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## Teaching Through a Transformative Lens: Exploring Teachers' "Trans" Perspective in Diverse Classrooms

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**ABSTRACT:** Employing the three “trans” concepts – translanguaging, transnationalism, and transculturalism – as a theoretical framework, this qualitative study examines teachers’ lesson plans, classroom fieldnotes, and journal writings that critically reflect on their teaching practices to explore how they provide transformative learning spaces in their racially/culturally/linguistically diverse classrooms. The findings show that the teachers reshaped their views on students’ translanguaging, prepared their lessons from the “trans” perspectives, and challenged current mainstream discourses by disrupting monolithic conceptions. The study provides implications that educators can create a transformative learning space in achieving social justice and equity by using assets-based lenses in their curriculum.

**KEYWORDS:** Translanguaging, transnationalism, transculturalism, teacher education, multicultural classroom

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The goals of teacher education programs in the U.S. are to not only construct appropriate curriculum and assessment for K-12 student learning but also to create positive and caring environments through reciprocal relationships for student development. Researchers pointed out that the majority presence in teacher preparation programs is white, monolingual English-speaking teacher candidates (Chávez-Moreno et al., 2022; Dixson & Dingus, 2007; Seltzer, 2019). Moreover, many teacher education programs serve to maintain a Eurocentric curriculum and train pre-service teachers “as if they will be teaching homogeneous, white, middle-class school communities” (Ukpokodu, 2007, p. 9); thus, teacher candidates may not practice various ways of understanding the values and cultures of students from diverse backgrounds.

Yet, as schools are becoming racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse, offering classrooms where students' heritage language (HL) and cultural heritage are included, welcomed, and valued becomes vital. Over a few decades, the term translanguageing (García, 2009) has become prevailing in theory, practice, and research, and an increasing number of scholars have examined translanguageing practices by exploring bi/multilinguals' unique and fluid communicative strategies when utilizing their entire language resources (García & Kleifgen, 2019; García et al., 2017; Lee, 2021, 2023; Li, 2024; Solorza, 2019). Although translanguageing includes critical theoretical principles that interrogate language hierarchies and communicative inequalities (Lee, 2023; Mendoza et al., 2023; Palmer et al., 2019), translanguageing studies from language-centered scholarships may not address the concept of racialization from perceived racial discrimination nor encompass how bi/multilingual individuals construct and negotiate their ethno-racial identities (Alim et al., 2016; Chaparro, 2019; Lo, 2020; Wolfram et al., 2023). To adequately serve bi/multilingual students in today's culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, utilizing multi-dimensional perspectives that emphasize the intersectionality of language, race, and culture is required for prospective teachers. Yet, there is a paucity of research exploring how teachers in the Southwest Region of the U.S., where dual language programs are uncommon throughout school districts, understand translanguageing, transnationalism, and transculturalism as pedagogical practices and employ those concepts in their curricula by utilizing students' bi/multilingual, transnational, and transcultural funds of knowledge (Cuero, 2010; Dabach & Fones, 2016) in their diverse classrooms.

The purpose of this study is to expand prevailing notions of translanguageing, transnationalism, and transculturalism by providing insights into the ways teachers in a white teacher education program 1) comprehend the concepts of these "trans" perspectives that transcend fixed notions of monolithic, monoglossic, and monocultural norms/ideologies and 2) implement relevant pedagogical practices in assisting elementary-aged bi/multilingual students' learning and engagement in their racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse (RCLD) classrooms. The following research questions guided the study: How does learning about the "trans" (i.e., translanguageing, transnationalism, and transculturalism) frameworks and practices influence the teachers' perspectives on their instructional decision-making and inform their teaching practices in their RCLD classrooms?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employed three different but relevant conceptualizations – translanguageing, transnationalism, and transculturalism – as theoretical frameworks. The three "trans" concepts illuminate people and their communities in a current diverse world. The integration of these three theories has contributed to comprehending complex multilingual and multicultural individuals, communities, and society beyond the boundaries of national identity (Donahue, 2016; Fenton & Mann, 2019) because incorporating the three concepts dismantles the traditional

notion of fixed relationships between separate ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic groups. This section addresses essential tenets of translanguaging, transnationalism, and transculturalism and displays how scholars adopt them to build a dynamic learning community, which resonates with the focus of the present study.

