonial governmentality, producing “governable national and colonial subjects that fit the political needs of modern society (Flores, 2013)” distinct from “deviant populations who were positioned as a threat to the integrity of the national polity” (Flores, 2019, p. 51). By extension, LTs and LTEs, as agents of the state, are “ethical subjects ‘acting on others’ (Foucault, 1997, p. 262) even as they struggle within power relations” through their reinforcement or rejection of these ideologies (Miller et al., 2017, p. 91). In other words, because language education is often deployed to uphold the political and economic agendas of a nation-state as well as the hegemonic ideologies mutually reinforced by those agendas, LTs and LTEs make decisions in their day-to-day teaching lives to align themselves and their pedagogies with linguistic imperialism and associated language ideologies (Phillipson, 1992)—or not.

Heteroglossic Conocimientos and Translanguaging

Consistent with the aforementioned ideologies, languages have traditionally been thought of as existing in separate compartments, or as “two solitudes” (Cummins, 1979), within bilingual learners’ minds. Over the past three decades, however, scholars have advocated for more holistic approaches to second language acquisition (SLA), such as Cummins’s (1979) interdependence hypothesis, which describes the possibilities for cross-linguistic transfer, and Cenoz and Gorter’s (2011) “focus on multilingualism,” where the goal is to support the development of learners’ full linguistic repertoires and language awareness (p. 358). Described as the “multilingual turn” in SLA, this shift moves away from monolingual language norms, where the “educated native speaker” is used as the goal for communicative competence, to emphasize how speakers employ their full linguistic repertoires in practice (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Cummins, 1979; May, 2014).

In contrast to the aforementioned ideologies, *heteroglossic ideologies* emphasize the

multiplicity of interrelated language practices among bilingual speakers (García, 2009), irrespective of national boundaries or racialized identities. Building from Bakhtin's (1981) use of *heteroglossia* to mean "multi-voiced," heteroglossic ideologies reject the limits of the aforementioned assimilationist ideologies to instead emphasize the fluid and dynamic meaning-making practices of multilingual populations. Instead of viewing languages as discrete objects associated with geographic locations or static identities (Flores & Schissel, 2014), scholars who ascribe to heteroglossic ideologies have also advocated for *translanguaging* (García, 2009; García & Li, 2014), a relatively new theoretical perspective and pedagogical approach to emphasize the fluidity of languaging and agency of speakers.

Translanguaging has its origins in Cen Williams (1994, 1996) theorization of *trawsieithu*, a Welsh term he used to refer to describe the language practices of bilingual youth as they learned both English and Welsh, the latter having lower status within their school's bilingual education program. Despite the unequal status between the two named languages, Williams found that students more deeply engaged in both content learning and language development when they received input in one language and produced output in another. The term was later taken up in the U.S. context by Ofelia García (2007, 2009) to describe a pedagogical approach to sustain and expand bilingual learners' full linguistic repertoires—while also critiquing existing hierarchies that privilege one language (and associated speakers) over another.

Put simply, translanguaging suggests that, rather than turning one language "off" and turning another "on," we creatively integrate all meaning-making resources in our repertoire to communicate, inclusive of named language systems, dialects, facial expressions, gestures, visuals, and shared ecological resources (Li, 2017). Thus, languages are conceived as not being independent and bounded, but are instead facets of the same cohesive and adaptive system

(Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Li, 2014). Therefore, as a theory of language practice, translanguaging breaks down imagined boundaries and levels ideological hierarchies between languages and speakers.

Translanguaging both precedes and overlaps with a number of other terms used to describe the practice of weaving together meaning-making resources across seemingly discrete linguistic and semiotic systems, such as *flexible bilingualism* (Creese & Blackledge, 2011), *hybrid language practices* (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Álvarez, & Chiu, 1999; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999), *plurilingualism* (Denison, 1970; Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 2009), *codemeshing* (Young, 2004, 2007; Canagarajah, 2009, 2011), *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010) and *translingual practice* (Canagarajah, 2013). However, as argued by Poza (2017), translanguaging was the first to be codified among educators in the U.S. and is explicitly concerned "with social justice and linguistic inequity" in the context of "oppression and marginalization of national and colonial subjects" as a result of hegemonic language ideologies (p. 108). (See Poza, 2017 for a full literature review of translanguaging.)

To this end, translanguaging has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach in U.S. language education to amplify the linguistic and cultural resources of students who are learning English as an additional language while expanding their capacity to critically and creatively negotiate the language practices privileged in schools (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017; García & Kano, 2014; García & Kleyn, 2016; García & Li, 2014; Menken & Sánchez, 2019). In centering the fluid and dynamic language practices of language-minoritized learners (García, 2009; García & Li, 2014), translanguaging resists deleterious language ideologies that pervade U.S. education and marginalize students when they do not conform to so-called "norms" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, 2019; García, 2009, 2017; García & Otheguy, 2019; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Seltzer,

2019). When enacted as a shared process between teachers and students—where they co-construct new hybridized language—translanguaging is a praxis that can "give voice to new sociopolitical realities by interrogating linguistic inequality" (García & Kano, 2014, p. 261). Hence, translanguaging can transgress and transform subtractive approaches employed to assimilate language-minoritized learners into "standard" language deemed necessary to advance the interests of the U.S. nation-state (García & Sylvan, 2011; Valdés, 2016). I take up translanguaging in this study as the central catalyst for my *conocimiento* as an LT and LTE in a U.S. context.

Translanguaging in Contact Zone Interactions

In his theorization of *translingual practice*[2], Canagarajah (2013) operationalizes Pratt's (1991) *contact zones* to illuminate the potential for translanguaging to disrupt perceived boundaries between language practices. In her keynote address for the Responsibilities for Literacy conference, Pratt (1991) explains that *contact zones* refer to "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonization, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (p. 29). To illustrate the concept, Pratt references a series of texts that are themselves reflective of translanguaging, such as Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's (1613) letter to King Phillip III of Spain, where he integrated his indigenous language, Quecha, with Spanish and illustrations, including adapting traditional Christian imagery. As Pratt explains, the

[2] At the time, Canagarajah distinguished *translingual practice* (i.e. situated social processes where bilingual speakers negotiate meaning using shared resources) from *translanguaging* as bilingual speakers' cognitive processes. Indeed, Williams's (1996) original theorization, *trawsieithu*, referred to students' cognitive processing skills. However, as discussed in the previous section, others have since forwarded a more critical orientation to the theory, defining translanguaging as a "socioeducational process [that] enables students to construct and constantly modify their sociocultural identities and values, as they respond to their historical and present conditions critically and creatively" (García & Li, 2014, p. 67).

first part of Guaman Poma's letter, *Nueva corónica,* or New Chronicle, appropriated "the official Spanish genre" of the chronicle, which was "the main writing apparatus through which the Spanish represented their American conquests to themselves" (p. 34). In her view, Guaman Poma wrote his *Nueva corónica* "to construct a new picture of the world, a picture of a Christian world with Andean rather than European peoples at the center of it" (p. 34). Thus, Guaman's letter grew from his contact zone interactions as an indigenous Andean of Incan descent who had adopted, at least to some extent, the language, cultural practices and Christian religion of Spanish colonizers in 17th century Peru.

Canagarajah (2013) extends Pratt's usage of contact zones in order to distinguish between the "linguistics of contact" over the "linguistics of community" (p. 29). Rather than defining a community based on a static set of communicative practices (meaning the linguistics of contact), such as the use of Spanish among Spaniards or Quechua among indigenous Incans, Canagarajah suggests that people adaptively co-construct an integrated repertoire of meaning-making resources to communicate across language difference when opportunities for contact emerge in shared social spaces (meaning linguistics of community), such as in Guaman Poma's letter. Thus, contact zone interactions are fertile ground for translanguaging. While contact zones can be conflictual spaces, as people interact across difference, they also represent authentic contexts and purposes for people to negotiate meaning with others; they can also foster the development of what Canagarajah (2013) calls the "cooperative disposition" of translingual speakers (see Table 1). Canagarajah describes the cooperative efforts of speakers in contact zone interactions as forms of "synergy" and "serendipity," where the former refers to speakers' combined effort to communicate and the latter refers to their acceptance and openness of each other on their own terms (p. 41).

Table 1.
Canagarajah's (2013) "Cooperative Disposition of Translingual Speakers"

Domain	Features
Language awareness	● Language norms as open to negotiation ● Languages as mobile semiotic resources ● A functional orientation to communication and meaning
Social values	● An openness to diversity ● A sense of voice and locus of enunciation ● A strong ethic of collaboration
Learning strategies	● Learning from practice ● Adaptive skills ● Use of scaffolding

Drawing upon Pratt (1991) and Canagarajah (2013), the collaborative self-study community of which I have been a part, TTT, has described our community as a contact zone, a space that has supported our collaborative investigation into translanguaging through juxtaposition of our respective language backgrounds and resources (Ponzio et al., forthcoming). Together, we found that through our contact zone interactions, we affirmed each other's cultural and language practices, demonstrated evidence of the dispositional characteristics associated with Canagarajah's (2013) translingual practice, and collectively challenged hegemonic language ideologies and associated power dynamics. As a part of my individual reckoning and reimagining as an LT and LTE, I revisit our group's development and collective transformation in Chapter 6; however, as I suggested to the group back in November 2018, our collaborative space afforded us the opportunity "to look at the self [in order] to look back outward again." Thus, while TTT has had its own collective journey as a group, I focus here on its fundamental role as a part of my personal journey.

nos/otras and the Nepantla Contact Zone

I put Pratt and Canagarajah's use of contact zones in conversation with two additional constructs that Anzaldúa (2015) theorizes: *nos/otras* and *nepantla*. Put simply, the term *nos/otras* directly translates from Spanish to us/others; however, Anzaldúa's placement of the slash is purposeful, representing a bridge between us and others. A Nahuatl word for "in-between space," *nepantla* could be used to describe this bridge, and is defined by Anzaldúa (2015) as "the site of transformation, the place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures" (p. 127).

Resonating with Pratt's (1991) contact zones, *nepantla* emerges in the collision of cultures and identities, dispositions and meaning-making practices; in connection with Anzaldúa's theorization of *(des)conocimientos,* however, *nepantla* also fractures our taken-for-granted assumptions of ourselves and the world around us. Within these fractures, these cracks, we can "develop a new sense of awareness and begin to 'see through' the competing ideologies that surround us" (DeNicolo & González, 2015). Hence, *nepantla* is a transformative liminal space where, in our process of becoming and self-reflection, we experience a shift in *conocimiento*. Importantly, *nepantla* are "places of constant tension" and "struggle," to which Anzaldúa attributes her own personal transformation, healing and creation. Through this tension, we come to "dis-identify with existing beliefs, social structures, and models of identity" (Keating, 2006), leaving us "open to make sense of competing cultures and belief systems" (DeNicolo & González, 2019, p. 9). Thus, it is within *nepantla,* at the slash between *nos* and *otras,* that we undergo the journey of *conocimiento.*

Important to Anzaldúa's theorization of both *(des)conocimiento* and *nepantla* is their onto-epistemological nature. Within *nepantla*, we undergo the process of *conocimiento* not only in our minds, but also in our bodies. As Anzaldúa (2015) explains:

> In nepantla you are exposed, open to other perspectives, more readily able to access knowledge derived from inner feelings, imaginal states, and outer events, and to "see through" them with a mindful, holistic awareness. Seeing through human acts both individual and collective allows you to examine the ways you construct knowledge, identity, and reality, and explore how some of your/others' constructions violate other people's ways of knowing and living. (pp. 122-123).

Just as Anzaldúa blurs the division between us/others—whether with regard to race, gender, sexuality, national origin, or language—so, too, does she resist the Cartesian divide between mind/body/spirit. While I will elaborate on this further as a part of my methodology in next chapter, I will highlight here that Anzaldúa's onto-epistemology centers the body as "the ground of thought" and "the text" (p. 5). Thus, the unlearning and relearning we experience in *nepantla* in the process of *conocimiento* is in our bodies as much (if not more) as in our minds.

Anzaldúa uses the term *las nepantleras* to refer to those who live at the slash, the "intermediaries between various mundos" who are able to "grasp the thoughts, emotions, languages, and perspectives associated with varying individual and cultural positions" (p. 82). They are trouble-makers who upset ideological binaries, their associated subject-positions, and the privileges that result. They are bridge-builders who "advocate a 'nos/otras' position" whereby they contend with their complicity in perpetuating existing power structures, face the mutual harm they have experienced within their personal *desconocimientos*, and "[honor] people's otherness" in pursuit of *conocimientos* (Anzaldúa, 2015, pp. 82-83). They are also

visionaries who imagine "a time when the bridge will no longer be needed," when we will "have shifted to a seamless nosotras," and when perceived divisions will have dissolved between our belief systems, geographical spaces, and meaning-practices (Anzaldúa, 2015, pp. 151-152).

Like contact zones, *nepantla* spaces challenge us to strategically leverage shared linguistic, semiotic, and ecological resources to negotiate communication across difference. And like *las nepantleras,* my collaborators in TTT deeply ruptured my taken-for-granted assumptions about language practice and pedagogy. Thus, my engagement with TTT was a generative space for developing the aforementioned resources, both inner and outer, that extended beyond my interactions in the group; these resources are reflective of characteristics listed on Canagarajah's (2013) overview of the "cooperative disposition of translingual speakers." That said, these characteristics are not inclusive of the full set of resources I identified in my analysis of my ideological reckoning and pedagogical reimagining. As previously mentioned, Anzaldúa's onto-epistemology underscores the embodied (i.e., psychic, emotional, felt) experiences of transformation in liminal spaces, experiences that involve negotiating new perspectives, such as heteroglossic ideology and translanguaging, with perspectives rooted deep in our identities, beliefs, and past experiences, such as monoglossic or raciolinguistic ideologies (García, 2009; Flores & Rosa, 2015). Therefore, I bridge together *nepantla* and *contact zones* as a part of my theoretical framework, in order to describe what inner resources and emotions resources I drew upon within and beyond our group's interactions—dissonance and resonance, guilt and contrition, shame and acceptance—as part of my struggle to achieve "equilibrium between the outer expression of change and [my] inner relationship to it" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 127). As I will later argue, the emergence of these resources and the strategies I developed to negotiate them were central to my translanguaging *conocimiento.*

With respect to my *conocimiento* as a LT and LTE, I conceptualize translanguaging in its broadest sense as a part of this study, blurring boundaries between named language systems along with the borders they reify between geographic locations, nation-states, and speaking communities. Translanguaging also disrupts hierarchies that privilege meaning-making resources used to enforce imperialism, colonization, and settler-colonization: linguistic means of communication (over non-linguistic means like visuals or movement) and forms of English associated with white, NES status. Instead, translanguaging affirms the legitimacy of *all* meaning-making resources: named languages, dialects, and registers, both spoken and written forms, along with drawings, hand gestures, dancing, whistling, inflection, and so on. In connection with Anzaldúa, I also contend that the emergence of my translanguaging *conocimiento* involves recognizing how I draw upon broader ideologies—as narratives that influence how I conceptualize myself, my interactions, and the world around me—along with my inner resources—inclusive of the assimilationist scripts into which I have been acculturated for thinking, being and feeling based on my various positionalities as well as the embodied resources I develop to resist those scripts. I now turn to how Anzaldúa's onto-epistemology is infused into my methodological approach in this study, beginning with its initial, organic design and ending with data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

"Gauman Poma's *New Chronicle* is an instance of what I have proposed to call an *autoethnographic* text, by which I mean a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them" (Pratt, 1991, p. 35).

"In these auto-ethnographies I am both observer and participant—I simultaneously look at myself as subject and object. In the blink of an eye, I blur subject /object, class, gender, and other boundaries" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 3).

Autoethnography

Well before I read Anzaldúa's (2015) *Light in the Dark* or Pratt's (1991) "Arts of the Contact Zone," I had set out to write an autoethnography. As a research method, autoethnography involves systematic analysis of one's personal experiences within one's sociocultural contexts (Ellis, 2004). Consistent with ethnographic tradition, autoethnographers contextualize who they are, what they think, and how they feel within their interactions and relationships (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015); they also "rely on their personal experiences to make sense of sociocultural issues by focusing on the impact of dominant discourse and corresponding ideologies" (Yazan, 2019, p. 40). Furthermore, by turning "the ethnographic gaze inward...while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography" (Denzin, 1997, p. 227), autoethnographers blur the boundaries between their scholarly identities and their personal identities. Thus, conducting autoethnographic research is a deeply personal and transformative endeavor that is predicated on deep self-reflexivity, vulnerability and risk taking, whereby autoethnographers publicly make academic the personal and make personal the academic (Lin, 2004; Spry, 2001; Yazan, 2019).

Having an established practice of writing personal narrative and memoir, I was interested in autoethnography as both a method and product of research and writing as well as a tool for my ongoing identity construction. Like Anzaldúa (2015), through my established practice of writing over the past two decades, I had found that the writing "'writes' me" (p. 3) and is where I

undergo “always-in-progress, transformational processes” (p. 139). To that end, I wondered how endeavoring to compose an autoethnography might support the development of my emerging translanguaging pedagogy as an LT and LTE. Later discovering the synchronicities between the frameworks I was adopting from Anzaldúa and Pratt and their alignment with autoethnography only reinforced my methodological decision.

However, I also questioned whether it was my place to undertake autoethnographic research and writing given my positionality as a white, English-dominant speaking, U.S.-born educator. By that, I mean that within the central constructs of this study (i.e., language, race, national origin), I occupy positions of privilege, which seemed to contradict another defining characteristic of autoethnography. According to Pratt (1991), unlike traditional ethnographies, where “European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their others (usually their conquered others),” autoethnographies are written by “the so-defined others” (p. 35). Resonating with Pratt, Boylorn and Orbe (2014) write that scholars who engage in autoethnography “invite readers into the lived experience of a presumed ‘Other’ and to experience it viscerally” (p. 15).

While my autoethnography would not center the experiences of “a presumed ‘Other’,” I did envision it as a rejection of “canonical ideas about what research is and how research should be done” that are predicated on “a White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied perspective,” consistent with Ellis, Adams, and Bochner’s (2011) view of autoethnography (pp. 2-3). Rather than representing my experiences to others solely from my viewpoint—and within the taken-for-granted ideologies that constructed my privileged positions—I wanted to adopt a theoretical and methodological approach that would allow me to analyze, within my interactions, the influence of the dominant ideologies into which I had been acculturated and to catch a glimpse of them from the viewpoints of those with whom I interacted,

namely language-minoritized speakers. In Anzaldúan terms, I wanted to engage in autoethnographic self-reflexivity through the "eyes of others" (Cantú & Hurtado, 2012). By this, I refer to Anzaldúa's (2012) supposition that while we might begin on "the opposite river bank" from those with whom we interact, we eventually "have to leave the opposite bank...so that we are on both shores at once" during our journey "to new consciousness" (p. 100). To that end, I began to conceptualize a form of critical autoethnography that might take as its starting point Anzaldúa's (2015) *nos/otras* framing. Reflective of Anzaldúa's words at the opening of the chapter, I intended to "simultaneously look at myself as subject and object" (p. 3) through what I am calling *nos/otras* autoethnography.

Other Matters of Positionality

Before I elaborate on how I am conceptualizing this research and writing genre, I want to highlight another tension I encountered with respect to my positionality: Was it my place to draw so heavily on Anzaldúa's (2015) work throughout this study? Put simply, I questioned whether I was appropriating her work given my racialized identity and language practices. Although I allude to this in Chapter 1, where I briefly describe my positionality and explain my rationale in aligning this study with Anzaldúa, I would like to return to this point by threading together elements from my theoretical framework and methodological commitments.

First, this study is meant to disrupt the ideological constructions that both emerged from settler-colonization in the U.S. and continue to perpetuate them, specifically constructions that privilege Whiteness, NES status, and White Mainstream English. As I have already explained, my second purpose is to intentionally decenter myself and the dominant ideologies that privilege my racialized identity and language practices—and to reimagine myself and my interactions as an LT and LTE through translanguaging as a critical lens. Decentering myself in this study

requires conscious interrogation of my positionality as a U.S.-born, fourth-generation immigrant, first-generation college student, heterosexual cis female, able-bodied, white, English-dominant speaking scholar, specifically with regard to my country of origin, language background and racialized identity.

To this end, I began with a commitment to make central to my theoretical and methodological frameworks the perspectives of those who, in Spivak's (1993) terms, have been positioned on the margins, but had reclaimed "marginality." Recognizing both the center and the margins as being unbounded and fluidly defined (Spivak, 1993), I was interested in what had been theorized by "deconstructionists that do their work from within (from an intimacy with the structure)" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), particularly with regard to U.S. settler-colonialism and English language education. Thus, I align myself and this study with Anzaldúa's (2012; 2015) theoretical and methodological perspectives, all borne from of her experience in the literal and figurative "borderlands" between Spanish, Nahuatl, and English and between U.S. and Mexico—what was once called Aztlan before it was colonized by the Spanish and later the U.S. Much of Anzaldúa's writing emerged during the 1980s and early 1990s, during "the era of mainstream academics fighting to preserve the Western canon and of political mobilization by conservatives to add an amendment to the U.S. Constitution establish English as the official language of the United States" (Cantú & Hurtado, 2012). Later, I also discovered that Anzaldúa herself was an English teacher and the director of bilingual and migrant education in Indiana, a Midwest neighbor of my home state of Michigan; like me, she identified as a woman and was a first-generation college student. Thus, while I knew I could by no means claim to understand Anzaldúa's theories from the vantage point of an insider, I did recognize in her writing situated

perspectives that might support my endeavor to decenter myself as a white, U.S-born, NES LT and LTE and instead center language-minoritized speakers in the U.S.

While I continue to question whether it is possible to decenter myself, I find further clarity in Morrison's (2013) theorization of the "white gaze," Flores and Rosa's (2015) "white listening subject," and Kendi's (2015, 2019) definitions of "racist" and "antiracist." According to Flores and Rosa (2015), the white listening (and speaking) subject, as with the racialized subject, is not a biological or physiological category, but a performative and ideological position (see also Daniels & Varghese, 2019 and Jenks & Lee, 2019). Therefore, the adoption of language ideologies that perpetuate the "white gaze" (Morrison, 2013), such as monoglossic and raciolinguistic ideologies, are not exclusive to white NESs, but are present whenever language-minoritized speakers and their language practices are deemed inferior according to idealized white, middle-class norms (Paris & Alim, 2014). Another example of this is reflected in how Kendi (2016, 2019) disrupts of the racist/antiracist binary by framing "racist" and "antiracist" as ideological positions that one can adopt and even alternate between from moment to moment. In his definition, one is racist when they are "supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea" and antiracist when they are "supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea" (Kendi, 2019, p. 13).[3] What I take Flores, Rosa, and Kendi to mean is that one's positionalities are not necessarily synonymous with their ideological stances; hence, it is possible to unravel one's own positionalities and perspectives from the ideological forces that shape them. Therefore, while I can never exist outside the

[3] One potential assumption that could be made from both Flores and Rosa (2015) and Kendi (2016, 2019) is that it is possible those in inhabit NNES and/or racialized positions to adopt the ideological perspectives of "white listening subjects" or "racists. It is not my place or purpose here to make this assertion; instead, I draw upon their examples to specifically point to the potential for me, as the subject and object of this study, to adopt ideological positions that undermine my privilege as a white NES.

ideological constructions of Whiteness, the dominance of English, or the privileges I experience therein, I can undergo a process of *conocimiento* to parse "reality, identity, language, [the] dominant culture's representation and ideological control" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 3) from my own ideological viewpoints.

nos/otras Autoethnography

To this end, Anzaldúa's *nos/otras* framing helps me navigate the tension of taking up her theoretical perspectives given my positionality, particularly since she herself questioned whether she, herself, was guilty of appropriation. As a sixth-generation Chicana, Anzaldúa grew up along the the U.S.-Mexican border and learned both English and Spanish; during her childhood, she and her family migrated between Texas and the Midwest. Throughout much of her writing, Anzaldúa draws upon the indigenous Nahuatl roots from which she had been separated through settler-colonization, and to this end, she questions whether "we Chicana/o writers and artists also are misappropriating Nahuatl language and images" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 53). Several lines later, she resolves this tension for herself (at least momentarily): "I feel that I am part of something profound outside my personal self. This sense of connection and community compels Chicana/o writers/artists to delve into, sift through, and rework Native imagery" (pp. 53-54). Her emphasis on connection and community is fundamental to her conception of *nos/otras:*

> The *nos* is the subject "we," that is the people who were in power and colonized others. The *otras* is the 'other,' the colonized group. Then there is also the dash, the divide between us. However, what is happening, after years of colonization, is that all the divides disappear a little bit because the colonizer, in his or her interaction with the colonized, takes on a lot of their attributes. And, of course, the person who is colonizing leaks into our stuff. So we are neither one nor the other; we are really both. There is not a

> pure other, there is not a pure subject and not a pure object. We are implicated in each other's lives (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 282).

Similar to the fluid ideological positions of the "white listening subject" (Flores & Rosa, 2015) or racists and antiracists (Kendi, 2019), *nos/otras* seems paradoxical: one can simultaneously be us/others, colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed. When given the choice between the theoretical and methodological perspectives of *nos* or *otras,* especially given the purposes of this study, I choose the latter. Thus, I adopt Anzaldúa's *nos/otras* framing in my methodological approach to conduct a form of critical autoethnography that considers who I am at the slash—where I attempt to see "from both shores at once" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 100). In Freirean (1991) terms, I intend to follow the lead of those whose own critical consciousnesses and pursuit of liberation could illuminate my own journey of *conocimiento*.

In conceptualizing what I mean by *nos/otras* autoethnography, I stay close to Anzaldúa's methodological approach to research and writing, which has been conceptualized as a method in its own right as *testimonio.* Directly translated as "testimony" from Spanish, *testimonio* refers to a narrative of marginalization. Further theorized within Chicana/Latina feminist traditions, *testimonios* can be described as a social justice methodology that explores one's life experiences with respect to political, social, historical, and cultural histories, bridging together individual's life stories with collective histories of oppression (Blackmer Reyes & Curry, 2012). As a form of counter-narrative, *testimonios* bear witness to one's individual experiences of marginalization as a way to raise consciousness and elicit social change, serving as "a discourse of solidarity" (Blackmer Reyes & Curry, 2012, p. 526) and providing a sense of validation and community among others who share in these experiences (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012). While I gesture to *testimonio* in how I conceptualize *nos/otras* autoethnography, what I

am intending to do here does not align with the purpose of *testimonio* as a methodological approach—nor can it, given my positionality.

What I do learn from *testimonio*, however, is how to recognize the body as "the ground of thought" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 5). According to Anzaldúa, "Writing is not about being in your head; it's about being in your body. The body responds physically, emotionally, and intellectually to external and internal stimuli, and writing records, orders, and theorizes about these responses" (p. 5). Therefore, in conceptualizing *nos/otras* autoethnography, I make central what I learn from the body—from physiological reactions in moments of conflict and collision, from the emotions that emerge in moments of questioning and fracturing, and from the sense of connection and community that result in transformation. Thus, as I discuss in the next section, recognizing these moments is central to my process of analysis.

Finally, I conceive of *nos/otras* autoethnography as an endeavor where I face my shadows as an LT and LTE, so to speak. As Anzaldúa (2015) explains, "Tu camino de conocimiento requires that you encounter your shadow side and confront what you've programmed yourself (and have been programmed by your cultures) to avoid (desconocer), to confront the traits and habits distorting how you see reality and inhibiting the full use of your facultades" (p. 118). It is at the dash, within the liminal space of *nepantla*, that it is possible for me to encounter my shadow self (*desconocimientos)* and embark on a journey of *conocimiento:*

> La rajadura gives us a third point of view, a perspective from the cracks and a way to reconfigure ourselves as subjects outside binary oppositions, outside existing dominant relations. By disrupting binary oppositions that reinforce relations of subordination and dominance, nos/otras suggests a position of being simultaneously insider/outsider, internal/external exile. (p. 79).

In connection with Anzaldúa's assertion that "the body is the ground of thought," my emotional reactions help me recognize my shadow self and *les rajaduras* in my *(des)conocimiento*, laying bear what taken-for-granted assumptions have, until now, circulated below the surface of my consciousness. Therefore, throughout my analysis, I identify points of emotional tension, which point to fractures in my *(des)conocimiento* through which I can begin to see myself, my interactions, and the ideologies that circulate within from "both shores at once" (p. 100), from both *nos* and *otras*. At the same time, as Anzaldúa points out, there is a danger in writing about oneself of "falling into self-indulgence, sentimentality, or grandstanding" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 103). Thus, while I focus my analysis on myself and the embodied resources that emerge throughout my personal reckoning and reimaging, I also stay close to the purposes and theoretical frameworks informing this study. I have also enlisted a dozen critical friends inclusive of my colleagues in TTT who have read my findings and pointed out when I have been myopic in my analysis and writing.

Data Generation and Analysis

When selecting data to include in this study, I began by collecting artifacts that reflect my language history as well as my development as an LT and LTE. (See Table 2 for an overview of the timeline and data for each chapter.)

Table 2.
Data Generation

Chapter	Timeline	Data
Chapter 5: An Ideological Starting Point	1985-2016: Includes references to childhood, K-12 schooling, my pre-service and in-service experiences as an LT, and the start of my PhD program in Curriculum, Instruction and Teacher Education (CITE)	● Personal artifacts (i.e., photos, school assignments, blog posts) ● Recalled memories
Chapter 6: Ideological Reckoning	2016-2019: Includes brief references to my early experiences in CITE; zooms in on my experiences as a part of a collaborative inquiry group called Transnetworking for TESOL Teachers (TTT)	● Personal artifacts (i.e., blog posts) ● Transcribed video recordings, field notes, and my research memos from TTT meetings
Chapter 7: Bodymindsoul Transformation	2018-Present: Includes brief references to my interactions with TTT and zooms in on my personal experiences within and beyond the group, including two months in France	● Personal artifacts (i.e., blog posts) ● Transcribed video recordings, field notes, and my research memos from TTT meetings

In Chapter 5, I trace my "ideological starting place," narrating my language and educational history from childhood through my undergraduate teacher preparation program; I also provide a brief account of my eight years as an LT and my first two years as an LTE (1985-2018). Much of the data that informs this part of my autoethnography is based on memories and written artifacts (e.g., course papers, formal teaching statements, and the personal blog I have maintained from 2008 to the present). With respect to the memories I wrote about in Chapter 5, I dug through old file folders, both physical and digital, and skimmed my personal blog; I then

drafted a timeline of moments from childhood onward. Finally, I composed a narrative account of the selected moments, piecing them together chronologically, which I then reread and revised to identify the presence of language ideologies throughout my experiences.

In Chapter 6, I focus on my interactions with members of TTT, or Transnetworking for TESOL Teachers, the collaborative inquiry group of which I have been a part since 2018. Given that I had started to conceptualize this present study just as TTT was forming, I was strategic about maintaining records from our interactions. This was aided by the fact that, as a group, TTT had also decided to generate data from our meetings as a part of our collective self-study (see Ponzio et al., forthcoming). Hence, we took notes and recorded our meetings, which we later transcribed; we also created a Google Drive folder shared only amongst our group where we stored our individual artifacts and memos from our meetings. I consulted with the group before revisiting these data for this study. Therefore, data for this chapter include the transcribed video recordings from our meetings between September 2018-April 2019 as well as written artifacts I composed during that time. I analyze the ideological reckoning our group experienced collectively and I experienced personally as a result of our interactions in this *nepantla* contact zone.

For purposes of analysis, I began by rereading the transcripts from our TTT meetings, using descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2016) to refamiliarize myself with the interactions and identify interactions that seemed particularly salient with regard to my ideological reckoning. I then recoded those moments using an approach I designed based on Anzaldúa's (2015) conception of *nepantla* (see Table 3) to identify moments of collision and conflict, questioning and fracturing, and transformation and reconstruction. This allowed me to narrow the data to the most relevant moments. Next, I employed emotion coding (Saldaña, 2016) to identify the

affective dimensions in these moments; in some cases, the emotion was stated explicitly in the data, while in other instances, I made inferences based on the data and my recollection of the moment. In the last round of coding, I drew more explicitly on the language ideologies outlined in the theoretical framework and coded instances where these were apparent. Following these cycles of coding, I reorganized the moments that I analyzed according to the categories in Table 3 and grouped together instances with associated language ideologies in order to compose a more cohesive narrative.

In Chapter 7, I drew upon data and data analysis from previous chapters and employed additional analyses to narrate my personal transformation, or *conocimiento*. Data for this chapter overlaps with my interactions with TTT and includes excerpts from my blog, including my two-month journey to France. Therefore, some data in Chapter 7 come from transcribed recordings from TTT meetings; I reviewed the written artifacts I composed during my engagement in TTT (November 2018-June 2019) and pulled related excerpts. As for my journey to France, it was both intentionally planned as potential opportunities to further propel my process of *conocimiento*; in fact, while I was just beginning to conceptualize the theoretical framework for this study at the time, my experiences with TTT made me wonder how I might create new contact zone interactions for myself. As a result, I also entered this experience with the intention of generating data for this study. During my time in France, this took the form of continued reflective writing and photographs, which I shared on Instagram and my personal blog. As with Chapter 6, I composed a narrative account of the selected moments for Chapters 7, piecing them together chronologically, which I then reread and revised to identify the presence of language ideologies throughout my transformation.

Table 3.
Coding for Nepantla

nepantla contact zones: theoretical spaces that foster...		
consciousness-raising		praxis/action
...by colliding and conflicting	...through questioning and fracturing	...resulting in transformation/ reconstruction
• different perspectives come into conflict • collision of cultures and identities, dispositions and meaning-making practices	• you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures • fracturing our taken-for-granted assumptions	• the site of transformation • become open to making sense of competing cultures and belief systems

CHAPTER 5: AN IDEOLOGICAL STARTING PLACE

"I believe that it is through narrative that you come to understand and know your self and make sense of the world. Through narrative you formulate your identities by unconsciously locating yourself in social narratives not of your own making" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 5).

Interlude #1: August 10, 1985

I am born on the outskirts
of Detroit,
in a hospital built on the
p e r i m e t e r
of urban
s
p
r
a
w
l
marking the divide between
the wilting urban epicenter of Michigan and
the blossoming suburbs.

I am born the fourth generation in a family of immigrants,
drawn by Henry Ford's promises
of white picket fences,
drawn from their native Italy
and Hungary
and Germany.

I am born at 1:05 p.m., splitting
a hot summer day in ha
lf for my mother,
who spends the morning laboring and
the afternoon welcoming me into the world.
I am born to a Brady Bunch family,
a father and mother who
have already fathered and mothered
half sisters and brothers with
other fathers and mothers.

I am born on the border
of both families,
our parents marrying eight months earlier
(you understand, don't you?),
expecting my older brothers and sister to

play house together
even though they were
strangers.

Twenty months later, my younger brother arrives, making me the forever
middle
child

***

Language Origins (1985-2003)

I was born in Detroit in the 1980s to white[4], English-dominant, native-born U.S. citizens. Consistent with the mass exodus of white Michiganders from the city in the 1970s and 1980s in response to desegregation, my family resided in the suburbs of Southeast Michigan.[5] Hence, my primary language from childhood onward has been a Midwest variation of White Mainstream English (Baker-Bell, 2019). However, from an early age, I became aware of language varieties and U.S. regional connections to English dialects. Due to an unusual set of circumstances between 1989-1992, my family and I were "snowbirds," a term that usually refers to retirees who travel south during the winter and return north during the warmer months. For those three years, my family left Southeast Michigan each fall, traveling south through Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and most of Florida until we reached West Palm Beach Gardens. The following spring, we followed the same route back to Michigan. We always drove, which meant we made multiple stops along the way, where my mom would point out the change from "pop" to "soda," and my

[4] As I will explain below, my father's family is Italian and immigrated to the U.S. at the turn of the 20th century at a time when they may have been racialized other than white (Salyer & Richards, 2004); today, I have only been positioned as white (as far as I know), but both my father and younger brother are, as Samy Alim (2016) describes himself "ambiguously brown" (p. 34), and have been asked what their race is.

[5] When probed about her parents decision to move outside Detroit, my mother referenced the violent response to the Detroit-based Civil Rights efforts, or the Detroit Rebellion of 1967 (she, like many Michiganders, calls them "riots") and the subsequent decline of the city and schools. My father and his parents resided in the eastside Italian neighborhood of Detroit called "Cacalupo," or "car loop" (so called because the neighborhood included the streetcar turnaround at Gratiot and Harper Avenues; Delicato, 2005) until after he became an adult. Neither parent recognizes the structural and economic decline of Detroit as a result of the racist policies and practices reflected in the brutal response of the city's police, the segregation of housing and schools, and rising black unemployment rates (Darden & Thomas, 2013; Kendi, 2016).

dad would mimic the shifting cadence of gas station attendants and waitresses' speech that we encountered along the way.

As third-generation immigrants[6], neither of my parents speak their predecessors' languages, though they express deep pride in their national origins. I recall learning a smattering of Italian words from my father's side of the family. I was taught to say *che fai* with my hand cupped, fingers pressed together, to ask, "What are you doing?" My younger brother and I would exchange the phrase *meno fottere*, emphasized with the "fuck you" hand gesture of sliding the top of your hand from under your chin outward, to (strongly) convey, "I don't care!" My Sicilian grandfather and Calabrian grandmother had quite a few words for which they disagreed about the pronunciation, and so today, I struggle to figure out the spelling of Italian words I recall hearing as a child. In the few memories I have of my Calabrian great-grandmother, Serafina, she is reaching out to hold my chin in her small, gnarled hand and speaking to me in Italian. I was both drawn to and afraid of her in these moments, unable to understand what she said.

My mother is a self-proclaimed "mutt," who traces her family's roots back to "Hungary, France, Germany, and Italy." While she was unable to pass along her linguistic heritage to me or my siblings, she does remember her maternal grandmother, Anna, being a multilingual speaker who knew something like seven[7] languages. Despite my parents' monolingualism, what I did take away from my parents' pride in their families language backgrounds and national origins was a question: How did different countries acquire different words?

When I was 7 or 8 years old, I imagined there was once a great language auction, where representatives were sent to bid on words for their countries. I assume this childhood conception

[6] I learned in the course of writing this dissertation that my great-grandfather on my mother's side was himself the third generation in his family to reside in Detroit, Michigan, contrary to the narrative I believed until recently.
[7] I grew up thinking she spoke seven languages, but recently learned that Anna spoke nine languages: German, Croatian, Serbian, Hungarian, Slovakian French, and English.

of linguistic diversity was inspired by the Old Testament Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, which begins with all of humanity sharing a common speech and ends with the Judeo-Christian God sabotaging humanity's effort to collaboratively build a tower to reach the sky by making it so all people no longer spoke the same language. As a child, I imagined it was then that people began forming different countries and associated language practices. Today, I realize that my childhood sense-making of language was implicitly bound to nation-state boundaries, consistent with the *Herderian Triad* (the ideological association between one nation, one language, one people; Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Blommaert & Verschueren, 1992), due in part to my parents' narratives of their families' language backgrounds.

Living somewhat of a migratory life during my first years of schooling exposed me to greater linguistic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity than if I only lived in Michigan as a child. In fact, during my time in Florida, West Palm Beach Gardens' school system was undergoing a process of forced desegregation. Unlike the schools I attended in Michigan, my classmates in Florida reflected greater racial and economic diversity. In Michigan, 99.9% of my schoolmates identified as white and one out of every 20 qualified for free and reduced lunch; in Florida, nearly 25% of my schoolmates were racially minoritized and 1 out of every 3 qualified for free and reduced lunch. Hence, during my first years of schooling, my closest friends identified as Black or Brown, some whose home language practices were distinct from my own (National Center for Educational Statistics). While my stint in Florida's educational system was only for three years (with the remainder spent in Michigan), it was the foundation for my formal schooling. Some of my earliest and most vivid memories of being in school are tinged with a child's recognition of the disparities in how children are differently positioned in U.S.

classrooms based on their racialized identities; at the time, though, I simply wondered why my teachers were meaner to some students than others.

Figure 1: Class photo

This is a class photo from my 1st grade class at Palm Beach Gardens Elementary School in Florida; I am the fourth student in the bottom row.

My early fascination with language continued into my adolescence, where I learned to impress others by using “big words” and being well spoken according to White Mainstream English practices. At school, I was known by my friends as a *walking dictionary* and by my teachers as a *bookworm*, titles that I wore proudly. I took great pride in the praise I received when I recited a Robert Frost poem at an academic competition and read a Biblical passage at my grandfather’s funeral, careful to enunciate the fancy language I saw on the pages of Eurocentric texts privileged in my communities. That said, I also remember playing with language as a teenager, experimenting with cuss words and slang to represent myself as less of a *goody-two-shoes*—another label I was often given by my friends. I used the English language to construct particular identities, recognizing that my words were a source of power and agency.

My diary entries from those years included goals like "visit all seven continents" and "learn seven languages" (perhaps echoing my mother's stories of her grandmother, Anna). However, it wasn't until high school that I had the opportunity to learn another language in a formal context. Given the option to study French or Spanish in high school, I chose French since it connected with my mother's familial roots. While I recall learning French in somewhat of a conversational manner, much of it was through the drill-and-practice sort of rote learning common in the late 90's and early 2000's. At the start of college, I briefly studied Latin, but by the end of my first year, I reverted back to studying French. When my parents declared bankruptcy for our family's trade business during my first year of college, I became solely responsible for funding my college education. Like many of the decisions that I made as a first-generation college student[8], my decision to continue with French was a practical matter: since I was able to begin with a more advanced course, I could complete my university foreign language requirement with less courses, allowing me to graduate and begin my career as quickly as possible. Financial limitations also precluded me being able to study abroad in a French-dominant context, an opportunity that I saw as being necessary to move toward being bilingual. As a result, I considered myself to be a monolingual English speaker, even after formally studying French for five years.

Becoming a Language Teacher (August 2003-May 2008)

By the end of my first year of my undergraduate studies, I decided to become an English language arts (ELA) teacher; around the same time, I began advertising my services as a private English instructor on the campus Website in an effort to supplement my meager income from a

[8] Given that I was the first in my family to attend college, my parents were unfamiliar with the process. It was through observing my best friend from high school, Jen, that I learned when I needed to take college entrance exams, to seek federal financial aid, and to apply to college; unable to afford multiple application fees, I only applied to one school and was fortunate to be admitted.

part-time job on campus and whatever was left over from my student loans after my classes were paid. I was soon recruited as a conversation partner for two Chinese graduate students and a TOEFL tutor for a young woman who previously taught in Taiwan. Seeing how quickly I took a liking to being a tutor for international students, my then-roommate, Guangye[9], suggested I consider teaching English as a second language (ESL). Unlike Guangye, whose parents had immigrated to the U.S. from China and South Korea and learned English later in life, I was unfamiliar with the term "ESL" and the fact that it was a discipline in which I could become certified to teach, especially since I was not fluent in another language. That said, choosing to pursue an ESL teaching certificate as a part of my secondary English language arts teacher preparation program seemed like a promising possibility to ensure my future job viability as a K-12 teacher in the U.S., especially given my success with the international students I tutored. And, in truth, given that I graduated from college as the U.S. was entering the Great Recession, becoming certified to teach ESL was one reason I was able to find a job in Michigan during a time when teaching positions were far and few between.[10]

Whispers of Critical Consciousness as a Pre-service Teacher

While my motivation to pursue teaching ESL was based, in part, on future job security, at the time, I would have claimed an alternate motive, explaining that I had come to recognize language could be "used as a gatekeeper to let certain individuals in while leaving others out" and had "embraced teaching as an opportunity to inspire and empower others" as an ESL

[9] Pseudonyms have been used for the names of all participants besides myself and my immediate family, for whom our identities are readily apparent.

[10] In Michigan as well as in other parts of the U.S., becoming an English language arts (ELA) teacher is distinct from becoming an English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual teacher. In contrast to ESL and bilingual education, which is designated for students' who qualify for Language Assistance Programs to support their developing capacity to *use* the English language, ELA, as a discipline, focuses on the study of the English language and the development of literacy skills. While there is overlap in the two areas, Michigan's educational systems treat the two disciplines as distinct. (See Motha, 2014 for further consideration of how and why ESL is treated as a separate discipline.)

teacher. Taken from my professional teaching statement in 2008, these quotes reflected the first whispers of critical consciousness—where I was becoming aware of the social construction of language and literacy practices, how people were positioned as having more or less power based on these constructions, and how they were situated with respect to broader ideologies. That said, this early belief that I could "empower others" through English language and literacy education could also be seen in a Freirean (1999) sense as "false generosity" in association with *native speaker saviorism* (Jenks & Lee, 2019). What I could not yet understand were the underlying deficit-based perspectives of language and literacy practices outside White Mainstream English that were implicit in my belief that school-based English language and literacy were necessary for students' empowerment.

In my first year of college, I first became explicitly aware that race is socially constructed through Omi and Winant's (1994/2004) theorization of racial formation, Wilson's (1859) *Our Nig: Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*, and Johnson's (1912) *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. In a paper I wrote during my third year of college, I explained that through these experiences as a beginning college student, I "began to tear apart my perception of the Other—of individuals from other races, ethnicities, or cultures as being extremely different from me." These ideas proved to be foundational when I began my teacher preparation courses later in college, specifically in the context of the English literacy courses I took. In contrast to the classes I took for my ESL certification, which focused on the study of linguistics and second language acquisition, the classes I took for my ELA certification emphasized more sociocultural and critical perspectives of literacy.

The distinct foci of both areas of study proved to be fundamental to the emerging critical lens through which I was learning to see language and literacy education. In the same

aforementioned course paper, I discussed Purcell-Gates's (2002) challenge to teachers to recognize non-standard language dialects as "difference instead of deficit" as well as other arguments that teachers could teach students to recognize the "the hegemonic power structure" underlying language and literacy as well as "to value the discourses of traditionally marginalized groups" (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2002, p. 378). Confronted by these critical understandings of literacy, I saw it as my "duty" as a future teacher to question "very ugly and inaccurate beliefs that have developed over the past two decades of my literacy education," namely the misconception that my own literacy learning experiences were "the norm" and that mainstream literacy practices were "superior to those who engage in other, invalid literacy practices." As a pre-service teacher, I understood that rejecting these assumptions and acknowledging my privileged position as a White Mainstream English-dominant speaker was fundamental to being able to unpack, with my students, the "continual onslaught of dominant ideologies that have the potential of skewing our perception of ourselves, literacy and the world." However, I had little idea of what that looked like in practice.

Interlude #2: Language Barriers (July 2009)

A recent Tweet: "Thinking about language barriers. Not the kind that prevent people from communicating but other obstacles faced by immigrants because they aren't fluent in the language or culture of power."

***

Monica[11] was a graduate student hopeful who had just arrived to the United States four months earlier. She needed to pass the TOEFL test in order to be admitted to a highly-

[11] Monica as well as Stewart, Julie, Brad, and Kelsey (introduced in the next excerpt) were all from Taiwan, but adopted names commonly used in the U.S.; this common practice among Asian immigrants in the U.S. can be

competitive graduate program in education, and she wanted me to help her learn English. I began meeting with her twice a week, helping her work through the TOEFL manuals and CDs she had purchased as well as the course material for her English as a second language classes. Being only several years my elder, we quickly became friends, and often our conversations would focus less on the academic content, and more on our spouses, families, and friends. By the end of that school year, I was confident that Monica would successfully pass the TOEFL.

When summer arrived, we decided to take a break from tutoring, and that break was extended when Monica not only passed the TOEFL, but was accepted to the graduate program. Both of us were consumed with our studies, and so meeting regularly was impossible.

Late that following January, I got a call from Monica, who wondered if I could meet with her for coffee. She needed to interview someone for a class project and had thought of me. During our meeting, she shared some of her recent academic writing with me, and I was very surprised to note the insight and intellect apparent in her writing. Certainly, this mental aptitude was not a new characteristic she acquired. I realized that somehow, because of her developing English, I had developed a perception of her as being less intelligent. How could she convey what she was really thinking before when she couldn't express it in English—and I couldn't understand it in Chinese? I was so ashamed to recognize this underlying bias, but it was a moment that profoundly shifted my future work as a English language teacher.

***

Back in Taiwan, they were both reporters, but in the United States, Stewart and Julie had taken jobs making sushi at the local Meijer. They had two kids to support afterall. I spent three

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described as "indexical bleaching" (Squires, 2012), technique of deracialization, whereby one's name is stripped "of contextually marked ethnoracial meaning" (Bucholtz, 2016, p. 275) in order to achieve proximity to whiteness and NES status in the U.S. context.

evenings a week at their house, tutoring the two parents and their kids, Brad and Kelsey. I quickly felt welcomed into their home and their family.

Brad and Kelsey were my main priorities; their parents wanted me to help them prepare for the upcoming school year, and so I spent most of my time with them. But once a week, Brad and Kelsey would escape to the basement to their computer games and the TV, and I would work with Stewart and Julie, going over foundational English language skills.