### **Transnationalism and Transculturalism in a Globalized World**

Because of globalization, which denotes “transcontinental or interregional flows of networks and activity” (Held et al., 2000, p. 16), cultural borders have become permeable. As Beyer (2007) pointed out that “all people on earth liv[e] in a single social space” (p. 98), a truly pure culture does not exist. The movement of people, ideas, and cultures across national borders and these deterritorialized global flows enable the formation and connection of diaspora communities. Thus, individuals in diasporic communities (i.e., (im)migrants and expatriates) shape hybrid but ambivalent identities (Appadurai, 1996) by navigating multiple cultural contexts, drawing from both their ancestral homeland and their adopted country. Scholars argued that vibrant and fluid aspects of globalization influence multinational interactions and international movements, which leads to embodying transnational and transcultural individuals’ social activities and cultural practices (Elteren, 2011; Morrell, 2008; Robins, 2006). Accordingly, transnationalism and transculturalism have become central impetus for diasporic studies.

Transnationalism indicates the social processes when immigrant individuals engage in intercultural and sociopolitical activities that connect their homelands and the host lands (Giroux, 2005; Lam, 2004; Vertovec, 2001). Transnational immigrants refer to individuals who live in or expatriate to host countries but sustain close social, cultural, political, and/or economic connections with their countries of origin (Guerra, 1998; Hornberger, 2007; Orellana, 2016). While transnationalism acknowledges the presence of national boundaries, it further highlights other metaphorical, that is, less tangible (e.g., political, economic, social, and cultural) borders beyond their spatial proximity (de los Ríos, 2018; Lee, 2022, 2024a; Skerrett, 2012). Since transnationalism influences individuals’ social practices and creates connections that extend national borders (Hannerz, 1998), the process of transnationalism is not stagnant but constantly changing and evolving (Tedeschi et al., 2022).

By juxtaposing the conception of transnationalism with transnationalization, Wolfgang Welsch (1999) coined the term transculturalism to emphasize the transitory and mutable nature of culture. According to Welsch (1999), cultures in contemporary society are recurrently passing through social interactions *with one another* within communities and social institutions, essentially transferring from one generation to the next. Since cultures are constantly interconnected due to the movement of people, goods, and ideas, these continuous cultural vicissitudes in a globalized society transcend traditional national and cultural borders, leading to a continuous exchange and blending of cultural elements that encompass

accumulative cultures (Imbert, 2014; Loh, 2022). For individuals who move across national and cultural borders, their personal identity becomes more complex and fluid because they encounter various social interactions and build relationships within their new community, leading to hybrid, flexible, and multifaceted identities that blend aspects of their original culture with elements of their new environment (Giroux, 2005; Jurkova & Guo, 2018; Lange, 2015; Montgomery, 2014; Sánchez & Kasun, 2012). Accordingly, those individuals are more likely to gain the power of a future promise from their recurring border-crossing experiences and practices, which are regarded as transnational and transcultural byproducts in a globalized world (de los Ríos, 2018, 2020; Skerrett, 2012).

### **Incorporating Translanguaging Pedagogy in Transnational and Transcultural Contexts**

García (2009) conceptualized the term translanguaging, which describes bi/multilinguals' fluid communicative strategy drawing on their full linguistic and semiotic resources without limiting their language capabilities (García & Kleifgen, 2019) to extend their communicative competence in a creative and meaningful way (Cenoz et al., 2022; García et al., 2017; Lee, 2021; Solorza, 2019). Translanguaging further implies a move away from hierarchical conceptions of language (Mendoza et al., 2023; Musanti & Rodríguez, 2017; Palmer et al., 2019). One of the key goals of translanguaging is to actively support and protect minoritized languages, speakers, and communities (Dorner et al., 2023; Lee, 2023); thus, translanguaging disrupts linguistic inequality and the power relations among languages in the classroom (Allard, 2017; Cenoz et al., 2022; Guerrero, 2021; Poza, 2017). In other words, translanguaging recognizes and values the affirmation and sustainability of home languages (Cummins & Persad, 2014; Lee, 2021, 2023) that are often regarded as susceptible and not always secured in the majority language context (Lee & García, 2020, 2021).