At the end of each session, Julie would serve a terrific feast of traditional Taiwanese food, a true reward for our hard work. Every meal was different, and it was exciting for me to try new food. Julie would smile proudly as I enjoyed her cooking and the kids cheered me on as I became more adept with chopsticks. One evening, after I took my first bite of an unknown protein, Kelsey noticed the quizzical look on my face. "Kelsey, what is this?" I asked, wondering what I was chewing.

She looked up at the ceiling, as though the English word for what she was thinking would appear there. Stumped, she started to wave her hands around her stomach, "It's in the pig's stomach, and it goes like this," tracing her hands in an imaginary curve.

I gulped. "Pig intestines?"

"Yeah!" She exclaimed, excited that I got it. "Do you like it?"

"Um, yeah," I said, taking another tentative bite.

At the next lesson, Julie showed me a letter she received from her insurance company. She needed to call them to address the matter, but did not feel confident in her speaking ability. Together, we wrote out a script to support her telephone conversation and practiced it over and over. It was the first time I really realized how difficult everyday life in a new country could be when you weren't fluent in the language.

After dinner that night, Stewart, Julie, and I remained at the table to talk. I was curious to know about their lives before they came to America and why they had decided to come. Stewart shared about their early years of marriage, knowing that my own wedding was coming up quickly.

"We were reporters before we came here—before Brad and Kelsey. We worked together for the same newspaper. After the kids came, Julie stayed at home, and I continued to work, but she worked sometimes. We decided last year that we wanted our kids to learn English and to go to an American school, so we decide to move here. But now, we can't be reporters. We don't know English well. My brother got us a job making sushi."

***

Jose is a forty-something father of six who immigrated from Mexico almost two decades ago. When he smiles at you, he discreetly keeps his upper lip from revealing a missing front tooth. His work ethic and energy is unmatched by the 18 and 19-year old bussers that he buzzes around, swiftly clearing, wiping, setting up tables, and hefting precariously-packed trays to the dishwasher before the youngsters even make it to the table. His playful attitude is reminiscent of a ten year-old boy, and he frequently makes bets with the servers that he can carry 20 wine glasses in one hand. He can.

Jose and I were hired on the same day. The manager asked me if I would help him navigate the language of the mound of paperwork we needed to fill out. Jose smiled at me gratefully, his upper lip pressed firmly against his gums, as I patiently explained the questions. From that moment, we were fast friends.

Having worked in the restaurant industry for many years, Jose proudly shared his trade secrets. He showed me how to wipe the knives before rolling them with the forks and napkins.

He demonstrated how to clean the table, swishing the rag around to follow the grain of the wood—it's faster and tidier—when he noticed my less-than-perfect efforts. He encouraged me when I stumbled as a new server. At the end of each shift I worked, he would announce my level of proficiency. "Christina, you were 75% today," and then, "Oh you were over 90% today. Almost 100%." These days, he calls me Super Christina, always stating that I am over 100%. He seems proud.

Over the past two years, Jose has become very perceptive about my facial expressions. Most days, I come into work with a smile, enjoying the people that I work with and serve. He frequently asks, "Christina, why are you so nice?" I teasingly tell him I'm just pretending.

Several months after I first started, Jose noticed that my smile wasn't so big, and like a concerned parent, he asked what was wrong. At first I hesitated, but was grateful for the opportunity to unburden myself. I explained to him how stressed I was. I was working two jobs while completing my full-time internship to become a teacher, and I was still not making ends meet. And my then-husband had just left his part-time job. Jose listened patiently, and at the end of my short confession, reminded me that I would be done soon. That I would get a teaching job. That he was sure I was a great teacher.

One night, as I was cleaning my tables, Jose came by to help me move the tables and chat. The recent presidential primaries had taken place, and Jose was excited that Barack Obama had won the Democratic Party nomination.

"I hope he wins," he announced. When I looked at him questioningly, he continued: "Christina, I have a secret to tell you. You can't tell anyone. Not even your husband." He paused, perhaps debating whether to tell me. "I am illegal. You know how I had worked here before. Well, I had to leave in the past because they found out. They told me to come back when I

could—they really liked me. I went to a couple other places and had to leave when I thought they were going to find out. And now I'm back here. But hopefully, if Obama wins, that will mean good things for my people."

I nodded in agreement and promised I wouldn't say a word. I hoped that Jose was right. That Obama would win and that somehow that would mean Jose could gain legal status.

The next week, when I came into work, our manager had a short meeting before our shift started. He made several customary announcements about guest counts and service standards. And he closed by saying, "Take it easy on Jose tonight, gang. He's had some Jose Kryptonite, and isn't feeling so super today."

Jose? Not feeling well? That was unusual. I walked around the restaurant in search of my friend. "What's a matter?" I asked when I found him in the booths.

"Oh nothing."

"Jose?"

"I can't tell you. Maybe I can tell you in a couple of weeks. But it's bad for my family. Knowing I couldn't press him further, and that we both had worked to to do, I didn't pursue the issue. But I was concerned. Later that night, as I was cleaning my tables, Jose came by to bus my last table.

"Jose, I understand if you don't want to talk, but you can if you want to. You know I won't say anything."

He looked at me solemnly, his brown eyes darker than normal. "My mom died." Tears filled the eyes of this strong middle-aged man. "And I can't go to see her. I haven't seen her in ten years. And now I won't ever see her again. I need to go—but if I do, I won't be able to come

back. And my kids..." His voice trailed off. He bent over a table, and his body began to shake. He quietly wept, hiding his face with his hand.

Shifting Practice, Shifting Ideologies (September 2008-June 2016)

While my early experiences reflected a nascent critical consciousness of the assimilationist and White supremacist ideologies underpinning education in the U.S., those ideologies were deeply embedded in the beliefs I brought to my classroom as a beginning ESL teacher. During my first years of teaching, my students, whose parents were mainly from Puerto Rico and Mexico, had grown up and attended school in Michigan their entire lives. Up until my arrival, the school district did not have a bilingual or English language development program; because of increased accountability measures associated with No Child Left Behind, the district was under pressure to improve standardized test scores among their students, who were mainly language-minoritized learners. In my new position, I was tasked with establishing an ESL program, specifically with a focus on the district's adolescent bilingual English and Spanish learners and a handful of others who spoke Hmong and Tagalog.

The little guidance I received from one of my administrators included the suggestion that I review the district's student list for names that looked "foreign" to determine who my students would be. Although I was horrified by this suggestion, I was not sure how to begin. By the end of my first week, I discovered that there were state guidelines for identifying English learners in public schools, and by the end of the first month, had tested students' whose home language surveys listed a language other than English. What this also meant, though, was that many students, who had already completed over half of their K-12 school careers in the U.S., suddenly had a new class foisted on them by a twenty-something white lady telling them they did not

know English—at least not well enough to be in the general education English language arts classes. My students were not shy in their resistance, particularly as we began to develop a relationship. "ESL?" They would ask, "What does that stand for—Every Stupid Latino?"

Even with the emerging critical lens I brought into my first year of teaching, there were many misconceptions I needed to interrogate. In those first months of teaching, I was quickly confronted with a tension, which I described in the teaching journal I kept at the time:

> I want to empower my kids since in many ways, I'm sure they feel disempowered. This means having them play a part in the decision-making process with regard to classroom expectations and consequences. But how does this work with the language barrier? Should I ask them to write this in Spanish if they are not comfortable using English? I'm sure [the bilingual teaching assistant] would help me decipher what they are saying. But at the same time, it's an English as a Second Language class. I don't think I can have an English ONLY policy; it just doesn't seem practical nor does it seem entirely beneficial. I think I'm going to aim high—we will establish the rules collaboratively; currently, I have it planned that students will work in small groups to come up with ideas. They can discuss in English or Spanish, but must share out in English. Good compromise?

In what was my first attempt to build classroom community on my own as a beginning teacher, I imagined a *heteroglossic* approach (though I would not yet know to call it that) to invite all students to co-construct expectations for our learning communities.

Despite these early intentions, I briefly implemented an English-only policy in my classroom to compensate for my weak classroom management practices. Essentially, I was overwhelmed with my students' talkativeness and thought that restricting their use of Spanish in class might make it easier to manage their behavior. In other words, I attempted to enact a

restrictive classroom language policy in order to *control* my students' behavior and protect my status as the English-dominant classroom teacher. I found further reinforcement for this policy in broader language policies, such curricular standards and standardized assessments. When my students asked if they could write in Spanish for a test, I reminded them that the state test would require them to demonstrate their knowledge in English. Unsurprisingly, neither policy went over well with my students, and I quickly backpedaled these restrictive classroom language policies in order to preserve the relationships I was building with them. Thus, whatever critical capacity I had begun to develop during my teacher preparation program was nothing compared to the reckoning that began then and continued over the decade I spent as a classroom ESL teacher—unlearning and relearning that came at a cost to my students.

I learned a great deal in those first years of teaching and started to question whether decisions I made as a teacher were truly in students' best interest—or if they were meant to protect my ego as a beginning teacher. Bumping up against diverse language and cultural practices in my classroom was illuminating in this regard. About halfway through my first year of teaching, one of my students from Puerto Rico, Ishmael, asked me, "Miss, don't you know that Puerto Ricans like to talk a lot?" As a result, I started to ask myself whether my attempts to restrict their interactions in class were actually contradicting their cultural practices. I connected this with my own family's cultural practices, recalling the contrast between gatherings with my paternal grandfather's Sicilian family, which were filled with loud voices and active hand gestures, and gatherings with my maternal grandmother's German and Hungarian family, which were much quieter and smaller affairs. I also began to consider how my own upbringing may have shaped what I expected from my students. For instance, I started to explicate to students that when I was growing up, my father insisted I look him in the eye when he was talking, a sign

of respect that he connected to his Italian background. While I often encouraged my students to look at me when I was talking, seeming to think there to be a connection between their aural comprehension of English and their ability to process what my facial expressions were saying, I also relaxed this request, recognizing that some students might not be comfortable with making eye contact based on their own cultural backgrounds.

The longer I taught and the more I loosened up, though, the more I realized that my classroom practices—and the state standards and assessments to which I was held accountable—contradicted how my students naturally made meaning and communicated. Essentially, our classes became rich contact zone interactions, where I began to develop the cooperative disposition of a translingual speaker (Canagarajah, 2013); over time, I became more open to collaboratively negotiating across difference, adapting communication to include shared ecological resources, and centering students' agency in choosing what resources they used to make meaning and communicate. During classroom discussions, students fluidly moved between English and Spanish, incorporating gestures, using Google Translate, and looking up images to support their conversations, practices that I also began to take up. I encouraged them to capture their ideas in writing using whatever resources were most readily available, whether that meant moving between languages or including pictures and gestures; however, my aim was always to expand students' English language capacities and school-based literacy practices, reflecting the continued privileging of White Mainstream English (Baker-Bell, 2019). Using Title III federal funding, I built an extensive library of multicultural and bilingual texts and accrued enough laptops for each student to use during class, recognizing the need for more resources to negotiate and co-construct meaning—particularly resources that reflected students' backgrounds and interests. Over time, my own meaning-making repertoire expanded. During my first teaching

position, I came to understand quite a bit of Spanish (and occasionally could use it in speaking and writing); my second position was in an even more multilingual context, with over 40 languages represented in the district. Thus, over the eight years I was in the classroom, I picked up a smattering of words in other languages from my students, like *como ce dice* (how do you say), *je ne sais pas* (I don't know), or شكرا لك , or shukran (thank you). As I focused more on shared meaning-making and communication and less on adhering to restrictive classroom language policies, the boundaries I perceived between languages began to dissolve. A decade later, when I returned to school to begin my doctoral studies, I would come to understand this as *translanguaging.*

Introduction to Translanguaging: A Revolutionary Perspective of Language (August 2016)

I was formally introduced to the concept of *translanguaging* in the context of the first course I taught as a beginning doctoral student and teacher educator. The class happened to be the same ESL practicum course I had taken as pre-service teacher over a decade before and was newly under the supervision of faculty member, Dr. Sandro Barros, who had chosen García and Li's (2014) *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education* as the central text for the course. I recall going for a walk with my partner, who is also an ESL teacher, after devouring the book; I shared with him my beginning understanding of translanguaging. Together, we wondered whether or not we, as self-defined monolingual English speakers, could engage in translanguaging and whether we already enacted translanguaging in our teaching. These questions would stay with me in the years to come, but were particularly on my mind as I prepared to teach the class.

As both theory and pedagogy, translanguaging captured my imagination as a language educator and would become the central focus of my own scholarship. Following that meeting, I

reflected on my initial understanding of translanguaging in my teaching journal, describing the various meaning-making resources that "live" within each individual's language system, or repertoires (García & Li, 2014). I explained that each individual's meaning-making practices include linguistic means, visuals, body language, music, or "any of the other things around us that we used to make sense of the world." I also recognized that "it no longer makes sense to teach language in the way that we've been doing it, where we give power to one supposedly superior form of English over another" rather than acknowledging that "each of my individual students as having his or her own language system." In other words, I acknowledged that language is not a unified, static system solely composed of linguistic resources, but is particular to each individual speaker, who fluidly integrates multiple resources to make meaning. I began to connect translanguaging to the sociocultural and critical perspectives of literacy that I had begun to adopt when I was an undergraduate in my own teacher preparation program, but had not yet extended to how I thought about teaching ESL:

> This makes language learning a social justice issue (and maybe even a human rights concern)...Sandro talked about Paulo Freire and his belief that love is the great thing governing us all—regardless of what system or belief system is above all of that…So ultimately language is a vehicle for creating meaning within and between humans, meaning that we might then call love.

These early musings about translanguaging seemed revolutionary to me at the time, and indeed, for many beginning and experienced ESL teachers, translanguaging *is* revolutionary. Unlike the more cognitive and sociocultural theories of language development that I had been introduced to in my teacher preparation program, translanguaging offered a more critical perspective.

Interlude #3: Why Not...Your Own? (May 31, 2017)

After a three-hour drive to northern Michigan, I pulled into the driveway to my dad's house, I felt a bit of nervousness—an awareness that despite our weekly phone conversations, I felt further away from him than I had in years. Over the past 9 months, I had gestated new ways of thinking and being as a first-year PhD student, and they made me disconnected from my father.

He helped me carry my bags in and after I settled into the guest room, he was excited to show me the projects he's been working on. First was the new boat he had outfitted for fishing, having cut out the original metal seat and welded in a rotating chair and a winch-and-pulley system to make anchoring easier on his 60-something body. He showed me where he takes the boat in and out of the water, explaining that he is waiting to put in a dock until he better understands how the water flow would affect the shoreline. When he gave me a tour of his new camper, he remembered that he accidently snapped off the latch to hold the exterior door open when he was mowing earlier; using his screw gun, he pried off the base from the outside of the camper, describing to me how he would drill in a new hole and reset the hinge to make the latch work again. Then I helped haul wood off into his truck, watching him use different pieces to counterbalance lumber that was double the length of his truck.

While we worked, I shared with him my plans for the summer, including working with the Refugee Development Center. "They're all legal, eh?" he asked, and I gave him a short explanation about the process the refugees go through to come to the U.S. "What if you found out one of them wasn't legal? What if you found out the father of one of your students, like Radi, was a terrorist?" I cringed twice over: once for the mispronunciation of Ravi, my former student's name, and again at the question. Over the phone, these would have been questions that

made me angry at my father, but in person, while we worked, I was able to read him better. As we talked, I explained that I am an educator, not a law enforcement agent. There are myriad factors that I consider, one of which is my own moral code and responsibility to the children in front of me. There was so much more I wanted to say, but I left it at that, knowing it was a topic we'd revisit.

Three hours later, when I decided to settle in at the kitchen table to start in on my reading and writing for the day, my dad sat next to me, wanting to hear more about my work. "Why refugees? Why not...your own?" It was a loaded question—and one that I had not yet really articulated an answer. I started with the simplest answer: it was an opportunity that arose this winter that fit with some of my goals as a graduate student. But certainly it's more than that—and so I decided to start at the beginning, where I always start: my brother.

I explained to my dad that since my childhood, I found myself troubled by the fact that some youth are validated through schooling (like me) while others are devalued (like my brother). Five decades ago, this included my father who, as a child of Italian immigrants from the lower class, was unfamiliar with the "school's codes and customs of the rules of the culture of those who have power" (del Carmen Salazar, 2013, p. 135). I pointed to my father's own language and literacies, the fact that he is a jack-of-all-trades, but that his literacies are not "held up" in the same way as my own school-sanctioned practices. I talked about my younger brother, and how the subtle messages he received from his teachers throughout schooling made him believe his ways of being, of reading, of thinking were less valid than others. Though I chose to conform to practices in order to "do school," my brother engaged in the defiant practices and boundary maintaining mechanisms that del Carmen (2013) describes as a form of resistance to the shaming he experienced in the classroom. And then I explained that this along with my

experiences in stumbling into TESOL education as an undergraduate were just the beginning of my "journey for humanization...toward critical consciousness" and envisioning my responsibility as a "humanizing pedagogical agent" in education (del Carmen Salazar, 2013, p. 131). Today, I see my work among refugee and linguistically-diverse youth as being the small sliver I am responsible for within the much-larger challenge that we are contending with in education—to humanize schooling for all students on a global scale. A question I posed to him is the same I ask myself: At what point do we envision “our own” on a global scale?

Keeping my father and brother in the back of mind is a constant reminder that the youth I work with have ambitions and experiences and perspectives of the world that cannot be encapsulated within the narrow view I possess of the world as a monolingual, white female. The inevitable binaries to which I subconsciously subscribe fail to capture the creativity and criticality, resilience and ingenuity, and fluidity and supercomplexity of their identities. And so instead, I turn to an old adage my dad shared with me when I was young: "Listen two times as much as you speak." And in this way, I can envision the connecting tendrils between us, all together, "our own."

Why refugees? For you, Dad.

CHAPTER 6: IDEOLOGICAL RECKONING

"Nepantla is the site of transformation, the place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 127).

Finding Community: Collaborative Exploration of Translanguaging (2016-2018)

While translanguaging became a central area of focus for me in my first year of my graduate studies, I was somewhat on my own as I figured out how to teach and write about a theory that I was just coming to understand myself. Most of my first year was spent learning to navigate graduate school and becoming familiar with the general landscape of research, although I would dig into research articles with "translanguaging" in the title when I had the time. During my second year, Sandro transitioned out of his role as lead faculty for the ESL practicum course and my fellow co-instructors moved on to other teaching positions; as a result, I was suddenly the resident "expert" for the course. Partnering with another experienced graduate student who was going to teach the class for the first time, we decided to re-tool the curriculum based on García, Ibarra Johnson, and Seltzer's (2017) practitioner-friendly text, *The translanguaging classroom: Leveraging student bilingualism for learning*, which I had discovered while wandering the exhibit hall at the American Education Research Association (AERA) annual conference for the first time. Reading and teaching this book gave me new language to think not just about the moves enacted in practice by teachers, but also the ideological shift that translanguaging required, a shift the authors call a "translanguaging stance." Later that year, I read Canagarajah's (2013) *Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. His theorization around "translingual disposition" gave me another framework to consider teachers' "orientation towards language diversity and difference from a non-deficit perspective"

that is “socially acquired through individuals’ embodied practices and experiences, thus being not only cognitive but also affective” (Lee & Canagarajah, 2019, pp. 353-354).

Around the same time, I embarked on my first co-writing endeavor with Dr. Matt Deroo (then a graduate student), where we examined data from our respective courses to figure out what made it easier or more challenging for teachers (who were mainly white, English-dominant speakers) to take up translanguaging. Unsurprisingly, our analysis led us to also question what ideological forces influence teachers’ beliefs about language and therefore what pedagogical practices they adopt. (See Deroo & Ponzio, 2019, 2021; Deroo, Ponzio & De Costa, 2020). As I continued to teach the ESL practicum course across nine semesters and began my own research, I found myself coming back to the inquiry Matt and I took up, which also led me to consider other questions: *Can white, monolingual English-speaking teachers ever really understand the fluid meaning-making capacities of bi- and multilingual students? Can they engage in translanguaging, even with minimal development in other languages? If so, can they engage in translanguaging without Whitewashing or appropriating translanguaging, and potentially undermining its critical aims? And how do new and practicing teachers come to reject assimilationist ideologies that are counterintuitive to both the practical application and sociopolitical implications of translanguaging?* (See also Barros, Domke, Symons, & Ponzio, 2020; Ponzio, 2020.)

The questions I was asking in my teaching and scholarship led me to turn the lens inward to consider how I, as a white, mostly monolingual English-speaking teacher, might critically interrogate assimilationist ideologies and engage in translanguaging pedagogy. Around the same time, I was fortunate to connect with other scholars who were asking similar questions. At AERA 2018, I found myself presenting at the same session as Drs. Elizabeth Robinson and

Zhongfeng Tian; though I had connected with Zhongfeng before, meeting together at this session led the three of us to talk about the similarities in our work and the challenges we faced. We also identified a shared commitment to social justice within English language education. We wanted to talk further and decided in May 2018 to begin a shared inquiry into translanguaging.

In September 2018, Elizabeth and Zhongfeng invited two others to join: Elie Crief, an undergraduate in Elizabeth's class and also her research assistant, and Maíra Lins Prado, who had recently moved to the Boston area and was interested in enrolling in Elizabeth's class. Similarly, I invited Drs. Abraham Ceballos-Zapata and Laura Kennedy. I first met Abe in August 2016 when we were assigned to be co-instructors for the TESOL practicum course; two years later, I taught the same course with Laura. Together, the seven of us began meeting twice a month using Zoom and a shared Google Drive folder to explore translanguaging, an inquiry that led to further investigation into our individual backgrounds and contexts, language repertoires, and translanguaging practices. We recorded our meetings from the start, some of which we would later transcribe for purposes of data analysis.

In the next section, I zoom in on the interactions amongst the members of TTT as a *nepantla* contact zone (Anzaldúa, 2015) and a fundamental facet of my ideological reckoning as an LTE. In drawing from Anzaldúa's conception of *nepantla,* I highlight (1) the collisions among our group members' respective cultures, identities, dispositions, and meaning-making practices, and (2) how those collisions fractured basic ideas, tenets and identities I inherited from my background with specific attention to broader language ideologies.

I first describe the genesis of our group, providing a brief overview of each member's background. After, I explore how our colliding perspectives fractured many of my taken-for-granted assumptions about language and language education, specifically through the lens of

assimilationist language ideologies. I conclude by describing several facets of our group's collective transformation. In the final section of the findings, I continue to extend Anzaldúa's framework to share how TTT became a site of transformation, where I demonstrated greater openness to others' cultures, belief systems, and meaning-making practices in connection with Pratt (1991) and Canagarajah (2013).

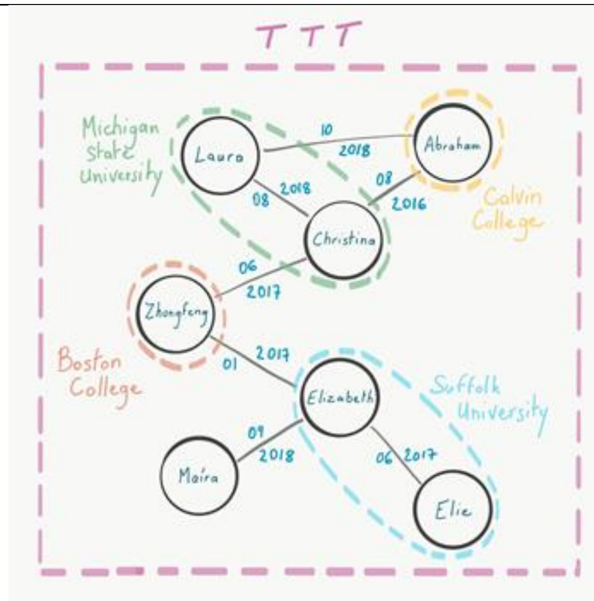
Orchestrated Collision (2018-2019)

When we first began meeting in September 2018, members of TTT resided in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Michigan; since then, members have travelled or moved to other physical spaces: Pennsylvania, France, Germany, Mexico, South Korea, and Costa Rica. Throughout that time, we created a shared online meeting space, which we described in previous work as a "contact zone" (Pratt, 1991; see Ponzio et al., forthcoming); together we co-constructed shared meaning-making practices across our group members' various linguistic resources, cultural backgrounds, and educational experiences. What brought our group together was our shared interest in translanguaging as a language theory and pedagogy. We began our first meeting by discussing the questions we brought to our inquiry: *How do we adopt and enact translanguaging as a language practice? How does one develop the stance or disposition needed to enact translanguaging? How does this vary based on our respective positionalities? And what does this all mean for our teaching?*

Figure 2: TTT Group Photo

Note. This image includes the members of TTT (beginning top left: Maíra, Christina, Laura, Abe, Zhongfeng, Elie, and Elizabeth).