### **The Intersection of Translanguaging, Transnationalism, and Transculturality**

The principal aim of transnational, transcultural, and translanguaging studies is to dismantle the national, cultural, and linguistic orthodoxy that draws boundaries. The integrated notions of the three trans lenses provide individuals a means to move away from a monolithic ideology by weakening and disrupting the static and immobile social, cultural, and linguistic practices (Mahon et al., 2019). According to Canagarajah (2013), linguistic and cultural contact as a result of migration and globalization have established transnationalism and transculturalism in modern societies. Similar to emergent bilingual students who acquire societal language in addition to their HLs, students living in transnational and transcultural

contexts develop different cultural values and sustain social participation from two or more national cultures.

Yet, at the same time, transnational and/or transcultural individuals are more likely to face linguistic and cultural assimilation (Guarnizo et al., 2003; Smith, 2006) as they are forced to “erase or give up all that represents their origin country ... to replace these with the U.S.” (Sánchez, 2009, p. 53). According to Sánchez, these “subtractive forces” of assimilation easily force transnational/transcultural students to abandon both their language and culture of heritage and would eventually eradicate their identities and their ties to families. Hence, it is imperative that educators authorize students’ translanguaging practices and consider how their transnational and transcultural funds of knowledge can be included in the classroom. To challenge dominant discourses that uphold inequitable practices, the critical tenets of translanguaging, transnationalism, and transculturalism must be reflected in RCLD classrooms, in which power dynamics (i.e., language and cultural hierarchies) are immortalized and perpetuated rather than questioned or challenged. By doing so, educators can help students maintain their linguistic and cultural heritage and families’ transnational and transcultural funds of knowledge in embracing their vibrant living experiences and cultivating their multi-dimensional identities.

## Methods

This qualitative case study took place at a university in the Southwest Region of the U.S. where I was a faculty member in the teacher education program. The university is committed to preparing pre-service and in-service teachers to work toward equity and justice in a range of education settings. The university is a predominantly white institution, and the undergraduate teacher education program is about 90% white. In the Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) Master of Education program, students who choose Bilingual Education (BE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) as their specialization prepare for the state ESL subject area test and/or pursue their teaching certification in ESL. They are required to take three specialty BE/ESL courses in addition to seven core C&I courses. I taught all three BE/ESL courses and one of the core C&I courses.

### Graduate Courses Participants Took

By taking the three BE/ESL courses, students learned about the history, theoretical foundation, and the impact of policies on BE/ESL education in the U.S. (course 1), developed an understanding of linguistic varieties and ethnocultural diversity by inspecting raciolinguistic ideologies that are widespread in society (course 2), and then applied teaching methods, materials, and assessments by creating differentiated instruction and lessons for RCLD students (course 3). While taking these three courses, students were introduced to translanguaging not only

as a bi/multilinguals' unique communicative strategy drawing on their entire linguistic knowledge but also as a way to disrupt hierarchical conceptions of language (Mendoza et al., 2023; Palmer et al., 2019). Thus, taking those courses helped students gain an understanding of translanguaging theory, pedagogy, and practices by reading scholarly articles, watching relevant instructional videos, and engaging in class discussions. One of the core C&I courses that I taught emphasized how to dissolve national and cultural borders in a globalized world. The course aimed to introduce students to transnational and transcultural perspectives through discussions of a set of contemporary multicultural literary texts where the themes or topics aligned with (im)migration, diaspora, multilingualism, and orientalism/occidentalism.

## Participants

41 students were taking the core C&I course at the time of the study. Among them, 11 students chose BE/ESL as their emphasis and four of them were taking the C&I course and the last BE/ESL course at the time of this study after taking the two previous BE/ESL courses. As a part of the third BE/ESL course assessments, students were asked to 1) create their weekly lesson plans considering the classroom environment where they worked as a K-12 teacher and their students' demographics, 2) teach their lessons for a week, and then 3) write a report reflecting on their teaching methods, materials, and practices. I invited the four students to participate in this study by completing a small-scale empirical investigation in their classrooms; these four worked as classroom teachers in elementary schools and agreed to participate in the study by sharing the details of their instructional methods and their analyses of pedagogical practices. The four teachers identified as novice teachers as they had no more than three years of teaching experience (see Table 1 for Participant Information). Participation in this study was entirely voluntary and separated from their coursework.