Figure 3: Mapping the Timeline of TTT's Initial Interactions



Note. This image illustrates the when and where each member of TTT began to interact, resulting in the formation of our inquiry group; credit to Elie Crief for creating this image.

For many of us, our interest in translanguaging grew from a desire to create educational spaces where teachers and learners can co-construct knowledge based on *all* the resources they bring. For me, personally, I shared that "[I believe] the purpose of education is not just to, you know, teach someone how to use English, it's, you know, to create opportunities where they can become themselves in fuller ways." Collectively, we acknowledged the practical reality of translanguaging—where individuals *agentively* choose to fluidly integrate multilingual, multimodal, multisemiotic, and multisensory resources to construct knowledge and communicate. However, translanguaging also contradicted many of the experiences we had previously in teaching and/or learning in English as a Second language contexts, where English, as a static language system, was centered rather than learners' evolving dynamic language repertoires. Thus, our group began with some awareness that translanguaging offers what I described as "a paradigmatic shift that can open up the constraints that have long limited how we think about language education and literacy education." The teacher educators in our group also realized, as Abe explicated, that we were not alone in "really trying to figure out what translanguaging really is while we're teaching it," a point that I will return later. This acknowledgement reflected my central motivation for joining the group: "I'm not sure how I can teach people to adopt a pedagogical practice without them also being able to engage in that linguistic practice. And then I don't know how to teach them how to do that if I don't also know how to engage in it as part of my meaning-making practice."

Despite our shared commitments and curiosities, one important dynamic in our group that became apparent in that first meeting was the diverse representation with respect to our national origins and language backgrounds. In fact, the majority of our group members represent language identities and national origins that are *not* English dominant or U.S. born. Having come

from France, Elie, an undergraduate student at the time, explained that the members of his family are French-dominant speakers, though he added that he had learned some Hebrew from his family and that his uncle speaks Arabic. Elie had also studied Spanish and English in school and was attending a U.S. university. Maíra, a prospective graduate student from Brazil, had recently moved to New Hampshire. (Her move to Germany in summer 2019 marked the conclusion of her active involvement in TTT.) Being that her mother was a Portuguese and English language teacher, she was raised in a bilingual home; she eventually became an ESL teacher herself when she was 17 years old. Later, she also studied French and Italian formally and Spanish informally. Then a second-year graduate student, Zhongfeng grew up in China, speaking Mandarin and English. Three years before, he moved to the U.S. for graduate school, and shared the following: "When I first came into the States, I always treated myself as an English language learner, so I'm not very confident saying that I'm a bilingual speaker, because you know English has the dominant power here." Originally from Mexico, Abe grew up speaking Spanish, though his post-secondary academic life has been conducted in English. When TTT convened for our first meeting, he was beginning a new position as an assistant professor, teaching intermediate-level Spanish language classes as well as elementary world language and ESL teacher preparation classes.

The remaining three group members, Elizabeth, Laura, and myself, were born in the U.S. and described ourselves as white, monolingual English speakers, despite our previous language learning experiences. Elizabeth shared, "I would say that I am monolingual, even though I speak, I mean, I speak Spanish, *but* I don't use Spanish in my life very often" (emphasis mine). Similarly, Laura explained, "I do identify as monolingual, *but* I have other languages in my back pocket to a certain [degree]" (emphasis again mine). She went on to explain that she speaks

Korean, having lived and taught in South Korea for six years, learned some Spanish from her mother, who taught it at a local school, and had "dabbled in" Swahili. (Sparked by Laura's response, Elizabeth shared that she also previously taught in South Korea and speaks Korean.) Like both Elizabeth and Laura, I found myself using the same word, "but," to give a similar disclaimer:

> I did study French in high school and college, *but* like a lot of [you] are saying, I've never considered myself fluent in French, and part of that is maybe because I haven't had the opportunity to go to a French-speaking context…[T]hroughout my teaching experience, you know, you pick up words from your students, so I picked up a smattering of Spanish here or a little bit of Arabic there…I definitely see myself as being more monolingual.

While this collision of our respective backgrounds emerged organically, we quickly saw the affordance of purposefully elucidating these differences in our future interactions. Elizabeth, in particular, suggested that the juxtaposition of our positionalities (specifically as self-defined monolingual and multilingual speakers) might support our self-study of translanguaging. As we continued, this meant that we were intentional about naming and, to the extent possible, mitigating power dynamics in our group with respect to broader assimilationist language ideologies.

We also recognized that our collaboration would likely not lead to conclusive answers to the questions we brought to our first meeting. As Laura suggested at the beginning of our first meeting, "So maybe it's ok if our [collaboration]—ends in questions. Here's what I still wrestle with around translanguaging, and here's how I'm coming into—here's what I bring with me into the classroom, and here's where I think I'm going with translanguaging but I'm still not sure. And I think it's ok to say that. It means making yourself vulnerable enough to do that." In

rooting our shared inquiry into translanguaging in a stance of vulnerability, our group began to cultivate a willingness to engage our differing viewpoints and experiences from a place of openness.

Colliding Perspectives, Fracturing Ideologies

In the next section, I highlight a series of interactions that were one part orchestrated and one part organic among our group members as we explored translanguaging, assimilationist language ideologies, and our respective experiences with both. Like stone striking stone, each of these interactions represents a collision—a spark—for consciousness-raising and praxis. Notably, our group members did not experience direct conflict with each other; consistent with our commitment to open vulnerability, our interactions reflected mutual respect of each other's lived experiences. Thus, our experiences layered onto each other within a dialogic process of collective meaning-making. For myself, any conflict I did experience emerged internally in response to the collision of our respective viewpoints and backgrounds; I allude to some of these internal conflicts below, but will attend to them in greater detail in the next chapter.

Nativespeakerism

In preparation for our second meeting, we decided to read Flores and Aneja's (2017) article, "'Why Needs Hiding?' Translingual (Re) Orientations in TESOL Teacher Education." For Zhongfeng, Elie, Maíra and Abe, the article resonated with their experiences as multilingual speakers who have been positioned as non-native English speakers, or NNESs. Zhongfeng shared that the article helped him question the lack of efficacy and privilege experienced by NNESs: "If we as non-native speaker...always put ourselves at a lower end compared to native English speakers...how can we really—you know—how can we really leverage the multilingualism in our classroom when we work with diverse group of student populations?" He

then elaborated on the disparate opportunities available to NNESs pursuing jobs as TESOL educators as compared with native English speakers, or NESs.

Elizabeth chimed in, asking Elie if he would be willing to talk about his experience teaching English during a study abroad trip to Vietnam, which Elizabeth had organized. While Elizabeth thought Elie's multilingual capacity was an asset in this context, Elie questioned this: "Yah, I don't know if I...was just a bit like self-conscious about my accent, and I know that for non-native speakers, it is difficult to understand someone who speaks English with an accent like me. I found it a bit, I don't know, uncomfortable...the kids would not understand me at all." Building from Elie's comment, Maíra described the "mutt complex" that Brazilians tend to experience:

> There's a general feeling, like, we're not good enough as a nationality, like Brazilians are not as good like, we wished we lived somewhere else. And there's this kind of thing, and we make fun of ourselves with our accents. If you know just a little English, you already look down upon people who know a little less...and you, like, make fun of people who have a strong accent, like a strong Brazilian accent while speaking English, and you make fun of people who use wrong expressions.

Maíra also admitted that Flores and Aneja's (2017) article brought tears to her eyes because it resonated so strongly with the self-doubt she experienced when she became an English teacher in Brazil. Maíra's story reminded Zhongfeng of his experience in being criticized for his translanguaging practices in China: "But in China, if you do codeswitching, people will think you are showing off...That's why whenever I go back to China, I'm very aware [that] I should speak pure Chinese; I shouldn't speak [mixed] sentences to my classmates, to my old friends." Across all three group members' examples, the dominance of Nativespeakerism—and the

associated influences of the (the ideological association between one nation, one language, one people; Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Blommaert & Verschueren, 1992) and monoglossic perspectives (the ideological assumption that languages are bounded, pure, and autonomous systems; García, 2009)—contributed to their self-consciousness in speaking English—or whether they would face ridicule by peers within their countries of origin for their multilingual capacities.

Those of us within the group who are positioned as NESs also shared how we experienced pressure to conform to notions of linguistic purity associated with Nativespeakerism; in our case, however, this pressure resulted in us questioning our capacity to become bilingual in languages other than English. This was evident in the language portraits (Busch, 2018) that we created and shared at our earlier meetings, where we visually represented the language practices that are a part of our repertoires. According to Busch (2018), this self-portrait activity was first adapted in the context of language learning at the beginning of the 1990s, when an article in the German journal *Grundschulzeitschrift* suggested giving students the task of filling in a drawn body silhouettes by choosing different colors and placement to represent their relationship to various named language systems, dialects, and registers. Having done the activity myself earlier that year, I proposed the task to the group, who agreed that creating and sharing our language portraits might provide a generative avenue to make our language identities visible to each other. In introducing her portrait to the group, Laura explained: "I'm actually kind of afraid to use languages [other than English]. It's, at least in speaking, I love learning them, but speaking them I'm afraid because I don't know that I kinda just keep them separate in my head." Laura's testimony resonated with Elizabeth who shared, "I have the same thing around fear and for me...it's less about the receiver and more about me and

my self-image...I share similar feelings around like not wanting to try out language unless I can do it correctly."

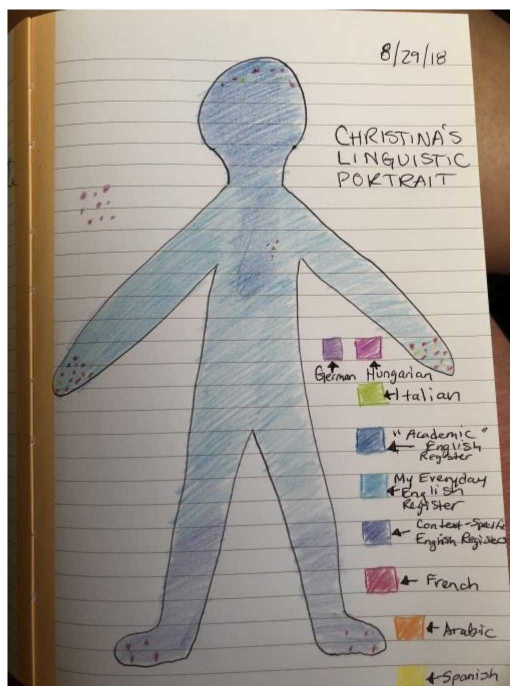
Figure 4: My First Language Portrait

Note. This image reflect the language portrait I created to represent my relationship to my language practices based on their color and placement on silhouette. The following is my written reflection about the portrait: When I was creating my linguistic portrait, I wanted to represent the multiple registers of English I use in my day-to-day life; for this reason, I chose to use different shades of blue to do so. The center part of my body, which includes my heart, hands and extends up to my head is colored in with a sort of blue that I see as being light and playful and chose to represent my everyday English register. It's the register that I use most frequently to think and reflect, to communicate and socialize, and to build relationships; it's also the register that I move most easily in and can most readily create and play with language. I also used a darker blue in my head region to represent so-called "academic" English, which I am using to refer to the formal register that comes with power and prestige in society, particularly in academic contexts. I associate this register of English with my head, because using this register requires me to think critically in order to comprehend and communicate with the particular vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse that enables me to claim an identity as a teacher and researcher. It's also a register that I am fairly comfortable communicating with, though it's not what I would use to express my emotions or connect with others. I used a dark, but more purple-y blue around my feet to represent the English registers that I can employ to move about in the world. While I can use them, they are not the most

Figure 4 (cont'd)

> familiar or comfortable for me (and are therefore furthest from my heart and head. Some examples of what would be included within these registers would be the shifts in my language choice to talk to an auto mechanic or insurance representative or ATT service desk clerk. With regard to my connection to my family's language backgrounds, I chose to use green for Italian, purple for German and pink for Hungarian. I added a few dots of green near the heart region of my portrait to indicate that I have a smattering of Italian in my repertoire that is closely associated with my heart and family. German and Hungarian are represented by dots of color outside, but in proximity, to my portrait. While I can't employ either language, I feel a greater association with them than many other languages. Finally, I used red, orange, and yellow to represent French, Arabic, and Spanish, respectively. There is a bit of red in the heart region to indicate that French connects to my family, but I added dots of red along with orange and yellow around my feet. Similar to the purplish blue I used for context-specific English registers, I see my association with these languages as being more about how I move in the world and interact in new spaces.

Around the time our group began meeting, I had begun explicitly acknowledging the shame I felt as a self-defined monolingual ESL teacher, which I shared with the group: "As somebody who has been an ESL teacher for over a decade, I have often felt like a fraud." This statement hearkened back to the doubts I had when I first decided to become an ESL teacher: that I could (or should) not be an ESL teacher without having extensive experience in developing my own bilingual capacity or living in a context where English was not the dominant language. These doubts reemerged anytime I talked to someone, like one of my family members or a new friend (generally, all monolingual English speakers), who marveled at the possibility that I could teach ESL without sharing a language with learners. And these doubts surfaced whenever I acknowledged the inequity, the lack of reciprocity, and potentially the lack of empathy underlying my expectation that students learn English as an additional language while I remained safe and comfortable in my monolingual English privilege.

Sharing these doubts with the members of TTT was the first time I truly made this admission public to other educators. In reflecting back on this moment, I was beginning to

explicitly recognize the “monolingual disposition” (Gogolin, 1994) in English language teaching (ELT), not as the advantageous marker of the “static, ideal native speaker” privileged by linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) but a deficit in multilingual teaching contexts. My group members helped me see that I was not alone in doubting my capacity as an emergent bilingual. I also recall being struck by the fact that, as a white NES, my emergent bilingual capacity was marked by my privilege, contrasting with how these practices might be “read” differently than others, like Zhongfeng and Maíra’s experiences in China and Brazil, respectively. Listening to Zhongfeng, Elie, Maíra, and Abe illuminated the challenges faced by NNESs, who are expected to learn English as the lingua franca, but who also face criticism for being bilingual; in hearing how this contradiction negatively affected others in TTT, who I was coming to know as friends, this disparity made me wonder how I might subvert the linguistic hierarchies that resulted in the privileges I experience as a result of my NES status.

Socioeconomic Dimensions of Bilingualism

Following our earlier discussion of self-consciousness and shame associated with bilingualism, we extended our interrogation of access to and privilege in becoming bilingual with specific attention to socioeconomic dimensions. We considered how each of us might, as Elizabeth suggested, “feel differently about the term bilingual” in relation to the social capital associated with becoming bilingual based on our respective contexts. To that end, Maíra explained that while English is commonly taught in Brazilian schools, opportunities to become bilingual are often unavailable to those within the lower class. Similarly, Abe shared his experience in Mexico: “If you say ‘a bilingual school’...the first thing that comes to people's minds is it's private,” meaning that students’ families must pay a tuition for their attendance. He also explained that if one is described as bilingual, their language practices are assumed to

include Spanish and English as opposed to Spanish and "Mayan or any indigenous language," which Abe associated with the supremacy of English. This seemed to resonate with Zhongfeng, who named the fact that English, as a dominant global language, is assumed to provide "social capital that can help people" and "increase their social mobility." Zhongfeng also connected Abe's point about bilingual status being afforded to those in Mexico who speak Spanish and English rather than Spanish and Mayan with a similar phenomenon emerging in dual language education programs in the U.S., where bilingual NESs have more social capital than bilingual NNESs. (See Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Heiman & Yanes, 2018; and Palmer et al., 2019.)

I shared how, similar to the class dynamics in Brazil and Mexico, opportunities to expand my bilingual capacity were also limited by my family's financial status:

> By and large, the opportunities I've had to continue pursuing learning additional languages have felt a bit tied—a lot tied to class...When I went to college, I [had started] thinking I might also become...an English and French teacher. And then when I thought about [my] marketability [as a future teacher], I decided not to. And then I, you know, I didn't have the opportunity to study abroad. I haven't had the opportunity to do any of that, anything like that since, because honestly, because of finances...because of my family's resources or lack thereof...money has often felt like the thing that's prohibited me from having the time to pursue language studies.

In connection to my earlier admission of feeling like a fraud as a self-defined monolingual ESL teacher, I contended with my social class as another layer of shame, emboldened by Maíra and Abe's contributions. However, I also took what Elizabeth and Zhongfeng shared to heart, acknowledging that I did not *have* to become bilingual, acknowledging later in our conversation my recognition that "because I exist in privilege as an English speaker, I know I've been able to

lean on that, whereas if I was in another context, I probably would have had to pursue studying English in order to gain the social mobility that I've been able to achieve [in the U.S.].” This discussion resurfaced in the memo I composed after our meeting:

> Our discussion really speaks to [the fact that] the intersectional nature of exploring translanguaging means confronting the hegemonic presence of English...the relationship between language performance and being able to claim “bilingual” or “multilingual,” and the other identity markers that are wrapped up in all of this...our group as a “contact zone” allows us to contend with our linguistic identities and practices (and potentially pluralize them), including how other identity markers weave into this.

Thus, TTT’s discussion raised my awareness of additional intersectional dimensions of privilege and oppression in association with language and language learning. Although I would not be able to name it as such until much later, I began to consider how I could simultaneously be *nos/otras* (us/others), both language colonizer/colonized (Anzaldúa, 2015).

Raciolinguistic Intersections

The intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1991) we brought to our discussions also extended to interrogating the overlapping dimensions of language and race. During one of our meetings, Zhongfeng and Abe shared their experiences in being racialized as “people of color” when they came to the U.S. to pursue graduate studies in language education—which contrasted with how they positioned themselves, particularly with respect to the construction of race in China and Mexico. According to Zhongfeng, this experience was an “uncomfortable transition” from China, which is “relatively more homogeneous” and where people “don't really talk about race and diversity.” Thus, in coming to the U.S., he suddenly “became a minoritized person.” As he continued to explain, this experience raised many questions for him: “What do you mean

‘students of color’? You label people based on their skin color?...White is also a color. So why—white students—they are not students of color?”

Building from Zhongfeng’s experience, Abe jumped into the conversation: “I think it's a common experience when you've been the mainstream in other places and then you come here and then you get all these labels. And I, I had a similar experience.” Just as Zhongfeng found the term “people of color” to be inaccurate, Abe found the term “Hispanic” to be “too broad...it's like just the huge group of people that it's like, it's just from, it's from the mainstream perspective. Like it's a label from the mainstream perspective.” In this regard, both Zhongfeng and Abe highlighted their experiences in being racialized according to the “white gaze,” a term I will explain below, upon immigrating to the U.S..

Our group explicitly connected the topic of race back to language and Nativespeakerism in order to trouble the notion of White Mainstream English. Zhongfeng raised the point that there are multiple English varieties despite the dichotomization between NES and NNESs and between standard and non-standard dialects. “How can we really appreciate different Englishes to try to support both monolingual and multilingual students, right?...Monolingual isn’t necessarily monolingual; I mean you guys also speak regional dialects of English, if I understand that correctly. I speak standard Mandarin, but also I speak my hometown dialect, that’s another version of Mandarin.” Citing Lippi-Green’s (2012) work, Elizabeth highlighted the relationship between White Mainstream English with racial and class privilege; she also described her own experience switching between regional dialects: “Like I grew up with two English teachers and so like my language was always very policed. But then I also grew up in an area where...we had a Boston accent...You were cool if you had an accent. So I definitely did some of that, you know, switching of the way I spoke depending on my context and the purpose of my communication.”

Our discussion reminded me of a chapter from Johnson's (2005) *Privilege, Power, and Difference* that I had read a few months before, which explored the idea that "[s]ystems organized around privilege have three key characteristics. They are *dominated* by privileged groups, *identified* with privileged groups, and *centered* on privileged groups" (p. 90). I shared with the group my recollection of the chapter, extending the social construction of racial privilege to linguistic privilege: "With regard to race, whiteness is considered the 'norm' and so that means that really understanding the [plural constructions of race] gets blurred whereas if you're situated in an identity that is marginalized, you have a greater awareness of [this] plurality." As Johnson explained, the practices of privileged groups who are centered become positioned as the "norm." Hence, one's privilege is predicated on how near or far their positionalities and practices are from the so-called norm.

In the U.S., where the language practices of white, middle and upper class NESs have been centered, those whose racial, class, and linguistic identity are outside this are rendered inferior (Alim & Paris, 2015; Valdés, 2016). This ideological phenomenon has been described by Toni Morrison (2013) as the "white gaze" and extended by Nelson Flores and Jonathan Rosa (2015) to theorize the "white listening subject." In connecting our group's discussion to Johnson (2005), I was attempting to articulate my emerging understanding that those whose privileged positionalities and practices are centered do not necessarily recognize their normalization is socially constructed within a system of power, nor do they truly *see* or *hear* what is marginalized. In contrast, those whose positionalities and practices are marginalized are keenly aware of both what is positioned at the center and on the periphery—what Du Bois (1897/1994) called *double consciousness*:

> [T]he Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 38)

Later in TTT's discussion, I explicitly named bi/multilingual speakers' awareness and capacity to negotiate "this plurality of practice and plurality of identities" as a form of *double consciousness*.

While I had come to question the boundedness of several social constructions, namely NES/NNES status, named language systems, and even national borders, I also questioned my capacity to fully *see* let alone *understand* these manifestations given the limitations of my positionalities. I associated my "awakening" to these manifestations, as I discuss below, with my continued learning around translanguaging. Just as translanguaging blurred perceived boundaries between named language systems, the lines between related constructions had also begun to blur. Although I previously recognized that the boundaries drawn between English and Spanish, Black English and White Mainstream English, NNES and NES status, the U.S. and Mexico were human constructions, my group members' accounts also put a face to the very real material consequences associated with these boundaries and the hierarchies that grew from them—material consequences that were not reflected in much of my lived experiences.

In seeking to extend our conversation to consider its practical implications for teacher education, I shared my belief that, among white, monolingual English pre-service teachers, an "awakening [has] to happen" whereby they pluralize their perspectives of meaning-making practices across contexts "as a way to affirm diversity," whereas bi- or multilingual pre-service teachers "already know about this plurality of practice and plurality of identities" and have "had to navigate across those contexts." This discussion, in particular, challenged me to contend with the multiple levels of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) that must be a part of undertaking enactment of translanguaging as a liberatory praxis. In considering how I might raise awareness around racial and linguistic hierarchies within the TESOL teacher education courses I taught, I recognized that LTs who are members of marginalized language groups *have* to develop critical consciousness in order to survive; LTs who are members of privileged groups can survive without acknowledging this, but must be challenged to do so. I was left wondering what this might mean for differentiating my instruction as a teacher educator for pre-service teachers based on their positionalities.

My engagement with TTT at this point had also begun to overlap with another teaching endeavor: returning to the high school classroom to co-teach a unit on the relationship between language, identity and power. While I do not elaborate on this experience in the context of this study, it inevitably seeped into the discussions I was having with TTT (and vice versa). To that end, our discussion of the intersection of language and race—specifically Abe and Zhongfeng's experiences—connected to a discussion I recently had with high school students about the arbitrary distinction between languages and dialects. In a memo composed after our TTT meeting, I wrote that "named languages and monolingualism are social constructs that, like race, have very material realities." Through colliding with Zhongfeng and Abe's personal experiences,

I become increasingly interested in the emerging field of raciolinguistics: "I wonder to what extent the two (race and language) are mutually constituted as social constructs and how seeking to deconstruct the former must occur along deconstruction of the latter." In the coming months, this question would stick with me, becoming an important facet of my transformation and pedagogical reimagining.

Collective Transformation

Leveling Linguistic Hierarchies within TTT

Deepening our exploration of translanguaging was transformative for our group. For Zhongfeng, learning about translanguaging was deeply personal:

> [Through] learning [about] translanguaging gradually, I think I need to value, validate and value my own bilingualism. This is an asset that I have. I can bring more than other people can bring to the classroom that I speak another language other than English, so I think gradually I developed kind of this translingual identity myself.

With respect to our discussion about educators who NNES and NES educators, Zhongfeng highlighted the fact that NNES educators likely have greater metalinguistic awareness as a part of their bi/multilingual development, even while they may question their ability to use English. Similar to Zhongfeng, Abe connected his learning about translanguaging to both his language practice and pedagogy. Referring to a previous conversation with me, Abe explained, "I was telling [Christina] that at least one thing that translanguaging does for me is that the things that I might do with my friends, in terms of linguistic practices, now I feel more comfortable in bringing that into the classroom and showing it to my students and telling them that this is ok." In this regard, their engagement with translanguaging supported Zhongfeng and Abe in repositioning their multilingualism as assets to be celebrated.

Elizbeth, Laura, and I were also affirmed by translanguaging with respect to the diversity of practices within our linguistic repertoires. At our second meeting, Zhongfeng reminded the group of the “myth” of the fully competent bilingual and the self-criticism that emerges from it: “So lots of people, they still hold this conception, like bilinguals, they have to be fully competent in both languages so that they can claim themselves as bilingual.” Drawing upon his experience in teaching “self-considered monolingual students,” he explained that, in disrupting compartmentalized views of one’s first and second languages, translanguaging refutes this myth by challenging the assertion that bilingualism requires full competency in two languages. By the end of that same meeting, Laura described herself as an “emergent bilingual.” Likewise, when sharing my language portrait at a later time, I explained that “the portrait also gave me space to own the fact that even though I can’t necessarily have a conversation or write something in French or in Italian or Spanish, these are language systems that are still a part of my identity…[Creating my portrait] really helped me to pluralize and own the fact that I do negotiate meaning with more [linguistic] diversity I guess than I had previously thought. And there’s something sort of empowering about that.” This acknowledgement marked a fundamental shift in my self-confidence as a language learner and was at the heart of a decision I made in the coming months to travel to France as a part of a university fellowship program and remain there on my own for a month.

Our group also began to explicitly critique the taken-for-granted practice of centering English within and beyond our interactions with each other. While we vocalized a commitment to advance translanguaging as language theory and pedagogy, our conversations were predominantly in English, a matter that we openly questioned. As Abe pointed out, “It's always about English, right?...We're very open to bring in our languages in our group. But to some

point, right.” As Abe also pointed out, though, the dominant set of shared resources we had to negotiate meaning within our group *was* English, which I echoed:

> Abe, I think it gets at that tension...we know that English, you know, being able to communicate in English, is [treated as] a privilege and its associated with power. But obviously it also creates that sort of commonality. And that's, for me, that's just this reminder [that] I exist in privilege. How do I use my privilege to complicate that notion, those notions of power and to support others?...I'm grateful that we all share English, but then I also feel like I shouldn't just expect that our conversation is going to be in English.

I then suggested to the group that one of the constraints we faced was the limitation of time; our group had started writing a book chapter and our meetings were now dedicated to that endeavor. “I don't know what that would look like if we weren't on a [schedule]...but maybe at some point maybe we should just have a meeting where, you know, everybody uses just whatever you want to use and we'll, we'll figure it out.”

My mind lingered on this tension in the memo I wrote following our meeting: “As I said to the group, I’m interested to know what it might be like to not lean on English as our shared resource and for others in our group to integrate their full set of linguistic resources (and for me to have to be ok with not knowing—for us to use other resources to figure it out).” In connection with our group’s earlier exploration of the NES/NNES hierarchy and how we were learning to overturn it, I continued to mull over how I might intentionally decenter myself—and the primacy of English—in order to actively center language practices that tend to be marginalized in the U.S. “It’ll be interesting to continue moving the center, so that translanguaging practices are at the center of our discussion. Not sure how to do that, but I think I need to do more listening (and question posing) in our next meeting and less talking.” In other words, I had concluded that

perhaps my responsibility in seeking to decenter English also meant actively decentering myself in our group's interactions—a conclusion I will return to in the next chapter.

"Having the Courage to Go and Do It"

In response to our group's expressed willingness to engage in more fluid meaning-making, Abe brought to the subsequent meeting a metaphor that he used to conceptualize his own translanguaging practices: *lírico*. Referring to his experience in beginning graduate school in the U.S. a decade before, Abe explained that he often thought to himself, "I'm missing some of the language that people use to talk about all sorts of things...that people do in academia." Despite this feeling, he continued with school, "having the courage to go and do it, even though I was missing the language," which he associated with *líricamente.* Upon introducing the term to the group, Abe explained that we could translate it to "lyric or lyrical." Seconds later, Elizabeth shared the Google Translation of the term: "lyrically or to put to song." Abe asked her how she understood the term in English, to which she responded, "as a sense of musicality." Using this as a building block of shared meaning, Abe expanded it to include the cultural understanding he had of the term: "Growing up I remember people will say, "Oh, this is a professional musician and this is a lyrical one, or like *lírico*. Right?" He then explained that a professional musician would be seen as "someone who went to school and studied [music]...who plays by following the charts and the notes and all that...someone who has the language for music." In contrast, *líricos* refer to people who played instruments and even had bands, "but then they don't know anything about, about like the theory of music. They just learned that by doing it...as someone who is trying to pay attention to the people, to the interactions and being aware that there is, there's some language that you are missing but doing it anyways."

For Abe, the metaphor of *lírico* was a particularly apt metaphor to describe his own translanguaging practices when he began teaching in the U.S. as a graduate student. Propelled by the group's follow-up questions, Abe explained that he questioned his ability to teach in the U.S., feeling like he missed "certain language to interact in certain situations," and wondered whether what he included in his syllabi was "off the mark, just like writing stuff that nobody teaches." However, he did it anyway: "When I'm drawing from my own experience and thinking about all the things that were helpful in my experience, that's what gives me the courage to say, 'No, I think this is important. I'm going to add it'...I feel like applying this *lírico* to other people, too [is] a way of empowering or creating more conversations" rather than excluding them because their way of engaging does not adhere to the "norm."

In the memo I composed following our meeting, I shared how our group's conversation had catalyzed growth for me in two regards. First, I recognized that in introducing us to the concept of *líricamente,* Abe created an authentic translanguaging interaction for our group, where the integration of his personal examples, Google Translate, and our questions fostered our collective meaning-making of the term. Second, as I explained, "Our conversations have continued to push me to see greater fluidity in our language practices, despite the structural boundaries that society has imposed." While I first recognized this when I was introduced to translanguaging as a beginning teacher educator, our group's interactions provided space to observe and engage in it consciously and critically as a part of our shared meaning-making practices. As I will illustrate in the next chapter, "This [made] me feel more willing to engage with texts or conversations where the words or phrases or grammatical constructions are unfamiliar—but where there are enough shared resources to negotiate meaning."

As I highlighted later in the meeting, Abe shed light on another dimension of translanguaging that, as I later noted to the group, was perhaps “less talked about in translanguaging scholarship” but had been gradually surfacing throughout our meetings: courage. In coming to understand the enactment of translanguaging as a courageous act, particularly when considering one’s positionality with respect to broader assimilationist ideologies, I began to think about a necessary shift for LTs and LTEs that was not just predicated on an intellectual understanding or practical application of translanguaging but required a deeper shift with regard to one’s embodied (i.e., psychic, emotional, felt) resources, particularly when that shift requires rejection of “basic idea, tenets, and identities [inherited]” from one’s culture, family and education. As I will discuss next, this discovery was further illuminated in our group’s exploration of the concept of “home” and became a central part of my personal ongoing transformation.

“My Home is Shifting A Lot”

Taking Pico Iyer’s (2013) TED Talk, “Where is home?” as a jumping off point, our group had turned our attention to exploring our respective definitions of “home” in relation to translanguaging and our shifting conceptions of our language identities and resources. First, our group agreed that, as Zhongfeng suggested, “home is more contextualized, situated, and not place bounded” and that our group had become a sort of “home” for us. Second, we recognized the affective dimensions of “home.” Beginning by describing the sense of home she experienced with her family, Elizabeth suggested a “home” is “safe and supportive,” and is where we feel a sense of connection and support, and as Maíra highlighted, a sense of “community and trust.” We had co-constructed our self-study “home” based on our mutual goals and cultivated a shared set of practices to support our collaboration: a commitment to vulnerability, risk-taking, and as

Zhongfeng suggested, to “interrogate ourselves to become [better people] during this process.” Consistent with a point I made in the previous section, our group has “multiple conflicting voices that can co-exist in [our] space,” which Zhongfeng attributed to our shared “respect for differences” and heteroglossic approaches to meaning-making. In this regard, Zhongfeng added, “[We each] bring different expertise, different knowledge, different histories to this home. Knowledge is distributed, and it's not just held by one person, this dominant person, to pass knowledge to other people. We treat each other as brokers of knowledge, and we learn from each other and grow together.”

Anzaldúa (2015) suggests that, “To be in conocimiento with another person or group is to share knowledge, pool resources, meet each other, compare liberation struggles and social movements’ histories, share how we confront institutional power, and process and heal wounds.” Thus, while our group’s discussion of “home” afforded us the opportunity to celebrate the shared resources and community we had cultivated together, our discussion also raised our critical consciousness of additional complexities associated with calling a space “home.” For one, the space we had co-constructed—where we were learning to strategically leverage shared resources, negotiate communication across difference, and level hierarchies associated with dominant ideologies—conflicted with many of the ideas woven into our familial histories, educational experiences, and broader social structures. Hence, seeking to amplify the practices we drew upon as a group required us to actively reject parts of ourselves, our pasts and our communities. I

explained to the group that this level of awakening reminded me of the allegory of Plato's cave,[12] explaining that "once you've seen something, you can't unsee it." In this regard, I referred to the awakening that had occurred for me through translanguaging as a liberatory pedagogy:

> As I've moved away from perceiving home in this monolingual way, I can no longer look at my home in the same way. Like I'm not even as comfortable—if I think of home and I think of, like, my family for instance. A lot of times I actually find myself more uncomfortable in that space, because [their] sense of inclusion is restrictive, it's exclusionary...Being able to find new homes where these are the sorts of practices—[like] adopting a translanguaging practice is what's centered...that's beginning to feel more like home.

Echoing Anzaldúa (2012), I no longer felt "rooted" among my "home-ethnicity," but instead felt rooted in a new network, or the "new tribalism" that Anzaldúa connected to Deleuze and Guattari's analogy of the self-as-rhizome:

> The 'root' you connect to becomes your spiritual ground of being, your connection to your inner self, which is your greatest strength. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari use a

[12] From Plato's (2012) *The Republic*: "And now I will describe in a figure the enlightenment or unenlightenment of our nature:—Imagine human beings living in an underground den which is open towards the light; they have been there from childhood, having their necks and legs chained, and can only see into the den. At a distance there is a fire, and between the fire and the prisoners a raised way, and a low wall is built along the way, like the screen over which marionette players show their puppets. Behind the wall appear moving figures, who hold in their hands various works of art, and among them images of men and animals, wood and stone, and some of the passers-by are talking and others silent. 'A strange parable,' he said, 'and strange captives.' They are ourselves, I replied; and they see only the shadows of the images which the fire throws on the wall of the den; to these they give names, and if we add an echo which returns from the wall, the voices of the passengers will seem to proceed from the shadows. Suppose now that you suddenly turn them round and make them look with pain and grief to themselves at the real images; will they believe them to be real? Will not their eyes be dazzled, and will they not try to get away from the light to something which they are able to behold without blinking? And suppose further, that they are dragged up a steep and rugged ascent into the presence of the sun himself, will not their sight be darkened with the excess of light? Some time will pass before they get the habit of perceiving at all; and at first they will be able to perceive only shadows and reflections in the water; then they will recognize the moon and the stars, and will at length behold the sun in his own proper place as he is. Last of all they will conclude:—This is he who gives us the year and the seasons, and is the author of all that we see. How will they rejoice in passing from darkness to light! How worthless to them will seem the honours and glories of the den! But now imagine further, that they descend into their old habitations;—in that underground dwelling they will not see as well as their fellows, and will not be able to compete with them in the measurement of the shadows on the wall; there will be many jokes about the man who went on a visit to the sun and lost his eyes, and if they find anybody trying to set free and enlighten one of their number, they will put him to death, if they can catch him."

similar structural model, the rhizome, for the self...Unlike a plant with a single tap root, rhizomes spread in all directions, creating a … network in which every point can be connected to every other point' (p. 68).

Spread though our group was across geographic locations, language practices, and cultural backgrounds, our roots had extended to each other, forming what we quite literally named as a "network," or the "Transnetworking for TESOL Teachers." More than a professional network, though, we had come to feel rooted in the self-study "home" we had co-constructed.

Elizabeth suggested that perhaps part of what we were doing as a group was challenging the concept of "home," which reminded me of the conversation I had with my father two summers before (see Interlude #3). I shared an abbreviated version of the anecdote with my group, explaining that when I told my dad about my collaboration with the Refugee Development Center, he asked, "Why refugees? Why not your people?" Sharing my dad's question aloud with the group reverberated back to the many times in the past where he suggested that "we should take care of 'our people' first" or that I marry "a good Italian man" because we would "do things the same way."[13] Anzaldúa (2012) describes this tension in this way:

> Your ethnic tribe wants you to isolate, insisting that you remain within race and class boundaries. The dominant culture prefers that you abandon your roots and assimilate…How can you step outside ethnic and other labels while cleaving to your root identity? Your identity has roots you share with all people and other beings—spirit, feeling, and body constitute a greater identity category. (p. 140).

[13] I often assumed this meant he questioned marrying my mother because she was not an Italian-American; at some point in my young adulthood, I recall my mother discovering that she had Italian lineage on her father's side and her making a point to share this around my father's family. They did eventually divorce each other.

In vocalizing my dad’s questions aloud to my fellow group members, I was immediately struck by a sense of dissonance, of shame, sadness, and rejection. Not yet able to name these feelings, I shared with them the reaction I was having in the moment: “Even right now, the emotional reaction I'm having to that is just, it's, it's visceral, because it's a sense of like, this person who I have thought as being home doesn't share the worldview that I have now.” Similar to me, Elizabeth shared that she also feels “much more comfortable doing the work and having the conversations that I have in classrooms and in intellectual spaces than I often do at home,” which made her wonder how we might “educate our families or have these conversations in families.”

Abe acknowledged the fear that emerges for him when, in the decade he has spent in the U.S., he encounters others who advocate for “homogeneity, like having everybody at the same...it's scary” He explained that he worries less about people disagreeing about politics or other viewpoints, “but there's some things that really are like what Christina says, like, ‘What about your people?’ It's hard to think about it...how do I even start a conversation in that case?” As I listened to Abe, I connected the embodied recollection I was experiencing with what he was sharing, wondering about his lived experiences given the intersections of his multiple positionalities: a Spanish-English bilingual speaker who had immigrated to the U.S. to pursue graduate school, who found himself being racialized in new ways upon arriving in the Midwest. While I knew I could not experience his reality, I wondered what I would *feel* if I could share in Abe’s experiences. Although I will elaborate on this further in the next chapter, I was, to use Anzaldúa’s (2015) language, shifting my attention from my “customary point of view (the ego)” (p. 150), a practice that I would come to understand as central to decentering myself within our group, my ongoing self-study, and my enactment of translanguaging as praxis. In building upon what I shared, Elizabeth and Abe both affirmed and complicated my experiences as I questioned

who and where my home really was; as I came to call “home” the communities I shared with others actively seeking critical consciousness, I had come to feel more like an outsider within my familial home.

Second, Elie, Abe, and Maíra reminded our group that claiming a space as home was also a privilege. As Elie shared, in order for him to feel at home, he must feel accepted as an insider, but that he also “[feels] really guilty to feel home.” He continued, explaining that while he might feel at home in Boston, he is also reminded that it is “another place that we stole from indigenous [people].” Thus, he simultaneously feels at home while also feeling guilty for “really feeling entitled...everywhere I go,” a tendency that leads to him “feeling like an intruder” even when he’s “surrounded [by] white people." Prodded by a follow-up question from Elizabeth, Elie continued: “I would love to travel and study, [but]...I don't want to stay in the same place all the time...I will always feel like I was like colonizer or like, I think it's a privilege because of colonization...because of my passport was stronger...I'm intruding in certain people's place or gentrifying or benefiting from the gentrification that happened before.” Abe chimed in, threading together Zhongfeng’s assertion from earlier that home is not necessarily bound to a physical place with Elie’s acknowledgement that calling a place “home” is a matter of a privilege.

> We've been discussing about home goes beyond place. But I still think that place is a very important part of it, right? Because even though many things that you think about home, you think you think about it beyond place in space, I think you're always going to have a place in space. And that's why I thought Elie's reflection on like, be mindful of like, your privilege, and colonization and indigenous lands, is important.

Expanding upon both Elie and Abe's comments, Maíra shared that while she is making New Hampshire "home with some effort," she knows she will be leaving in the coming months for Germany. She then explicitly acknowledged her disenfranchisement as an immigrant in the U.S.

> If I made this home and I would think that I wanted to stay, I cannot. Because of red tape, you know, I can't. I'm an immigrant. So the only place right now that I could go and stay is Brazil. So like, I feel at home, everywhere I go, but I cannot stay because of fees and documents. And I am treated as a foreign while I'm here. So like, we can make this internal evaluation to make ourselves feel at home, but it won't be. So like you would need a certain amount of money or marry someone or whatever to get a document that says this is home, or else is just a feeling and then you have to go.

In addition to connecting to Elie and Abe's discussion of home and privilege, Maíra seemed to push back on a comment I had made earlier, when I wondered aloud to the group whether I am "more at home" according to how "comfortable in my own skin" and "whether I believed in my own sense of self worth." Although she did not explicitly challenge what I said, Maíra highlighted the reality that whether she is at home in the U.S. or not is not necessarily a matter of how she feels, but is more a matter of the material realities and legal limitations of establishing a home outside one's nation of origin.

Collectively, Elie, Abe, and Maíra further complicated our group's conceptualization of home, and for me, personally, held me to account for my privileges as a white NES and U.S. citizen. Toward the end of our meeting, I acknowledged that "being an insider or feeling like you can claim a space as your home...reflects privilege," which could be associated with one's racial identity, with one's ability to own their ancestral land in spite of colonization, or with being in a space where one's home language is the dominant language. This moment of

reckoning—where I contended with the privilege that came with finding belonging in a new community, to speak as an insider, and to experience a sense of home—was a critical spark in my learning, not just within my mind, but within my body. As I will discuss in the next chapter, this realization is something I carried with me into other interactions beyond our group, including a two-month sojourn in France, where I would live outside the U.S. for the first time.

CHAPTER 7: BODYMINDSOUL TRANSFORMATION

"Your bodymindsoul is the hermetic vessel where transformation takes place" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 133).

In the previous chapter, I traced my ideological reckoning as a part of the collaborative self-study and collective transformation among TTT. Specifically, I highlighted instances where our group's interactions catalyzed the development of my critical consciousness, from an intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 1991), of the ideological constructions and material consequences associated with linguistic hegemony. Consistent with Pratt's (1991) and Canagarajah's theorizations of contact zone interactions, TTT co-constructed interactional practices to foster a culture of translanguaging within our group's interactions. Reflective of Anzaldúa's (2015) theorization of *nepantla,* we cultivated a set of inner resources necessary to the translanguaging transformation reflected in our group: critical self-interrogation, openness, vulnerability, and risk-taking. Occurring in what I am calling a *nepantla* contact zone, these experiences were fundamental in catalyzing the development of these same inner resources for me personally. Thus, in this next chapter, I describe how I carried these resources with me into my interactions beyond our group and what personal transformation I experienced in my "bodymindsoul" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 133).

While the organization of these chapters makes it appear that this development was linear, this was not the case; instead, many of the interactions I describe in this chapter happened concurrent to my interactions with TTT. Hence, it is important for me to mention the overlapping relationship of our group's interactions with my own personal interactions as a part of this process of reckoning and reimagining. In other words, the fluid and interdependent nature of these consciousness-raising interactions and opportunities for praxis were fundamental to my development across contexts. Additionally, in what follows, the order that I write about some of

my experiences is not necessarily reflective of when they occurred chronologically, but is instead reflective of the development of my critical consciousness as it relates to the experiences. In other words, the order in which I write about these experiences is meant to lead the reader through my reflective process rather than the actual associated events. In an attempt to represent this process, I use the fractal nature of a tree's growth as a metaphor; as each root or branch expands in one direction or another, it is overlaid with the development of another root or branch that follows a similar developmental pattern, each growing on their own. In other words, you could imagine that one of the branches of a tree symbolizes my transformation as a part of TTT, overlapping with another branch that symbolizes my transformation while in France, which both overlap with a third branch that symbolizes my transformation during my personal self-study. Thus, the timeline of events described in this chapter overlay with the interactions among TTT described in the previous chapter; likewise, the patterns in my development through interacting with TTT reoccurred in my development beyond TTT.

Humility and Healing in Nepantla (September 2017-December 2018)

The multiple "collisions" I had with fellow members of TTT sparked fundamental shifts in how I approach research and teaching as an LTE. I recognized our group as a space where we could inquire into translanguaging together; for me, personally, it was also a space to contend with my complicity in perpetuating linguistic oppression and to engage in self-study of my language learning and teaching. As I shared during TTT's second meeting, I began to think of our group in a Freirean sense:

> When you were talking [Zhongfeng], I was thinking about...how in order to engage in liberation as it relates to language and oppression, we really have to do this work together. And I see myself as having to step back and think about how I can let—not

"let"—but how I can create space for people who have typically been marginalized because of their language backgrounds to take the lead, but also to not put all that responsibility on them. [Instead of] "get your white people," I'm thinking about "get your English—your monolingual English people."

In other words, I recognized that our group provided us an opportunity to intentionally subvert linguistic hierarchies in English language education, where whiteness and English are typically privileged, and to instead purposefully center experiences and practices among our group's members that are often pushed to the margins. Thus, in thinking of our group as a collective space for self-study, I recognized the tremendous opportunity I had to learn alongside the members of our group. However, I also felt a tension in that I did not want to expect undue emotional labor from my group members, particularly when they were so vulnerably sharing their experiences in being marginalized. I was also committed to our shared learning being reciprocal; as much as I was learning from my fellow group members, I wanted to give back in equal measure. In Anzaldúa's (2012) terms, I was attempting to "give up investment" in my "customary point of view (the ego)" and to shift my attention to see my group members' circumstances from their respective positions (p. 150).

My participation in the group became a sort of dance as I navigated this tension, where I had to consistently check myself: *How am I sharing? How am I listening? How can I decenter myself while centering my fellow group members?* Essentially, I wanted to understand the experiences and perspectives of my fellow group members without defaulting to taken-for-granted ideologies or superimposing my own interpretation—an endeavor I am not sure is truly possible. Recalling one of my dad's many adages (and his father's before him), I attempted to "listen two times as much as I spoke." I recall becoming increasingly self-conscious of my talk

time and actively resisting my inclination to fill up space when there were quiet pauses in our conversation. Instead, when I noticed that some members were particularly quiet, I asked direct questions. I also unofficially became our group notetaker; when group members shared, their words appeared on each of our computer screens as I captured them in our group's shared Google Doc. Because I knew they would be able to read my interpretation of what they shared, I felt particularly self-conscious about how I represented their words on the page; while I knew they could tweak in real time what I wrote, I also recognized that my listening was being made visible. I wanted to convey through this non-verbal act how closely I was listening by attempting to represent on the page how *they* were representing themselves aloud (not just how and what I was hearing).

Through these efforts, my growth outside our group extended in two important ways. First, as TTT group members' personal experiences challenged me to contend with my privilege and complicity as a white, U.S. born NES, I felt a deepened sense of responsibility to become more aware of linguistic oppression as a part of U.S. history and education and its intersections with other identity markers. Essentially, my interactions with members of TTT (and the journey to France that I will describe later in this chapter) led me recognize that "my explorations in graduate school around language and literacy with a focus on translanguaging in TESOL education were essentially superficial if I didn't really dig into the nature of language education as a colonizing enterprise," which I wrote in a journal entry from December 2019. Thus, independent from our group, I embarked on what I described as a "months-long meditation on liberation and oppression (with Freire in the back of my mind)" where I "read and read and read and journaled and thought" with the express goal of expanding my critical consciousness. Consequently, I began a more in-depth study of "linguistic hierarchies, linguicism, monoglossic

and raciolinguistic ideologies...all taken-for-granted within the context of U.S. K-12 TESOL education," which "run in opposition to translanguaging." In extension of a practice that I had begun to develop alongside fellow members of TTT, I found myself listening more closely and endeavoring to sit with the felt and embodied experiences of those I read: the personal counter-narratives of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Jacques Derrida, Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde; the theoretical and empirical works of critical race theory, decoloniality and raciolinguistics scholars; and alternative histories of the U.S. that critiqued dominant ideologies and narratives (e.g., Dunbar-Ortiz, 2015; Isenberg, 2017; Kendi, 2016; Ortiz, 2018). Many of these accounts were new to me, which made me wonder about the limited perspectives and criticality reflected in many of my previous undergraduate and graduate-level English language, literature and education courses in Michigan. (For a full list of the book-length texts I count as a part of my education in critical consciousness, visit this link.)

Through repeated efforts to shift my attention from myself and my ego, both among TTT and in my ongoing self-study, to empathize and try to see the circumstances of others' from their positions, I moved towards *nepantla,* "the place between worldviews" that became "a turning point initiating psychological and spiritual transformations" that led me to look inward (Anzaldua, 2015, p. 150). While I only expand on it briefly here, given my focus of this study on language teaching and education, in that same journal entry, I also began to recognize that my personal self-study "simultaneously required me to grapple with my own experience with abuse and trauma in the context of my childhood while opening my eyes in a new way to oppression and trauma writ large in the U.S. context." Put most simply, as I engaged in a spirit of openness, vulnerability, and risk taking with the stories of those who have been historically marginalized in the U.S., whose languages and cultures have been stripped from their bodies and whose voices

have been silenced, my own experiences in being silenced emerged from the inner caverns where I had hid them away.