**Table 1**

*Participant Information*

Name	Grade Level Taught	Content Area	Years of Teaching Experiences	Ethnic Identity	Reported Language Use	Student Demographics in the Classroom
Lizzy	3rd grade	ELA	3 yrs	Mexican American	HL was Spanish but lost it and became a monolingual in English	70% Hispanic 20% White 8% African American 2% Asian

Jase	4th grade	Science	2.5 yrs	White	Monolingual in English	52% White 20% Hispanic 14% African American 8% Asian 6% Native American
Grace	3rd grade	ELA	2 yrs	White	Monolingual in English	42% White 28% Hispanic 11% African American 9% Asian
Ellie	5th grade	ELA	3 yrs	Asian American	HL was Korean but identified as a limited Korean speaker	50% White 25% Asian 15% African American 10% Hispanic

### Researcher's Positionality

As the author and researcher of this study, I identify as a transnational/transcultural scholar and a race-critical teacher educator. I am a first-generation immigrant from South Korea and bilingual in Korean and English. I had previously worked at Korean heritage language schools in the U.S. for ten years; I worked with second-generation Korean American students by implementing translanguaging pedagogy and including students' transnational/transcultural funds of knowledge in my curriculum. My previous teaching experiences enhanced my understanding of how bi/multilingual and/or transnational/transcultural individuals cultivate their funds of knowledge when participating in different cross-border activities and dynamic transnational life events. My accumulated experiences and shared knowledge helped the in-service teachers in my graduate courses expand their viewpoints and develop instructional practices in their RCLD classrooms.

### Data Collection Sources and Procedures

The primary data for this article was the four teachers' weekly lesson plans, their fieldnotes, their journal writings where they critically reflected on their teaching practices, and the transcripts of the audio recordings during interviews. Each teacher participated in interviews three times for 40-50 minutes during the semester. The first interviews were conducted before the teachers designed their lessons. During the first interviews, I asked questions to learn about each of the

teachers' classroom environments (i.e., student demographics, teaching philosophy, and previous instructional practices). The second interviews were held after the teachers created their five-day weekly lesson plans. Since I learned about instructional elements and the learning environment in each teacher's classroom from the first interviews, I was able to provide suggestions when the teachers had questions or concerns regarding their lesson plans, and the teachers modified and revised their lessons based on the comments they were given by me.

The teachers participated in the third interview after they taught their lessons for a week. The third interviews were based on the collections of the teachers' classroom field notes (i.e., informal memos while teaching) and their narrative journaling (i.e., analytical reflection after teaching the lessons). The teachers' oral narratives obtained from the third interview were also analyzed as they provided the details of teachers' instructional practices and their students' responses and participation during the lessons. In addition, my analyses and queries provided the teachers with opportunities to clarify and elaborate on the details of their teaching methods and practices. Throughout the interviews, the teachers used dialogue to share their instructional approaches and practices that included the "trans" framework as they embraced instances of translanguaging and utilized students' transnational knowledge and transcultural experiences in their classrooms.

## Data Analysis

To seek the answer to the Research Question, I used open coding (Saldaña, 2021) as an initial step to analyze the teachers' lesson plans along with their field notes and narrative journaling that capture their teaching practices with classroom activities. I also read and re-read the transcripts of audio recordings of the interviews. Analyzing the interview results also helped me understand and explore the fullness of the teachers' pedagogical practices in their classrooms. When analyzing each teacher's interview responses, I identified whether consistent patterns were discovered from his/her lesson plans, field notes, and journal writing. Then I collated all pieces of data that were provided by the four teachers to search for emerging patterns to find themes and labeled each set of data with codes. After the first round of inductive coding, I analyzed the entire data set to seek the moments when the teachers provided transformative learning spaces through their lessons in their classrooms. In total, eight different codes were discovered under the theme of transformative pedagogy, such as reshaping their identities, shifting perspectives toward translanguaging pedagogy, understanding bi/multilingual learners' translanguaging practices, providing time and space for translanguaging in the classroom, utilizing students' transnational and transcultural knowledge, challenging Eurocentric curriculum, interrogating language norms and linguistic inequality, and designing curriculum to achieve justice and equity (See Table 2 for codes discovered under the theme of transformative pedagogy).

**Table 2***Codes for the Theme of Transformative Pedagogy*

Codes for the Theme of Transformative Pedagogy
Reshaping their identities
Shifting perspectives toward translanguaging pedagogy
Understanding bi/multilingual learners' translanguaging practices
Providing time and space for translanguaging in the classroom
Utilizing students' transnational and transcultural knowledge
Challenging Eurocentric curriculum
Interrogating language norms and linguistic inequality
Designing curriculum to achieve justice and equity

## Findings

The findings present that the four teachers offered transformative learning spaces in creative ways in their RCLD classrooms. The following section displays how the teachers 1) reshaped their views about students' translanguaging performance, 2) prepared their lessons from the "trans" perspectives, and 3) challenged current mainstream discourses by disrupting monolithic conceptions within their multilingual/multicultural classroom dynamics.