Interlude #4 (December 2018)

Shards of unsaid words
like holy communion
pressed onto my tongue
purifying incense
asphyxiating raw humanity.

To swell with clenched jaw
pinching slips of truth
into yellow falsehoods,
provocations like bile,
hot humors
of silenced womanhood.

Traveling from spleen
out of mouth, hooked
onto the jagged edges
of scar tissue, worms writhing
into inescapable knots.

Heart choked
up from ribcage, inner-child
offerings cloaked in shame

Recalling my personal experiences with trauma was less of a matter of remembering them in my mind as it was of remembering it in my body, as I explained in that same journal entry:

> Trauma is like that. It makes you question what is good, what is new, what is life. How are you to know you can trust what seems good or new or life when all your previous experiences have taught you otherwise? First a disclaimer: I don't know what it is like to carry centuries of racial trauma in my bones or to have that trauma reinscribed daily by both systemic oppression and individual encounters with those I know I can't trust—or

> those that I think I can trust, but find out I can't. But I can make sense of it in a surface way with my own trauma.

In making this connection, I began to explicitly recognize that efforts to contend with histories of oppression and to reimagine English language education as a liberatory pursuit, specifically through translanguaging praxis, required unlearning and relearning not just in my mind, but in my body. Connecting back to my experiences with TTT, I pursued a stance of empathy that did not center myself as a part of this ongoing self-study. Just as I had attempted to shift how I listened to my fellow TTT members without immediately superimposing my interpretation, I attempted to do the same with the stories and histories I read. While I turned to my personal experiences with trauma to empathize with the embodied harm experienced by those historically marginalized in the U.S., I also reminded myself to not assume that I could *really* understand how others' experiences with systemic oppression lives in their bodies. Drawing connections between my experiences and those of others was fundamental for expanding my empathy and recognizing our shared humanity—but paradoxically I also had to continuously decenter myself so as not to recenter privileged perspectives or positionalities.

As Anzaldúa (2015) suggests, I attempted to use my "wounds as openings to become vulnerable and available (present) to others," which meant "staying in [my] body" (p. 153). Thus, just as I had learned to sit with the heavy and uncomfortable feelings of my own personal history in order to heal, so, too, did I begin to sit with the heavy and uncomfortable feelings of our history of language oppression and of instances where I might have been complicit in perpetuating harm as an LT and LTE. I explained this connection in another journal entry (December 2019): "Recognizing my complicity in perpetuating abuse and trauma and oppression within the broader system, reminds me of the survivor's guilt I had to wrestle with last winter.

As I started to name the physical and verbal and emotional abuse I experienced growing up, I had to sit and relive those memories." While I was the object of abuse in some of these memories, many of them were "moments where I witnessed it, perhaps only avoiding being hit by words or objects or hands because I stayed quiet. I also had to acknowledge that then as now, I have not only survived, but thrived, benefiting in spite of the abuse and oppression because of my conformity and silence."

In connection to Anzaldúa (2012), I "ground" myself in my own body in order to "connect" to my own inner resources, resulting in empowerment, or "the bodily feeling of being able to connect with inner voices/resources (images, symbols, beliefs, memories) during periods of stillness, silence, and deep listening or with kindred others in collective actions" (pp. 152-153). At the same time, I had to immediately turn my lens outward to use my experiences "as a conduit to recognizing another's suffering" and to take "responsibility for making changes" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 153). Thus, I extended this feeling of empowerment outside myself as I considered my place in U.S. society as an LT and LTE and inward as I reflected in my journal that "my personal liberation has been wrapped up in [acknowledging] my complicity in systemic oppression." As I connected threads across my personal experiences with broader circumstances of oppression, I considered how I had benefited as a white, English-speaking learner throughout my schooling in the U.S. at the expense of my peers, whose racialized identities and marginalized language practices were positioned as deficits. Often, my White Mainstream English language and literacy practices were valorized throughout my experiences in school, and as a result, I leaned into the praise I received as a *walking dictionary* and *bookworm*. These affirming experiences likely contributed to my decision to become an ELA and ESL teacher,

where I also centered the same White Mainstream English practices, thus reinstituting the same patterns of dominance and oppression.

Furthermore, I considered how I benefited as an ESL teacher, whose job security was predicated on the number of students' whose English language practices were assessed as being within the threshold to qualify them for ESL services—assessments that *I* gave and evaluated. While I never intentionally placed students in the district's ESL program who did not qualify according to state and district criteria, I do recall actively resisting parents and students who questioned my evaluation and advocated to *not* be placed in the program, especially in my first years of teaching. While I contended then that it was in the students' best interests, I now question whose best interest I really had in mind. I also recall being a part of a meeting between the superintendent and the district's ESL department, where I was newly hired into my second teaching position. Also new to his position, the superintendent asked the members of our department about the potential for bilingual education programming. My colleagues and I quickly responded in favor of the current design of the district's ESL program, explaining that research had not found bilingual education to be more beneficial. While I had not yet encountered the well-established body of scholarship that highlights the benefits of bilingual education over ESL programming (e.g., Valentino & Reardon, 2015), I do recall a short moment of panic, knowing that I was *not* qualified to teach in a bilingual education program—an impulse toward self-preservation that reflected my willful ignorance of what might actually have been in the best interest of students. Suffice it to say that I continued to have a position in the district until I chose to leave four years later to pursue graduate studies full time.

From this ongoing self-study within and beyond TTT, I experienced a transformation within my inner resources that aided me in navigating the difficult emotions of my continued

unlearning and relearning. Broadly, I describe these resources as the active choice of seeking discomfort in three ways: (1) moving toward defensiveness, (2) moving toward guilt, and (3) moving toward humility on the periphery. Believing, as Anzaldúa (2015) suggests, that we "can know the other" through both love and pain (p. 153), I considered what I might learn from discomfort. First, I began to more readily recognize moments when I experienced discomfort—when I feel the need to defend myself or to run away from an interaction. In those moments, I feel my fists and chest tighten, my mind jumping to rationales for why I could justify fighting in or fleeing from an interaction where I was confronted by my own culpability in perpetuating dehumanization. Sometimes, these moments are instances where I do not recognize that I need to speak out against a harmful comment made by a colleague—or am scared to do so. Other times, these have been moments where I am afraid that the version of myself that I hold in my mind is not reflected in how others see me, such as the moment in the last chapter when Maíra challenged me to question whether my self-confidence is central to being able to call a place "home." I felt ashamed that I had not immediately considered the material realities associated with immigrating to a new country and wondered how flippant I sounded when I suggested it was just a matter of being comfortable within yourself. In Anzaldúa's (2015) view, by shifting my "customary point of view (the ego)" to "include the complexity of feeling two or more ways about a person/issue," I began to move towards "a less defensive, more inclusive identity" (p. 150). Thus, instead of attempting to rationalize what I shared earlier or mentally "checking out" of the conversation, my interactions in TTT taught me to double down on listening, recognizing that my discomfort indicated an opportunity for me to listen and learn.

Second, I began to look more closely at the emergence of shame in these defensive and discomforting moments; these moments reflected barriers I have built internally that served no

one but myself. This explicit realization emerged in response to Dunbar-Ortiz's (2015) description of the "race to innocence":

> A "race to innocence" is what occurs when individuals assume that they are innocent of complicity in structures of domination and oppression. This concept captures the assumption made by new immigrants or children of recent immigrants to any country. They cannot be responsible, they assume, for what occurred in their adopted country's past...Yet, in a settler society that has not come to terms with its past, whatever historical trauma was entailed in settling the land affects the assumptions and behaviors of living generations at any given time, including immigrants and the children of recent immigrants. (p. 229)

In a memo that I composed after finishing the book, I explained, "Dunbar-Ortiz's final words remind me that the overwhelming guilt I experience, whether I am acknowledging trauma and abuse in my family or the history of oppression experienced by indigenous people on this continent or elsewhere—this guilt is useless. In fact, I tend to think that it is this guilt that makes people turn away, to ignore, to [attempt] to erase these atrocities. This guilt perpetuates dehumanization." I then turned back to Dunbar-Ortiz, who asks, "How then can US society come to terms with its past? How can it acknowledge responsibility?" Quoting the late Native historian Jack Forbes, Dunbar-Ortiz explained that he "always stressed that while living persons are not responsible for what their ancestors did, they are responsible for the society they live in, which is a product of that past. Assuming this responsibility provides a means of survival and liberation" (p. 335). She then shared a few ways forward, which include acknowledging the violence of US military intervention, bringing to light the history and heritages of indigenous ancestries in U.S.

K-12 schooling, honoring the treaties the U.S. made with indigenous communities, restoring sacred sites, and providing reparations for reconstruction and expansion of Native nations.

In response to Dunbar-Ortiz and others I had recently read, I recognized that "not one [Black, Indigenous or Person of Color] I have read has said the way forward is for white people or settler colonists or monolingual English-speaking U.S. citizens to feel guilty. As a social construct, guilt forces us to turn away or look down rather than to look directly at oppression." Once again making a connection to my experiences with harm in my personal history, I explained:

> The guilt I experienced from my childhood trauma forced me to close myself off, to put up a shell, to disconnect. I have learned to see that acknowledging responsibility helps me to imagine a way forward where I can do and be differently. I can take up space and have a voice despite those who inflicted abuse in my family. I can come alongside those who have also experienced abuse rather than fearing that their experiences with oppression will remind me of my own.

In seeing these parallels between my personal experiences and the nature of oppression writ large, I could no longer knowingly associate myself with the dehumanizing practices of English language education. And that meant that I had to continue seeking opportunities as an LT and LTE where I could unlearn and relearn, not from the dominant perspectives and practices privileged in the U.S., but from the perspectives and practices positioned on the periphery. However, just as I had begun to learn to empathize without centering myself, I had to consider how I might pursue opportunities to learn from the periphery without imposing myself or reasserting my privilege as a white, U.S. born, NES.

Ultimately, I began to consider how I might adopt what I am calling a stance of "humility on the periphery." By this, I am referring to instances I have where I have been invited and accepted to stand alongside others who are positioned on the periphery based, for instance, on their language backgrounds, racialized identities, or national origins. These experiences emerged organically, often because of a shared commitment, such as collaboratively inquiring into translanguaging, travelling as a part of an educational fellowship, or choosing to take a similar class or professional learning experience—although they also require intentionality on my part to seek out these shared commitments. They can be conceptualized as contact zones (Pratt, 1991), where individuals from across a variety of positionalities, backgrounds, and experiences have the opportunity to collide and negotiate across their differences in order to achieve a shared purpose. However, simply sharing this space does not mean that I have been invited to stand alongside others who have been historically marginalized. Instead, in my initial interactions, I have extended what I learned from my engagement in TTT in order to decenter myself and center others: monitoring my talk time, conveying active listening through my body language and question asking, and explicitly naming and questioning problematic power dimensions that inevitably emerge in social interactions. I check whether what I am sharing or asking comes from a place of ego, where I am attempting to maintain my unearned privilege as a white, U.S.-born, English-dominant speaker by reinscribing dominant ideologies, or whether I am intentionally carving out space to level hierarchies and co-construct knowledge. I also attempt to convey that I am always learning, rather than feigning awareness and knowledge, but that my continued learning is *my* responsibility. In my view, these intentional choices are all necessary to foster the development of the inner resources requisite for these experiences to become *nepantla* contact

zones. I will further illustrate the enactment of these inner resources in the next section, as they have become central to how I attempt to "live with a translanguaging stance."

Seeking Nepantla Contact Zones

TTT's interactions and our critical study of translanguaging began to seep into other interactions in my life. Within our group, many of us aligned ourselves with translanguaging as a "theory of language and practice…[that] has the potential to disrupt monolingual bias [and] the potential to disrupt these like perceived boundaries around nation-states and people," a point I raised during one of our later meetings (February 22, 2019). I wondered how we might extend this to blur perceived boundaries between ourselves and others within our personal interactions: "People talk about how translanguaging disrupts these perceived boundaries, [like those] between nation states, but if we zoom in on a micro-level, it also disrupts these boundaries in our interpersonal relationships." I also saw this as a necessary challenge for myself, acknowledging that "if I'm not doing this on a personal level, I can't do it in my own teaching." Consistent with Anzaldúa (2015), who suggests that the "path of knowledge requires that we apply what we learn to all our daily activities, to our relationships with ourselves, with others, with the environment, with nature" (p. 91), I wondered aloud to TTT what it might mean to "live with a translanguaging stance across spaces in practice," an objective that I began to actively pursue in interactions beyond our group.

One example of this occurred during a writing retreat that began later the same day that I stated my desire to "live with a translanguaging stance" (February 22, 2019). I attended the retreat with two close friends from graduate school, Ashley Moore and Eliana A. Castro, both bilingual English-Spanish speakers. During our interactions, we often default to using English, a meaning-making resource that we all share; however, towards the end of our retreat, we were

joined by Ashley's then-partner, whose dominant language is Spanish. During brunch, the three of them had launched into a discussion in Spanish. When this happened in the past, either with them or others speaking a language in which I had limited capacity to engage, I often tuned out and excluded myself during the discussion, reflective of monoglossic ideologies of language separation. However, as I recalled in a memo I wrote a month later (March 29, 2019), I explicitly made a decision to listen more actively during this occasion. Having picked up some Spanish from my students and studying on my own for a brief period in the past, I was surprised to discover that I understood more than I expected. While I could not contribute to the conversation in Spanish, I could understand much of what my friends were saying and would contribute in English when I could.

Around that same time, I began co-teaching a high school ESL class as a part of an ongoing research project to investigate my translanguaging pedagogy as an LTE. Given that I had returned to the very classroom I taught in as an LT, I inevitably compared this to previous teaching experiences from three years before. Referring to this experience in that same memo (March 29, 2019), I wrote, "I'm also noticing that I am very willing to listen and try to make sense of what students are saying in the moments where they are using resources other than English." Additionally, my interactions with TTT, where we had contended with our taken-for-granted practice of resorting to English as the dominant language, had taught me that I needed to be doubly aware about resisting the dominance of English and explicit in my willingness to engage in meaning-making using other resources. In other words, I had to explicitly reject my assumed privilege as a dominant English speaker in order to disrupt the influence of assimilationist ideologies. Thus, in returning to the ESL classroom, I recognized more readily

that students were unlikely to integrate meaning-making practices other than English into their classroom interactions unless I, as the teacher, repeatedly invited them to do so.

While it is beyond the purview of this current study to map the transformation within my *enacted* translanguaging pedagogy as an LT and LTE, for now, I point to this experience as another example that I was actively seeking discomfort in *nepantla* contact zones. Reflecting on these aforementioned experiences in that same memo, I recognized that "in our U.S. context, it seems rare that I have to extend beyond the linguistic resources I use on a daily basis and this is part of my privilege." I continued in the memo to explain the following:

> I notice that, when I am engaged with others whose linguistic repertoires include language systems other than English, they are apologetic if they are concerned that I (or others around me) cannot understand them (e.g., because of accent, grammar use, etc.). I think of Elie's comments when he was sharing at the conclusion of our meeting [that suggested] it is his responsibility alone to communicate in English in a prescribed way rather than our *shared* responsibility to negotiate meaning together.

While I recalled other instances from the past where people were apologetic for their accent or grammar when speaking English, such as colleagues or parents of previous students, I was learning to claim *my* responsibility to disrupt the presumed power dynamic in our interactions. To that end, I wondered how else I might stretch my own meaning-making practices as well as actively redistribute the privileges I have as a U.S.-born NES. When the opportunity to apply for a program called the Fellowship to Enhance Global Understandings, or FEGU, appeared through my university, I was eager to apply.

Pursing Nepantla Abroad

As previously mentioned, I was unable to study abroad during my undergraduate education because of financial constraints. While I had often imagined leveraging my experience as an ESL educator to teach abroad, this never seemed feasible for me as a young professional who was establishing her career just as the U.S. economy was careening into the Great Recession. Hence, FEGU seemed to be a once-in-a-life opportunity that would allow me to study abroad with the support of a university fellowship. FEGU is an established program for doctoral students within the College of Education at Michigan State University; the general premise of the program is to create a learning experience for doctoral students to investigate educational systems within contexts outside the U.S. and their intersection with other facets of society, such as language, gender, race, or immigration. Serendipitously, in the year I chose to apply, the program was being offered in France, which would afford me the opportunity to extend my language repertoire using a resource I had already begun to develop. In addition, given what I learned from Elie throughout TTT, I felt particularly primed to explore the dynamics of education, language, race, and socioeconomic status in France. While I would have been pleased to have studied in another country or language context, I also recognized that I had essentially prepared for this opportunity well before I even applied.

In my application for FEGU, I explained that I would bring a unique lens to "[exploring] the intersection of identities, ideologies, and education" in the French context, particularly in relation to "my growing expertise as it relates to how learners' identities are discursively constructed within micro-level sociocultural contexts, like individual classrooms, meso-level contexts like schools and neighborhoods, and macro-level contexts, like nation-states." By this point, I had also already decided to embark on "an ongoing autoethnographic project" that had

grown out of my collaboration with TTT. To that end, my expressed goal in participating in FEGU was to "problematize the limitations of my U.S. and monolingual English-centric paradigms and broaden the set of experiences and lens I bring to my work as a teacher and scholar in the TESOL and bilingual education world" from an intersectional perspective that considers "immigration status, religion, race, age, gender, and linguistic, physical, and cognitive abilities."

While I had not yet encountered Anzaldúa's theorization of *nepantla*, I had explored Pratt and Canagarajah's theorization of contact zones and had begun to recognize the need to create contact zone interactions for myself given the predominantly white and monolingual English-speaking contexts within which I most frequently interacted. Looking back on this experience, I can also see how my interactions with TTT had taught me to pursue what I would now describe as *nepantla* contact zones. Until this point, my interactions had generally emerged organically. Thus, my engagement in FEGU marked the first opportunity where I drew upon my experience with TTT to *intentionally* enter a contact zone interaction with the expressed purpose of transforming my ideological perspectives and inner resources. Thus, in a TTT meeting that I attended just after being accepted to the FEGU program, I explained the following: "The benefit that I have is I'm going to go in with the frame of translanguaging in mind. So I think that the kind of risk taking then I'll be able to take [into] it will be very different [than] three years ago when I also said I'm a monolingual English speaker."

My interactions with TTT quite literally bled into my experiences as a part of FEGU; I recall carrying my open laptop, where I was listening to Elie share his final comment during a TTT meeting, as I walked to Room 107 in Erickson Hall for my first in-person FEGU meeting. I closed my laptop as I entered the room, but my conversation with TTT lingered in my mind as

the faculty members and fellows participating in FEGU introduced themselves. Later in the meeting, when I was paired with two other fellows, Candice and Ofelia (both multilingual speakers who grew up in the U.S.), I shared that one of my goals in participating was to expand my critical consciousness of hegemonic language ideologies as well as my own translanguaging capacity. In response, Ofelia shared that she tended to not employ her Spanish resources in academic contexts because of unspoken expectations to use English, but that it limited what she could express. Recalling this in the memo I wrote later that day, I returned to one of the questions I had explored with TTT: How can I, as a person who exists in linguistic privilege, "create space to support others in using their full linguistic resources—to know that it's ok for me to have to do the work of figuring out what they are saying in French or Mandarin or Spanish or Arabic?" I recognized that, similar to what I would do in a classroom context, I could directly ask what a word is in another language or open Google Translate, but I began to wonder how else I might take responsibility for shifting away from English while I was also learning a new language. In Anzaldua's (2015) framing, I was motivated to "discover resources" within myself and to "take responsibility" for consciously contributing in my interactions within new contact zone communities (p. 136)

This question became a central concern of mine as I prepared to embark on my two-week FEGU journey, and, in fact, was the reason I decided to remain in France for an additional six weeks beyond the fellowship. I was in the privileged position of having the university cover the majority of my travel expenses, including my airfare, and I knew that it was common for FEGU fellows to request an adjustment to their return flight date in order to extend their stays. After researching multiple options for lodging, including considering home stays or short-term teaching positions, I found a relatively inexpensive Airbnb in southwest France, where I would

travel by train. My intention in staying and traveling to another part of France was to be forced to navigate communication beyond English—to intentionally seek discomfort.

In thinking about the structure of my experience from the perspective of an LT, I recognize the tremendous benefit of being immersed in a language learning experience with multiple levels of support. Thus, I think of the two weeks I spent in Paris as a part of FEGU as an opportunity to expand my French language repertoire and translanguaging capacity while being well supported within my zone of proximal development. While I certainly was immersed in French during the two-weeks FEGU program, I rarely *had to* extend myself beyond English. During our journey to and from the airport, when we checked into our hotel, and throughout our excursions around Paris and nearby villages, my FEGU colleagues and I were consistently surrounded by others who were bilingual English-French speakers, including the two faculty members who hosted the fellowship, two graduate students who had previously participated the same FEGU program the year before and returned to support our experience, and our tour guide, Felipe. We spent several days observing and eventually teaching English language lessons at *un lycée* just north of Paris, but even then, *les professeurs et les étudiantes parlent anglais.* The rare occasions where I had to negotiate meaning-making and communication without assistance were when we were ordering food or taking *le metro*, which I only did a few times on my own. Generally, during these interactions, I was joined by two other fellows and close friends, Christa and Renee. Together, we would negotiate meaning using various ecological resources, such as menus or signs; I also had the opportunity to more explicitly use my developing French. The support and success I experienced during these two weeks were vital in building my confidence in my expanding translanguaging repertoire while being relatively within my comfort zone.

However, before I knew it, FEGU came to an end, and I began my month-long solo journey in the southwest corner of France.

Interlude #5 (May-June 2019)

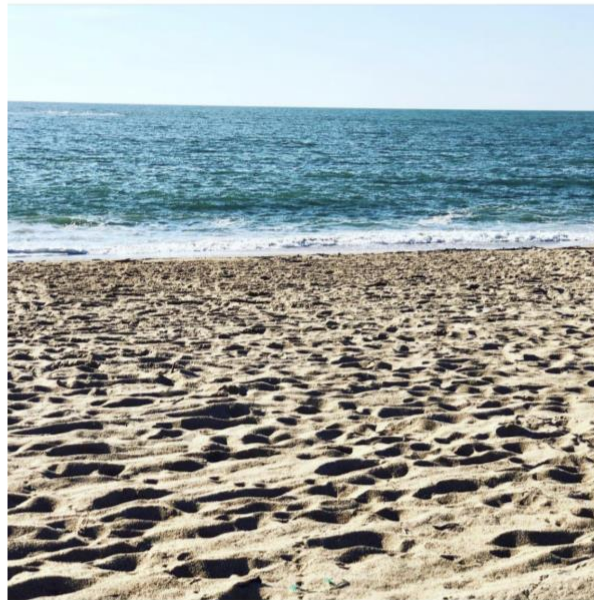
Figure 5: Instagram Post from First Solo Week in France

christinaponzio This morning, I left Paris and the fellowship group I've been a part of the past two weeks. Finding my train to Biarritz, listening to conversations French en route, and then sorting out the bus system to get to my apartment made me feel small and ill equipped. Language is access and agency and without it, I struggled to find either. That said, I trusted what resources I do have and found myself here on the Atlantic coast about 30 minutes north of Spain. I fed myself lunch, carted home groceries and did laundry. There was a sense of reassurance in these everyday tasks. This evening, I ventured back out for wine and found myself entranced by the way the light hits the city. I'm looking forward to quiet moments on the coast this week. I'm expecting to feel lonely over the next month, but I'm eager to see what I learn from that.

Note. This photo and caption was composed during the first week of my solo stay in France.

Figure 6: Instagram Post from Second Solo Week in France

christinaponzio



christinaponzio When we strip away what's familiar--language, people, habitus--what are we left with? In this space, there is so much I have let go of: my ability to fluidly communicate, to determine what version of myself I construct within social contexts, to experience a sense of belonging. But there's also so much I don't have to let go of because of my privilege. My identity as a white female makes it possible for me to easily pass as a local in this very white space; someone even stopped me to ask for directions. I have such limited capacity to communicate in French (five years in high school and college don't cut it), but I can revert back to English with relative ease, knowing that it is a lingua franca. My education and social capital have made this whole experience possible. And I have immediate access to multiple forms of technology, which make it possible for me to move about with little assistance. My privilege makes it possible for me to stay within myself if I so choose, but at what cost. Practicing vulnerability, empathy and openness means pursuing what is unknown. To extend beyond our boundaries in pursuit of liminality. And to have the choice to do so without relatively little consequence is itself privilege. What do we discover about ourselves and those around us in liminal spaces?

Note. This photo and caption was composed during the first week of my solo stay in France.

Figure 7: Instagram Post from Third Solo Week in France

christinaponzio Today I attended my first French class in almost 15 years. Having been a language teacher for nearly that long, I know that language development requires tremendous scaffolding from an "expert" and lots of interaction with others. Receiving relevant input at just the right moment along with lots of opportunities to produce language helped jog my memory around vocabulary and grammar that have been buried deep in the recesses of my mind; it also helped that I got to start using new knowledge in a real communicative context. And arguably, I had the authentic purpose of engaging with a group of others who are actively seeking to co-construct meaning, which for me, may have been the first time. The artificial context of a high school or college foreign language classroom has nothing on being in a context where French is the mode of communication for many. I also felt my "deer in a headlights" look start to dissipate as the teacher slowed her speech, repeated ideas, and invited me to ask questions. I've had a tremendous amount of empathy over the years for the many students to whom I have taught English as an additional language —but I don't think it's possible to REALLY get it without having to learn another language yourself. I also know I'll probably never fully get it for a whole host of reasons. (Side note: It's fascinating to be actively seeking to learn another language while having years of teaching experience and building theoretical understandings around the process.)

Note. This photo and caption was composed during the third week of my solo stay in France.

Figure 8: Instagram Post from Fourth Solo Week in France

christinaponzio Before I came to France, I had plotted to find spaces to practice the language. A corner bar where I would become a regular. The coffee shop that I would spend each morning reading. A grandmotherly figure who would be patient with me to sit and chat. It's been harder than I would like to find spaces to feel welcome enough to stay for a while and vulnerable enough to experiment with language. I've wondered how much of it is perceived reality—a story I'm making up in my own head. How much of it is me reading facial expressions and body language, perhaps in inaccurate ways.

One place I have found is a really lovely cafe called Manatee (which is appropriate given my childhood love for the creatures). My first time there, the woman behind the counter switched to English to help me, which is both frustrating and reassuring when it happens. I happened to mention that I had a mix of euros with American and Canadian coins in my wallet, which led to us talking about her time living in Montreal and why I'm here. I went back last Sunday on a particularly rainy day to knock out several hours of planning for my class, and even though we didn't talk (I think it might have been Mother's Day here and she was quite busy), I felt welcome enough to stay for the better part of the afternoon.

Today, I stopped in pour un goûté (they make amazing smoothies like the one in this picture) and she asked how I was doing. I shared with her that I would be starting one-on-one French classes this week. I also told her I would most likely be back in since rain was expected, and she said I would have to share with her how the classes went. As I left, I felt tears well up in my eyes, perhaps in response to experiencing a small sense of belonging. I generally thrive in solitude, but I'm also a very communal creature (aren't we all?). I am not an island, nor do I want to be.

Note. This photo and caption was composed during the fourth week of my solo stay in France.

Existing in Discomfort

While my time in France could be analyzed as a part of a whole dissertation on its own, I wish to highlight how my experiences there point back to the ongoing transformation that grew

from my interactions with TTT. With me, I carried an increased awareness of the multiple ideological influences that shape linguistic hierarchies. This included Elizabeth and Zhongfeng's fierce commitment to pursuing the enactment of translanguaging as an act of social justice and to level socially-constructed language hierarchies. I also carried with me Abe's story of *lírico* and the example he and Laura both set in having "the courage to go and do it," with regard to entering communicative contexts in which they had developing capacity in the dominant language. And I carried with me the vulnerable strength and critical self-awareness modeled by Elie and Maíra in shifting the physical and abstract space I would call "home." (In truth, each of these statements could be said of all members of TTT.)

Being in France on my own challenged me to navigate linguistic hierarchies and how I might mitigate them in new ways. Essentially, this was the first time I was living in a context where the dominant language was not English. Even though English is a lingua franca in France and even though most people with whom I interacted knew some English, I did not want to rely on or expect this in my interactions–for a couple reasons. For one, I wanted to practice and expand my capacity to communicate in French. I also saw myself as an interloper, and as such, I did not want to rely on my privilege as an NES or to be perceived by others as an "entitled American." At the same time, I could only get so far on my French skills—and a bit further with Google Translate—before many people with whom I interacted switched to English. Attempting to limp through conversations in French felt like another imposition, particularly when my interactions were predominately with people in the service industry. Essentially, I felt like to do so would be to trap the servers or sales clerks with whom I interacted into practicing French with me. This raised a whole other set of questions around power dynamics in relation to class.

On the one hand, I wanted to discard my privilege as a NES. I wanted to be courageous,

like Abe, and immerse myself in French. I wanted to strike up a conversation with strangers who seemed open to it. On the other hand, I was grateful that I could withdraw within myself, and to rely on the taken-for-granted assumption that others would switch to English on my behalf. I could put my headphones on, bury my face in my phone, and find human connection through Instagram or Snapchat—recognizing that this, too, was a privilege. As I shared in Interlude #5 (Figure 7), "My privilege makes it possible for me to stay within myself if I so choose, but at what cost. Practicing vulnerability, empathy and openness means pursuing what is unknown. To extend beyond our boundaries in pursuit of liminality. And to have the choice to do so with relatively little consequence is itself privilege. What do we discover about ourselves and those around us in liminal spaces?" A week into my solo journey, I resolved to find a community context where I could stretch beyond myself. Through a website called Meetup that I had first encountered in Detroit, I discovered a weekly conversation class, where I eventually met two other women from the U.S.; after meeting with the teacher, a native French woman who had lived in California for a time, I found she also gave one-on-one classes, of which I took advantage a handful of times. (See Interlude #5, Figure 8.) Grateful though I was for these experiences, they were not the interactions I had hoped for before coming to France. (See Interlude #5, Figure 9.) At the same time, I knew how fortunate I was to have the time and financial resources to afford them.

Grounding myself in my body and my discomfort once more (Anzaldúa, 2015), I grappled with the mix of these complicated emotions: I felt sadness in my loneliness, but I also felt tremendous joy and gratitude for the opportunity to be abroad. In any given moment, I might feel powerless and resourceful. I was, for the first time, sojourning in a new country—a privilege that I had yearned for, but questioned whether I would ever enjoy. I was also humbled to

consider that I was the first person in my family to set foot in Europe since my great-grandparents immigrated. I remember sitting alone at the southwest corner of France, staring at the Atlantic Ocean and feeling so small and lucky. I knew the other side of this ocean, having glimpsed it in New York and Rhode Island and North Carolina and Florida during one of many road trips. But I was the first in four generations to view it from this side of the world.

Sitting in what little knowledge I have of my family's roots, I began to wonder what courage and determination it took for my great-grandparents to decide to leave behind their homes in Palermo and Calabria, Italy and Osijek, Croatia (my mother stills calls it Austria-Hungary), escaping the violence and economic hardship of their homelands at the turn of the 20th century. I wondered what fears and hopes they carried as they began anew as immigrants in a new country and a new language, laboring in the coal mines of Clarksburg, West Virginia and the Ford auto plants of Detroit, Michigan to create a home for their new families. I wondered what heartbreaks or joys my grandparents experienced as the children of immigrants in a xenophobic country, learning English while attending school—at least until 11 or 12 years old, in the case of my paternal grandparents—before they began to work in Detroit factories themselves. And I wondered what threads of connection were lost between their generations, my parents, and now me, in cutting roots on one side of the Atlantic and setting down new roots on the other side.

Somehow, I needed to travel 4,000 miles to truly begin to grapple with what was both lost and gained over four generations of assimilation—to catch a glimpse of myself as *nos/otras*. I recognized that I simultaneously existed in privilege and loss. I had the privilege of being born in the U.S. because Salvatore and Francesca, Serafina and Giovanni, Anna and John, and two forebears whose names I do not know chose to leave behind their homes and communities. I had the privilege of being a NES because those same forebears chose to sever their Italian,

Hungarian, and German roots, believing it necessary for their children to learn English, become "Americans," and be successful in U.S. schools and society—the result of monoglossic ideologies (García, 2009) and native speaker saviorism (Jenks & Lee, 2019) seeping into their home language policies. And even if my Italian and Hungarian forebears were once racialized as other than white in the U.S. context, my parents and I are racialized as white today.

If I am being really honest, then as now and in the dozens of moments in between when I have grappled with this reality, I have been brought to tears, my heart tight in my chest and my instincts telling me to turn away. *Bury it away again. You're making too much of it. You're fine—and others have had it worse.* They are feelings of grief that I do not understand and wonder if I ever will, given the loss of my family's history over the passage of time and assimilation and silence. What I do know is that these feelings resonate with those I mentioned in the last chapter, when I reckoned with the survivor's guilt I experienced with abuse in my immediate family—when I accepted the fact that I had both suffered abuse and was complicit in it. After all, I chose to remain silent and to conform to the prescribed codes of behavior in my family (I know this is not really fair to my child self). If I am being doubly honest, I always ask myself why it matters, especially in the context of this study and especially in academic conversations. In turning back to the theoretical framework of this study, though, I resolve to turn back and answer that question. Why *does* it matter? What does my body, as the ground of thought (Anzaldúa, 2015), tell me?

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"Nepantla is the midway point between the conscious and the unconscious, the place where transformations are enacted. Nepantla is a place where we can accept contradiction and paradox" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 56).

***

at the edge

of the ocean, the opposite

boundary of the liminal

space

crossed by my forebears

both *nos/otras*

oppressor/oppressed

simultaneously

standing on opposite

shores

both product/producer of assimilation

  of school gates

  creating rifts

  like the Atlantic Ocean between children and

their parents

severed roots shallowly grown

thirsty for “home”

***

This poem was composed during the final day of composing my findings for this study and represents the in-the-moment fracturing and transformation that occurred as I relived and narrativized my time in France through the theoretical lens of this study nearly two years after. While I am only just beginning to explicitly name how I am a *product* of oppression as much as I have been a *producer* of it, I recognize that contending with the deleterious effects of forced assimilation and erasure experienced by my family continues to live on today in my body and relationships. In reflecting on what it means, I recognize that viewing myself as *nos/otras* has allowed me to have compassion and empathy for myself and to extend that to other generations, past, present and future, of people who have been or may be forced to sever their linguistic and cultural roots. Likewise, I see the emergence of that empathy and the inner resources therein as necessary to the work of actively decentering myself and the assimilationist language ideologies that reify my privilege as a white, NES, U.S.-born LT and LTE. And finally, I contend that this effort to decenter myself has been necessary to center the meaning-making resources of language-minoritized students through translanguaging pedagogies. To this end, I now turn to the discussion and implications for this study.

CHAPTER 8: PEDAGOGICAL REIMAGINING

"Your ethnic tribe wants you to isolate, insisting that you remain within race and class boundaries. The dominant culture prefers that you abandon your roots and assimilate…How can you step outside ethnic and other labels while cleaving to your root identity? Your identity has roots you share with all people and other beings—spirit, feeling, and body constitute a greater identity category" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 140).

This critical autoethnography began as a self-study of my emerging translanguaging pedagogy as a white, self-defined monolingual NES LT and LTE. This study is rooted in some of my earliest questions as teacher: How can I advance more equitable and inclusive educational experiences among language-minoritized learners in spite of the gatekeeping functions of language and literacy in K-12 U.S. education? My initial exploration into translanguaging came through my interactions with my students—where, in the contact zone space of our classroom, our respective meaning-making resources, cultural practices, and backgrounds collided. At the time, our translanguaging interactions grew from the practical matters of teaching and learning: to build relationships with students, to communicate, and to scaffold the development of school-based English language and literacy practices. Throughout the course of these interactions, though, taken-for-granted assumptions about classroom power dynamics and language hierarchies remained. It was not until I began to explicitly learn about translanguaging that I began to consider what ideological forces I needed to trouble in order to enact it as praxis. Thus, this critical autoethnography evolved into a study of my ideological reckoning and translanguaging reimagining as an LT and LTE. Over the past decade and a half, I've become aware of how I, as a seemingly well-intentioned white, NES LT and LTE, have been caught up in assimilationist language ideologies, or *desconocimientos,* both carried away by and

perpetuating them. Unraveling their influence has resulted in the ongoing process of *conocimiento* reflected in the findings of this study (Chapter 5-7), which I now thread together with the literature review and theoretical framework (Chapters 2-3) by way of discussion. I then conclude with what implications this study offers LTs and LTEs.

Discussion

Revisiting Chapter 5: An Ideological Starting Place

In looking back at Chapter 5, "An Ideological Starting Place," my earliest experiences continually centered White Mainstream English, though there were multiple opportunities for me to exist in culturally and linguistically-diverse spaces, or contact zones (Pratt, 1991). I learned from a young age to associate particular language variations or language systems with geographic locations, whether the regional dialects of the Midwest compared with the Southeast U.S. or the bounded named language systems of European nation-states, all reflective of the Herderian Triad and monoglossic ideologies (Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Blommaert & Verschueren, 1992; García, 2009). Even though I knew that my grandparents and great-grandparents spoke Italian, Hungarian and German, I also knew that, here in the U.S., our family spoke English. Once I began school, specifically in Florida, my classrooms had the potential to be natural contact zones, raising my awareness of linguistic, racial and economic diversity in the U.S. While I do not recall explicitly negotiating communication, beliefs or values with my peers, my experiences at school and among my family made me curious about language diversity, as evidenced by my "language auction" imagining, exchanging Italian swear words and hand gestures with my younger brother, and my decision to study another language as soon as I had the chance. However, even after studying French for five years in high school and college, I

continued to define myself as monolingual, reflective of the influence of native speakerism (Holliday, 2005) and the "pure" boundaries delineated by monoglossic ideologies (García, 2009).

I chose to pursue college as a first-generation student because school had been a place where I was affirmed. As a white, fourth-generation immigrant, I was acculturated into White Mainstream English as well as the literacy practices I encountered in school, and I self-identified as a reader and writer from a young age. When I began college, those identities informed my decision to become a teacher, specifically an English language arts teacher. My undergraduate experience and teacher preparation program represent important contact zones that began pointing me towards *nepantla.* From sharing a home with Guangye and tutoring international students to eventually deciding to also become an English as a second language teacher, I began to bump up against language and cultural practices outside those into which I had been acculturated. These opportunities emerged from a mix of happenstance and intentionality: I chose to go to college and become an English teacher, to build a friendship with Guangye and become roommates, and to post an online advertisement to be an English tutor. These choices were, at least in part, the result of my NES status, the alignment of my literacy practices with whiteness, and the access and privilege they both afforded me in school.

However, these decisions were also the result of my precarious financial status. Guangye and I became roommates because we realized that renting an apartment five miles southwest of campus and cooking our own meals would be less expensive than living in the dorms. I began tutoring because I needed to supplement my income; if it had not been for that, I may never have met Monica, Stewart, Julie, Brad, and Kelsey, whose lived experiences complicated my awareness of what it meant to be NNESs and immigrants in the U.S. I decided to study French and become an ESL teacher to ensure I could finish college quickly and gain employment as a

teacher. And because I had to work a third job as a server at a local restaurant during my teaching internship and first year of teaching, I had the opportunity to meet Jose, who made me further aware of the challenges of being an undocumented NNES in the U.S. In other words, while my racial and linguistic privilege may have contributed to me going to college and becoming a teacher, my lack of class privilege resulted in a handful of decisions that led to life-changing contact zone interactions.

My experiences in college and particularly the juxtaposition of my teacher preparation classes to become certified to teach ELA and ESL mark other early fractures, or *rajaduras*, in my *(des)conocimiento.* Through Wilson (1859), Johnson (1912), Omi and Winant (1994), and Purcell-Gates (2002), I began to see race, language, and literacy as social constructs created to maintain the power of few and the disenfranchisement of many. I also began to explicitly recognize that I had benefited because of the alignment between my language and literacy practices with White Mainstream English. I claimed responsibility (at least in words, if not yet in action) to disrupt the power dynamics of language and literacy in my future classrooms. However, with few real-life examples of how to do this in the classroom, I reproduced the same assimilationist ideologies into which I was indoctrinated as a beginning ESL/ELA teacher, upholding the ideological belief of native speaker saviorism (Jenks & Lee, 2019) whereby language-minoritized students positioned as cultural Others might be "saved" by learning English and achieving proximity to whiteness.

The eight years I spent as a classroom teacher, ESL program coordinator, and de facto advocate for students and families marked a radical period of unlearning and relearning for me, but as I point out in Chapter 5, this came at a cost to the 150 students[14] I taught over that time.

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[14] Carlos, Angelo, Drew, Lorena, Arielis, Aracelis, Jose Alberto, Jose Armando, Lizmarie, Genesis M., Francheli, Tatiana, Andres O., Andres A., Genesis R., Antonio, Danny, Yabdiel, Yabner, Luis, Lorenzo B., Alexis, Giovanni,

How many times did they have to implicitly or explicitly resist restrictive classroom language policies, curricular resources that did not reflect their identities or experiences, or instructional and assessment practices that undermined their language and cultural resources? How much courage did it take for Ishmael to ask me, "Miss, don't you know that Puerto Ricans like to talk a lot?" How much more challenging, disaffirming, and dehumanizing had I made their educational experiences?

While I began to recognize my own translanguaging capacity and to exhibit the characteristics associated with the cooperative disposition of translingual speakers (Canagarajah, 2013) during that time, the lens I used to view my students, myself and our interactions was largely constrained by assimilationist language ideologies and my *desconocimientos*. Thus, while my time in the classroom represents a critical contact zone in my process of *conocimiento*, the collisions in this space did not yet result in the fracturing and transformation that within the internal and liminal space of *nepantla*. To be honest, I question whether I should have even had my own classroom without having developed this critical awareness since I likely enacted undue harm on my students, a question that resonates with recent critiques of practice-based teacher education (i.e., Daniels & Varghese, 2019; Peercy et al., 2019). Today, as an LTE, I contend that much of what I learned during my eight years of teaching should be central to how we educate future LTs and is reflective of what scholars in TESOL and bilingual education have advocated for over a decade, a point that I will return to in the implications section (e.g., García, 2009;

Isaiha, Joel, Kiara, Genesis S., Jorge, Natasha, Erica, Yalianez, Yuleidis, Marcos, Carlos, Angelo, Drew, Jose A., Maria, Abel, Ivan, Nelson, Mario, Tony, Angel, Julie, Dana, Adrianna, Miguel, Beto, Eugene, Brenda, Marvin, Sergio, David, Henry, Josue, Dyanaris, Manny, Guillermo,Yosue, May, Aline, Neishaliz, Lilly, Miguel, Francheska, Jennifer, Tatiana, Eleonore, Krystof, Sydney, Hohin, Oskars, Sue Lyn, Ricky, Louis, Michal Z., Michal M., Anahita, Sunny, Tomas, Jiri, Ryanka, Giulia, Elysabeth, Elie, Oriol, Farah, Emma, Maelle, Camille, Celyan, Allesandro, Jamael, Alena, Amina, Helena, Cecile, Lorenzo, Giovanni, Richard, Renad, Noor, Fadi, Farah, Baraa, Kristina, Vlad, Giorgia, Amadeo, Anna, Yaela, Murtaza, Caroline, Dimitrios, Fiona, Jonathan, Julie, Pietro, Selim, Nina, Thomas, William, Marc, Wei-Shun, Wei-Yao, Taihei, York, Megan, Agathe, Alexis, Asaad, Flavia, Honore, Sofian, Marisol, Daan, Joppe, Tiphaine

García & Li, 2014; García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017; Seltzer, 2018). This emerging realization is what informed my commitment to make translanguaging as a critical praxis the central focus of my current work as an LTE and researcher.

Revisiting Chapter 6: Ideological Reckoning

Given my aims in this study and the gap I intend to address among LTE scholarship, the findings reflected in Chapter 6, "Ideological Reckoning," offer new insight into the role of self-study among LTEs and perhaps its potential in preparing LTs to enact translanguaging as a critical praxis. TTT emerged from a common purpose: our shared inquiry into translanguaging. Unlike my time in the classroom, where students were more or less forced to interact with me, the opportunities I had to explicitly learn about translanguaging in theory and practice as a beginning LTE and specifically as a part of TTT represent a co-constructed contact zone, where each member chose to be a part of the group. Thus, to the extent possible, we attempted to position each other as equals—unlike the inherent teacher-student power dynamics of the classroom.

Having translanguaging as our central focus undoubtedly said a lot about our predispositions towards interacting with each other as well as the practices we co-constructed to create generative contact zone interactions. We all had experience negotiating communication across named language systems. We each already had a vested interest in English language education, either as learners, LTs, or LTEs; we all had already been introduced to translanguaging and shared a commitment to its critical aims. Thus, from the beginning, our group was not shy in naming and critiquing assimilationist language ideologies. We were also quite open from the beginning about sharing our respective experiences with language and language education from an intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 1991) and became more so

over time as we discussed vulnerable matters, such as Zhongfeng and Abe acknowledging their experiences in being racialized within the U.S., Maíra and Elie acknowledging their self-consciousness and doubt in using English, or Elizabeth, Laura and I acknowledging the uncertainty we felt in calling ourselves “bilingual.”

While I was familiar with many of the matters we discussed in the group from my own studies as a doctoral student, such as the deleterious influence of native speakerism (Holliday, 2006) or raciolinguistic ideologies (Alim, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015), TTT put real faces and experiences to these matters. Among a community of people who I consider friends, I felt a heightened sense of accountability to acknowledge my complicity in perpetuating harmful ideologies and to take active steps to redress this harm in my work as an LT and LTE. Within the very real human-to-human interactions of our group, I experienced feelings of guilt when I realized that I benefited as a NES LT at the expense of NNES LTs, like Zhongfeng or Abe, in the field of English language teaching. I felt contrite when I realized that my overly simplistic supposition that feeling at “home” had to do with one’s sense of self-worth undermined the layers of complexity and marginalization that Maíra faced in calling New Hampshire “home.” I felt affirmed when my groupmates echoed my struggle in feeling at home among my immediate family in contrast to the acceptance and understanding we experience among each other. I felt inspired by everyone’s stories of courage and resolve in navigating new contexts, even when they felt like interlopers in new languages and cultures. And I felt a growing sense of empathy that helped me move beyond myself as I sought to understand, to the extent possible, the experiences of my groupmates. While I did not understand it then, this experience planted an important seed that later allowed me to extend that empathy to myself, a point I will return to shortly.

Reflecting heteroglossic commitments to meaning-making (García, 2009), our group's interactions also provided me with multiple real-life examples of how to consciously decenter English (and myself) to the extent possible, explicitly contend with inherent ideological power dynamics (as discussed above), and draw upon the inner resources necessary to enact in translanguaging. Although English was the shared resource among our group, we explicitly questioned its centrality in our interactions and purposefully integrated opportunities for meaning-making using other resources, such as visually representing our language practices through our language portraits or exploring the term lírico as a metaphor for translanguaging. That said, our group's interactions made me increasingly aware of how difficult it is to work in opposition to ideological forces, such as monoglossic ideologies (García, 2009) and native speakerism (Holliday, 2005), even with our conscious efforts to decenter English. I became much more self-conscious about how I participated in our interactions, which resulted in more careful listening and purposeful speaking during our discussions. Over the course of these interactions, I began to shift my attention from my "customary point of view (the ego)" to instead focus on trying to see and empathize with my group mates' perspectives, a process that taught me to let go of my defensiveness in order to adopt a more inclusive stance (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 150). These interactions raised my awareness of the often invisible inner resources needed to resist hegemonic ideologies and enact translanguaging in practice: vulnerability, risk taking, courage, and humility.

Revisiting Chapter 7: Bodymindsoul Transformation

The experiences I carried with me from my engagement in TTT directly influenced my ongoing self-study and future interactions as reflected in Chapter 7: "Bodymindsoul

Transformation."[15] While I have no doubt that, without my engagement in TTT, I would have still pursued the Fellowship to Enhance Global Understandings that resulted in my journey to France, I also know my interactions with TTT framed my experience and contributed to my decision to remain alone in France beyond the two-week fellowship. I was nearly always self-conscious about my presence as an interloper and consistently attempted to use French even when it would have been easier to rely on English. I often reminded myself that I had many resources I could rely on to make meaning (e.g., ecological resources, technology, and what French I did know) as well as extensive knowledge about learning another language and translanguaging as a theory of practice. I also carried with me the commitment to levelling hierarchies that was central to TTT's exploration of translanguaging as well as the examples of courage, humility and critical self-awareness of my group mates.