### Shifting Teachers' Perspectives Towards Students' Translanguaging Performance

The four teachers shared that their perspectives toward translanguaging had shifted after taking the three BE/ESL courses. All four teachers noted that they had reconsidered the idea and consequences of allowing emergent bilingual students to employ their full language repertoires in their classrooms. For instance, Jase shared that he had occasionally told his students to speak English only when they spoke in Spanish during small group work. After learning translanguaging as a natural and normal language practice among bilinguals from the BE/ESL courses, Jase reconsidered his students' translanguaging performance. Jase stated,

Now I understand that my students who are bilinguals can extend their meaning and communication when they are allowed to use both languages. That's something I did not know and consider. I thought that my role as a teacher was to help them develop English as much as possible. But as we discussed in class, if they don't have comprehensible input, English immersion would not be helpful.

Jase's response implies that he was able to reflect on his pedagogical stance on emergent bilingual students' language use and shifted his views on their translanguaging practices.

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Meanwhile, Lizzy, whose HL was Spanish, shared her K-12 school experiences in a predominantly white school district. She responded in the interview:

During my elementary and secondary school years, I was almost forced to master English to fit in and also to prepare for standardized tests and assessments. So, I slowly lost Spanish and eventually became a monolingual speaker in English. I felt so bad and still feel bad about that. I tried to regain my Spanish during my college years.

Similarly, Ellie who identified as Korean American pointed out that her parents did not endeavor to help her develop Korean while attending English-only schools because they were advised to focus on the English language even at home. She further shared that she was ashamed when using Korean with her parents in front of her white classmates. She responded,

I should have been proud of myself for the fact that I spoke Korean in addition to English, but I felt humiliated speaking Korean. Using a language that is not English made me feel less valued and not intelligent because they automatically thought that I was not good at English.

The two teachers' responses indicate that, not only the English-only programs but also the social construction of the English language and people's deficit views on HL speakers had contributed to bi/multilingual speakers losing their HLs.

The teachers appreciated the overarching goals of translanguaging. Grace, for example, added,

The goals of translanguaging are not just allowing or encouraging students to use their entire languages but also to protect minoritized languages and those who speak that language so that people can understand that English is not a superior language.

Similarly, Lizzy stated during the interview:

The translanguaging theory is fascinating and makes more sense than code-switching to me because it breaks down the idea of language hierarchies. It is true that English has more power than Spanish or other minority languages in the U.S. However, we as classroom teachers need to change our mindset, and schools need to equally value our students' home languages and what they bring to the table.

As shown, Grace and Lizzy understood that translanguaging was more than mere fluid language use, but its implementation could challenge monoglossic ideologies of majority language and linguistic homogeneity, which mark minoritized language and their speakers unequally and unjustly (Flores & Rosa, 2019; Ortega, 2019). Thus, the teachers' understanding of the translanguaging paradigm not only shifted how they viewed bi/multilingual students' languaging practices but also recognized the counter-hegemonic impact of translanguaging to value the sustainability of students' HLs (Lee, 2021, 2023; Jaspers, 2018).

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## Providing Spaces for Translanguaging in Mainstream Classrooms

After learning about the benefits of translanguaging, the teachers endeavored to provide time and space for their emergent bilingual students to employ translanguaging in their classrooms. Although all the teachers worked in mainstream classrooms where the language of instruction was solely in English, they identified that half or more of their students were from RCLD backgrounds. Specifically, 70% of the students were children of Hispanic descent in Lizzy's classroom. Lizzy let the class know that she was learning Spanish, and she positioned herself as a language learner and the students who spoke Spanish as language experts. Lizzy stated:

I wanted my students to see that I am also learning a language so that they can see that their teacher is also learning a language. I hope they understand everyone can learn a second, third, or foreign language. More importantly, I want them to understand learning their home language is important. I shared with my students that the home language we had was Spanish, but I didn't practice enough, so I can't say that I am fluent in Spanish which I regret a lot. Most of my students are more fluent in Spanish than English. But I know that their English will dominate before they graduate elementary school since all the instruction we provide here is in English. I wish they got my message and did not stop using and learning Spanish.