Considering what privileges I had in a space where I could not take for granted the language, cultural practices, or ideological constructs, I began to see more clearly what it meant to teeter on the edge of *nos/otras*, to be both us and others, oppressor and oppressed, insider and outsider simultaneously. While I did not fully understand it at the time, existing alone on the opposite side of the Atlantic Ocean led me to turn my emerging consciousness inward to wonder who the people in my family were who chose to emigrate from Europe to the U.S. and under what circumstances. What emotional resolve did it take to leave behind their homes and communities, to know they might never see loved ones again, and to begin anew in a new

[15] In discussing the experiences described in Chapter 7, I refer to them here in chronological order in order to illustrate the trajectory of my learning for pedagogical purposes whereas in the actual findings reflected in Chapter 7, I wrote about the events themselves in order of my process of *conocimiento.* For one, this decision was made in order to create a cohesive story arch. I also made this decision to illuminate the fact that my ideological reckoning and transformation came about through purposeful reflection *after* my time in France and as a part of my ongoing self-study. I highlight this here to detangle the actual chronology of the events versus the chronology of my internal processes.

country, language and culture? What challenges did they face in finding new jobs, connecting with new communities, and finding belonging and acceptance? What facets of themselves and their histories were silenced by English and U.S. culture? And what parts of themselves were they unable to share with their children and grandchildren in a borrowed language? These questions were only flickers during my time in France, but they remained with me when I returned to the U.S. and began to engage in self-study on my own. They also reinforced my commitment to translanguaging, grounding in in my “bodymindsoul” (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 133) rather than just in my mind.

In that respect, my interactions with TTT and my time in France challenged me to embark on a deep and critical journey inward upon my return that I now saw as fundamental to learning to decenter myself and the privileges of my positionality in order to enact translanguaging as a critical praxis. Learning of my friends’ experiences with language oppression from an intersectional perspective made me realize how much I had taken for granted as a white, U.S. born, NES and made me wonder what else I did not know. I also recognized that I had more work to do on my own if I was going to, in Anzaldúa’s (2015) words, do more than “pay lip service to diversity issues” and contend with the “privilege of whiteness” (p. 145). This resulted in a deep dive into theoretical perspectives (e.g., critical race theory, decoloniality), historical overviews (e.g., Dunbar-Ortiz, 2015; Kendi, 2016; Ortiz, 2018), and narrative accounts (e.g., Anzaldúa, 2012, 2015; Ngũgĩ, 2005) with which I had limited exposure to throughout my educational career. Having learned to listen differently through my interactions with TTT—to not just hear and see, but also to feel alongside the stories and experiences of my groupmates—I engaged differently with the felt and embodied experiences of those I read than I might have before when I only attempted to understand in my mind.

Recognizing that I may never fully understand the accounts of others in the "bodymindsoul" (Anzaldúa, 2015) from the stance of my racial, linguistic, and citizenship privilege, I began to drawn threads of connection to my own experiences with harm, specifically those borne from familial trauma and patriarchal definitions of gender, as a source of empathy as well as an example of how to feel my way through the accounts of embodied harm of which I listened and read. I also began to wonder more about the silences in my family's history with respect to immigration, language, class, and even the racialization of Italian-Americans. *Why* did I know so little about my family's histories and language practices and cultural roots? The easy answer is "assimilation"—the ideological influences of the Herderian Triad (Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Blommaert & Verschueren, 1992), monoglossic ideologies (García, 2009), and native speakerism (Holliday, 2006) made manifest in the lived experiences of my family—how they parented, how they passed down stories, how they built emotional connections (or not) with others. I also wondered why it was so emotionally challenging to look at this history of loss. I had come to find it much easier to name how I have produced oppression as an LT and LTE, but much harder to name how I might be a product of it.

Looking to Anzaldúa for insight, I recognize that making this intellectual and emotional leap requires me to reject the binary construction of *nos/otras,* or colonizer/colonized, and to paradoxically see myself as both. On the one hand, I have experienced privilege as a white, U.S.-born, NES with some class privilege and education; on the other hand, I have experienced loss, limited access to resources and opportunities, and hardship as the result of the limitations of my class privilege, my family's educational history, and the erasure of assimilation. When I began to identify with the latter, I questioned whether it was my place to identify as "colonized." As far as I know, no member of my family was ever kidnapped from their homeland and forced into

enslavement. No member of my family had their home ripped away from them, their land and communities demolished through colonization and settler-colonization. And regardless of my forebears' experiences with being marginalized, my day-to-day reality reflects the privileges of being racialized as white, of speaking English, and of U.S. citizenship. Whatever experiences with violence and war, economic hardship, discrimination and xenophobia, and language loss and erasure my family has experienced is not a part of my experience. Is it? This question cannot be answered here, but has made me wonder what the fields of epigenetics (the study of how behavior and environment influence one's genetics) and trauma research (van der Kolk, 2014; Menakem, 2017) might contribute to the conversation about assimilationist language ideologies, the trauma of language loss in oneself and their connections with their family, and the need for translanguaging to be enacted in U.S. classrooms as a critical praxis.

Reaching through these wounds, I extended beyond the connections of my "home-ethnicity" to re-root myself in what Anzaldúa (2015) describes as rhizomatic "new tribalism, referring to Deleuze and Guattari's model of the self: "Unlike a plant with a single tap root, rhizomes spread in all directions, creating a…network in which every point can be connected to every other point" (p. 68). Ultimately, it was through *nepantla* contact zones—the overlap between my external interactions and my internal ideological reckoning—that I learned to reconfigure myself "outside the us/them binary" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 82), a process I now see as fundamental to the translanguaging reimagining of my pedagogy as an LT and LTE. In truth, my experience is only further evidence to support the wisdom of visionaries from whom I have learned. These include those explicitly woven throughout this dissertation, from poets and writers like Gloria Anzaldúa and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, educational linguists, like Ofelia García and Suresh Canagarajah, and my collaborators in TTT: Abe, Elie, Elizabeth, Laura, Maíra, and

Zhongfeng (all writers and educators in their own right). These also include the voices of the students who have been my teachers all along, who in refusing to lose parts of their humanity to education have taught me to regain my own. This brings me back to the purpose of this study: to advance educational equity, inclusion, and justice for language-minoritized learners in the U.S. To this end, I now turn to what I can distill from my ideological reckoning and translanguaging reimagining that has broader implications for the field of language teacher education.

Implications

Much like me, many LTs and LTEs fail to reckon with the underlying dehumanizing biases they bring into their classrooms let alone reimagine more humanizing possibilities for their pedagogical practices, like translanguaging. While I first came to understand and engage in translanguaging through my interactions with students, LTEs must continue to imagine new pathways within language teacher education in order to ensure LTs begin the overlapping and iterative process of awareness-building and praxis *before* they enter their own classrooms. Likewise, LTEs who are themselves complicit in perpetuating assimilationist ideologies must also reckon with and reimagine their pedagogical commitments. To this end, I offer four main implications based on the findings of this study for LTs and LTEs.

Adopting Ideological (Des)conocimientos as a Framework for LTE

One common thread throughout my process of *conocimiento* from my teacher preparation program to my work as an LTE today is the emergence of what I am calling an "Ideological *(Des)conocimientos*" framework for designing language teacher education. Upon revisiting my writing from my time as a pre-service teacher and onward, I was struck by how often the revelations I had about my own language and literacy education as well as my future work as an LT grew from texts and classroom conversations where these ideological manifestations were

explicitly named and analyzed. From the seeds that were planted then to the learning that has come since, I propose an "Ideological *(Des)conocimientos*" framework to catalyze awareness-raising and praxis in language teacher education. However, I first want to acknowledge that in *Light in the Dark,* Anzaldúa (2015) herself conceptualized a seven-stage journey to describe her process of *conocimiento* as an artist and activist. From what I can distill from Anzaldúa and my own development as an LT and LTE are five stages that I have explored within language teacher education courses I have taught; I will use, as an example, a graduate-level course on ESL teaching methods to support K-12 literacy instruction that I designed.

Stage 1: Looking Inward

For the first stage of this framework, I recommend that LTs and LTEs begin by reflecting on their own educational experiences (e.g., through composing a literacy autobiography or language portrait), a practice that has become common in teacher education courses (i.e., Florio-Ruane, 1994, Busch, 2018). Importantly, they should put this in conversation with the notion of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and the "spokes" of another common pedagogical activity, "the social identity wheel" (Harro, 1982), to consider how their respective stories are reflective of their multiple positionalities. Alongside this work, they can engage with other personal stories of language education, which serve the dual purpose of being "mentor texts" for their own writing as well as providing additional narratives with which to juxtapose to their own. For example, I have previously used Yazan's (2019) "Identities and ideologies in a language teacher candidate's autoethnography" and various passages from España and Herrera's (2020) *En comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students,* but other possibilities could include memoirs or novels that teachers might use in their future classrooms, such as Ruth Behar's *Lucky Broken Girl* or Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime.* Likewise,

teachers can share their stories aloud once they have had some time to build community and connection. This act of shared reflection serves as a touchstone that teachers can revisit throughout their learning. Similar to my experiences as a part of TTT (see Chapter 6), where we shared our own language portraits and language autobiographies, this shared act of storytelling can ground teachers' inquiry in their own experiences while allowing them to juxtapose their experiences with the rich narratives of others. This helps teachers construct a multifaceted lens with which to consider the myriad experiences of learners, past and present, rather than the myopic or essentialized view they might hold if they only engage with their own stories. In my experience, this juxtaposition also seems to surface complexities of our experiences, perhaps buried because they are taken for granted, such as in Elizabeth sharing that she also knew some Korean after Laura shared this part of her background or me realizing that my class status was a significant factor in my language learning experiences after Abe and Maíra discussed the role of class with respect to language learning in Mexico and Brazil, respectively.

Stage 2: Establishing Common Vocabulary

Threaded into the initial reflection of Step 1, teachers can establish a common vocabulary for naming and analyzing ideological influences in education (i.e., the language ideologies outlined in Chapter 4). This provides teachers with shared terminology to describe variations in their individual experiences or contexts with respect to how they are positioned within broader ideological structure, or master-narratives, through no fault or intention of their own. Consistent with the patterns of engagement within TTT, the use of this language to describe teachers' respective experiences can challenge them to contend with their experiences in being products/producers of these ideologies without labeling themselves in static terms. While I cannot speak for other members of TTT, I can say for myself that I could better take

responsibility for past, present and future acts when I could describe how I was either conforming to or resisting particular ideologies from one moment to the next. Teachers can then use this vocabulary to extend their lens from themselves to the learners they are seeking to center, considering who students are as multifaceted individuals. This includes explicitly naming common misconceptions of language-minoritized learners, themselves rooted in assimilationist ideologies, as well as engaging with more humanizing accounts of language-minoritized learners. For example, in viewing "Immersion," a YouTube video that is commonly used to raise teachers' awareness of language-minoritized learners' experiences with marginalization in schools, I asked teachers to name instances that reflected the influence of assimilationist language ideologies versus heteroglossic ideologies. Throughout this experience, teachers can see how the teacher and students moved from one set of ideologies to the next in any given moment, a practice that they can apply to examine their own self-study of their moment-by-moment enacted pedagogy.

Stage 3: Looking Outward

Next teachers can extend their lens outward to consider the influence of these ideologies within broader policies, programs and structures in U.S. education, from legislation and court cases to accountability measures and curricular standards. As with before, teachers can employ the vocabulary they have developed to name and analyze language ideologies that inform what and who is being centered with respect to the U.S. educational systems; importantly, the accounts included should be selected to juxtapose competing perspectives and scales. Borrowing from a unit of study in España and Herrera's (2020) *En comunidad,* teachers can use the perspective of master narratives and counter-narratives to analyze legislative and policy endeavors, theoretical perspectives, and educational practices. For example, in the

aforementioned class, I asked teachers to read about important legal cases and policies enacted by the federal government as well as interviews conducted among activists and advocates seeking change at the local level in their exploration of the history of U.S. bilingual education.

Consistent with my efforts through my personal self-study to embed myself in historical accounts, theoretical perspectives and personal narratives (see Chapter 7), the intention of this stage is to raise teachers' awareness of the manifestation of these ideologies within broader educational structures, which then reify those same structures. Simultaneously, I want teachers to recognize their agency to resist these ideologies and structures, similar to what I and my TTT colleagues discovered as we considered how we might shift our interaction practices with each other, our teaching practices, and even how we interact in the world to reflect a translanguaging stance. Again inspired by España and Herrera's (2020) *En comunidad*, teachers can identify master narratives that are present in their schools and classrooms (i.e., de facto English-only classroom/school language policies, inadequate resources for engaging bi/multilingual parents and caretakers) and create counter-narratives in resistance, such as composing poetry, designing infographics, writing letters to local officials, or designing professional development for their colleagues.

Stage 4: Enacting in Practice

The next stage, where teachers explicitly engage with teaching and learning in action, is one that I have not yet fully envisioned with respect to the emergent framework I offer here and for which the findings of this study do not explicitly address. With respect to the course that I have used as an example, this stage actually constituted the longest amount of time and was inclusive of learning about curricular standards, diagnostic and standardized assessments, curricular design, instructional practices, scaffolding learning, conducting formative assessment,

and reflecting on practice. What I can say is that my experiences in engaging in translanguaging practices among TTT and then extending this within my own self-study (including my sojourn to France and my return to the K-12 classroom) were instrumental in allowing me to extend the critical lens and translanguaging practices I was developing to real-life experiences. In my future work as a scholar and LTE, I plan to analyze the data I have collected when I returned to the K-12 classroom to consider how my learning from across various *nepantla* contact zones influenced how I approached curriculum design, instruction and assessment as an LT and how it has since informed my pedagogy as an LTE. What I can say now (and will expand on shortly) is that the intentional co-construction of *nepantla* contact zones can provide teachers with fertile ground for their own inquiry and self-study through the iterative process of reflection and practice.

Stage 5: Turning Inward Again

In the final stage, teachers can turn the lens inward once again. They can revisit the stories they created about their own language or literacy experiences at the beginning of the course, reflect on their learning from across the course, and explicitly state what beliefs they hold about being language teachers. I believe it is important for teachers to engage in introspection through writing, such as through writing a philosophy of teaching statement, but also to make their accounts public. For instance, in the aforementioned course, I asked teachers to record FlipGrid videos where they role-played giving a presentation or participating in a job interview with colleagues. As with my own learning, the overlapping and iterative process of looking inward and outward is fundamental to building awareness as well as one's capacity to take action in pursuit of social emancipation.

Designing Nepantla Contact Zones for Teacher Education

A second implication of this study is the potential for designing what I have described as *nepantla* contact zones among pre-service and in-service LTs as well as LTEs as a context for self-study. As I illustrate throughout this study, *nepantla* contact zones are both outward and inward endeavors. While Pratt's (1991) and Canagarajah's (2013) theorization of contact zones seems to refer to outward interactions and adaptive communicative practices that emerge organically, my theorization of *nepantla* contact zones, particularly in light of Anzaldúa's (2012) framing, involve intentionality, both in interacting with others and in reflecting within oneself. In alignment with the intersection between Anzaldúa and Pratt's theorizations, I also currently see them as being rooted in three objectives: (1) colliding with identities, practices, and beliefs distinct from one's own; (2) questioning and fracturing one's taken-for-granted assumptions; and (3) actively reconstructing and transforming one's awareness and actions.

With respect to intentional interaction with others, I contend that *nepantla* contact zones must emerge from members' shared interests and investment in improving the conditions of our society; in the context of this study, I have focused on improving the conditions of our society through language education, specifically through translanguaging pedagogy, but I imagine this concept could be extended to other shared endeavors in healthcare, local governments or other social systems. Building from my own experiences, these interactional spaces can certainly emerge organically on their own provided that members engage in spaces where they come into contact with language and cultural practices, beliefs and values, and histories and lived experiences that contrast with their own. To that end, schools and classrooms themselves can act as contact zones, but as I argue earlier, members need to be positioned as equals; in other words, although teacher education classes and departments can be contact zones, I would caution against

superimposing participation in such a group as a condition for completing graduation requirements or faculty service requirements since this could reify the exact power dynamics such a group is meant to mitigate. That said, given the tremendous segregation within the U.S. today (see Bonilla-Silva, 2006 and Kao, Joyner, & Balistreri, 2019), LTs and LTEs are not likely to engage in contact zone interactions through happenstance alone; thus the creation of *nepantla* contact zones has to be somewhat intentional. One possibility is to pursue the co-construction of shared inquiry groups through a virtual platform, as illustrated by TTT.

Given the aforementioned objectives, all members within a *nepantla* contact zone are positioned as equal participants in the endeavor with conscious attention to inherent ideological power dynamics. This is predicated on several interactional practices. One is adopting a stance of humility, whereby all members acknowledge equal validity of each other's' viewpoints and experiences and are open to making sense of competing beliefs, values, and cultural practices. This includes intentional listening whereby those listening recognize that they are attempting to hear and understand the speaker's experiences from the speaker's viewpoint rather than superimposing their viewpoints as listeners. Another practice involves acknowledging and taking responsibility for one's own discomfort (e.g., defensiveness, guilt, shame) without superimposing that responsibility on other group members. This may involve actively revising a viewpoint in the moment during the group's interaction; it could also involve turning inward through personal self-study and reflection.

The element of intentional reflection within oneself with the purpose of personal transformation is, to me, what distinguishes *nepantla* contact zones from contact zones. In my view, colliding with others' perspectives, identities, cultures, dispositions, and meaning-making practices through interaction functions as a catalyst to raise members' awareness of how much

they cannot see or understand given their positionalities and the limitations of their perspectives. As I began to question what I know to be true from my own, isolated experiences—my beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions fracturing—I began to see the contours of how much I could not know or see given the limitations of my privileged perspective. To turn back to my fellow TTT group members and to ask them to fill in those gaps might have unfairly positioned them as being responsible for my learning and would have shifted the power dynamics in the group. More specifically, I would have centered my privilege as a white, U.S.-born NES. To use Anzaldúa's (2012) language, in choosing to self-educate and self-reflect, I "put certain aspects of [my] identities backstage," so our shared inquiry into translanguaging could remain central (p. 77). Thus, I saw it as my responsibility to seek out voices and perspectives to fill in those gaps through ongoing self-education and reflection. To that end, I turn to the next implication I offer in this study.

Exploring nos/otras Autoethnography

To paraphrase Anzaldúa, through writing, we write ourselves, undergoing ongoing transformation as our writing takes shapes on the page. As this study illustrates, engaging in self-study through a critical lens can challenge LTs and LTEs alike to reckon with their own ideologies in order to reimagine more transformative and transgressive language pedagogies, like translanguaging. First, this study affirms and extends the findings of prior research that reveals how LTs and LTEs can engage in self-study to contend with assimilationist language ideologies and competing sociopolitical tensions that influence their pedagogies (e.g., Dengerink et al., 2015; Dinkelman, 2003, 2011; Golombek, 2015; Kubota & Miller, 2017; Morgan, 2004; Peercy et al., 2019; Ponzio et al., forthcoming; Sabatier & Bullock, 2018; Yazan, 2019). This study also affirms the affordance of conducting self-study research in collaboration with others (e.g., Boyd

& Harris, 2010; Dengerink et al., 2015; Green & Pappa, 2020; et al., 2019; Viczeko & Wright, 2010). This study also offers new insight into the potential for self-study research, specifically in what I am calling *nos/otras* autoethnography. While I outline how I conceptualize this approach to research in Chapter 4, I wish to highlight to recommendations for how this method might be taken up by others.

First, engaging in autoethnographic research challenged me to both closely examine my own personal experiences while gaining distance from them through various theoretical frameworks in order to consider the influence of broader sociocultural issues, dominant discourse, and corresponding ideologies (Yazan, 2019). This occurred through the multiple layers of analysis that occurred throughout the process of data generation, where I first recalled memories and culled artifacts that would help me answer my two research questions; I was fortunate to have kept much of my previous writing as a pre- and in-service teacher—writing that was itself generated during times in my life where I was composing my new identity as a teacher. In the next layer, I had to weave together a cohesive narrative with the intention of leading the reader through these experiences while staying close to my theoretical framework to nuance my analysis and illuminate key findings within my narrative. In this regard, writing as a form of research method was supported by the juxtaposition of the narrative account I composed about myself with the multiple theoretical lens I used in this study: language ideologies, contact zones, *nos/otras*, and *nepantla*. This overlapping process—of narrativizing my experiences while consistently regrounding myself in theory—was necessary in order to be able to "simultaneously look at myself as subject and object" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 3). In fact, as I was writing my final findings chapter, I made the decision to reread Anzaldúa's (2015) *Light in the Dark*, seeking to gain distance from the memories I was writing about—memories that I had created more

recently. Staying close to theory was one way I attempted to avoid "falling into self-indulgence, sentimentality, or grandstanding" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 103) throughout composing autoethnography, particularly as I attempted to see myself as both *nos* and *otras*.

Composing a *nos/otras* autoethnography was also facilitated by the overlapping nature of the collaborative self-study in which I was engaged with members of TTT alongside my independent self-study; as I contended with my own past experiences, I was able to make them public during our meetings, where my experiences were literally juxtaposed with the various positionalities and experiences of my colleagues. During these interactions, I was intentional about listening and engaging with my colleagues' input from their standpoints, once again allowing me to examine my narrative from multiple viewpoints. As I engaged in the process of analysis and writing, I also attempted to adopt the same intentional practices that I had developed through interaction with TTT: moving towards the discomfort of defensiveness, guilt, and humility on the periphery. These intentional practices essentially served as an analytic approach, whereby my embodied reactions to the data I was generating helped me determine how to interpret my experiences. I came to recognize this discomfort as a "light in the dark" and evidence of my emerging *conocimiento* as I rejected the dominant, dehumanizing assimilationist ideologies into which I had been acculturated. In future work, I intend to continue theorizing what it means to enact *nos/otras* autoethnography as an approach to research and what potential it offers to LT and LTEs seeking to engage in critical approaches to research and teaching.

Decentering Ourselves: Embodying Translanguaging as Praxis

A common adage in education is to "center our students" in the classroom. In response, I ask: What needs to be moved from the center in order for our students to be there?

In the context of many classrooms in the U.S., what is centered are the meaning-making practices and cultural resources of the predominately white, U.S.-born, English-speaking teaching force—which are then reflected back to them in their multiple ideological manifestations:

De facto English-only school policies.

English-centric standardized assessments.

Whitewashed curricular guidelines and resources.

Enacting translanguaging as a form of critical praxis helps us renegotiate what is at the center, positioning all meaning-making resources as equally valid for learning and positioning all members as equal participants in the democratic classroom community (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). However, in order for its critical aims to be realized in U.S. language education classrooms, many teachers—myself included—must learn to *see* and *hear* their students and their students' meaning-making practices and cultural resources for what they are, not through the exclusionary lens of the "white gaze" (Morrison, 2013). As Anzaldúa (2012) suggests, this requires that we set aside our "customary point of view (the ego)" (p. 150) in order to let go of the binary thinking that is mutually reinforced by the construction assimilationist language ideologies, national borders, and the social construction of race. In other words, we must learn to decenter ourselves.

This study provides new and important insight into the deeply critical and self-reflective work in which LTs and LTEs must engage in order to ensure they are not undermining the transformative potential of translanguaging for language-minoritized students (Poza, 2017). To this end, this study calls into question whether translanguaging can truly be enacted as a critical praxis if LTs and LTEs do not uncover the underlying assimilationist ideologies that inform their

pedagogical stances and problematize their culpability in perpetuating linguistic and racialized oppression. Thus, in order to ensure translanguaging is more than an educational fad, LTs and LTEs alike must engage in a process of intentional collision, fracturing and transformation in order to reimagine more liberatory and democratic translanguaging approaches to English language education.

In my experience, this process of transformation was first catalyzed by the practical realities of interacting across meaning-making practices and cultural resources and was fueled through the ongoing intellectual endeavor of learning about translanguaging as a language theory and pedagogy. But even more so, the ideological reckoning that was truly necessary for my pedagogical transformation came through embodied learning. I had to learn to sit and listen to the accounts of others, to feel my way through what they were sharing. I had to be witness to the courage and vulnerability and openness of my peers in TTT. I had to go abroad and experience the loneliness and discomfort and humility in order to intentionally usurp ways of being and thinking that I had long taken for granted. And I had to reach, deep down, through my own wounds to heal from severed roots and discover how to connect to a new root system irrespective of binary social constructions or assumed boundaries between languages. Across these embodied experiences, I have begun to decenter myself in order to embody translanguaging as praxis.

> In order to discover the roots of connection
> My father would tell us, "listen two times as much as we speak."
>
> Anzaldúa would say, "our bodies are the ground of thought."
>
> And so I say:
>
> Listen to our bodies two times as much as our minds.
> Move toward defensiveness and guilt.
> Seek humility on the periphery.
> And seek moments of collision and fracturing in order to transform the state of language education.

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