According to Lizzy, there was a student who wrote the answer using a Spanish word when he filled in the worksheet. Lizzy provided full credit for the student because his answer in Spanish was accurate; she stated, "I decided to focus on whether he understood the concept or information he was given rather than whether he knew the word in English or its spelling in English." Lizzy's response indicates that she valued what the student knew by paying attention to the meaning of language rather than its form because she understood that the student was able to draw on the entire linguistic knowledge he had at his disposal in a creative and meaningful way rather than not provide an answer because it was not in English (García & Otheguy, 2020; Lee, 2023; Li, 2024).

Similarly, Jase shared what he did during his science lessons. His students often worked in groups for their science experiments.

The science terminologies in 4<sup>th</sup> grade can be challenging and confusing for students whose first language is not English. As I knew that we have five or six different languages my students use at home, I purposefully grouped the students considering their HLs so that each group had more than one student who shared the same language. I let them use their home language if needed. What I recently saw was two students in the same group who used Spanish at home were helping each other when comprehending the science concept.

Jase's response implies that teachers do not necessarily need to know or be fluent in every language their students speak, but they can still create spaces where students are encouraged to use all their languages for learning, even in monoglossic classroom settings (e.g., mainstream schools) (Duarte, 2019, 2020; Lee, 2021).

### **Utilizing Transnationalism and Transculturalism through Multicultural Literature in Their Instructional Pedagogy**

Three ELA teachers (Lizzy, Grace, & Ellie) embraced cultural diversity by including their students' funds of transnational and transcultural knowledge through multicultural literature in their curricula. Both Lizzy and Grace admitted that they did not consider including multicultural literature and relevant literacy practices before taking the four courses (i.e., the three BE/ESL courses and one C & I course). As a third-grade ELA teacher, Grace understood that much of her students' learning came from literature and stories. For Lizzy, who was also teaching ELA in third grade, phonics was her reigning philosophy when she taught first and second graders, but her focus shifted to whole language instruction for her third graders. Although both teachers had previously included children's literature when designing their lessons, when they went back to the list of literary texts they had previously used, they expressed their astonishment that they did not select any multicultural literature that portrayed diverse people, cultures, and lifestyles.

By preparing their lessons after taking the four courses, the teachers (Lizzy & Grace) focused on using multicultural literature to expand the concept and knowledge of people's transnational and transcultural practices in their classrooms. For instance, Lizzy included Latinx multicultural children's literature in her lessons to promote her students' (who came from Spanish-speaking countries) transnational identity development. Lizzy understood that most of her students (80%) had biracial identities from their ethnic/cultural heritage; thus, she believed that providing literature depicting transmigrants' life experiences would provide insights into how people traverse sociopolitical, racial, and cultural boundaries when traveling across national borders. One of her lessons showed that she introduced the book *My Diary from Here to There* (Pérez, 2002) about a family who crossed the border from Mexico and settled down in the U.S. According to Lizzy, incorporating this literature supported the Spanish-speaking students to make connections to the protagonist from the story and reflect on their transnational experiences in shaping their collective identities. After reading and discussing the literature, the students in her class were asked to participate in their writing practice (i.e., writing diary entries), which helped them shape their collective identities by engaging in authentic and meaningful literacy practices.

Unlike Lizzy's classroom, seven different national identities were represented in Grace's classroom; thus, Grace chose to use multicultural literature that encompassed different immigration stories from diverse racial/cultural groups.

She decided to use the book titled *We Came to America* (Ringgold, 2016) as it portrays America's rich history of immigration and cultural diversity so that she could teach about people's sophisticated and complex transnational lifeworlds. Grace discovered that her students expressed their curiosity while reading the book; thus, according to her, her classroom became a dynamic learning space with vibrant conversation. Grace shared that educators like her (white monolingual teacher) could create a classroom where transnationalism and transculturalism are recognized and celebrated.

Ellie, a fifth-grade Asian American teacher, had included multicultural literature in her curricula previously, but she shared that she had not considered including Asian American multicultural work because Asians represented just a small number of the school population. Yet, while taking the four courses, Ellie realized that the number did not constitute the importance. She argued, "Even if there were only one or two Asian American students in a school, we still should advocate for the representation. Asian American humanization matters, no matter the number." Ellie criticized the dominant belief that immigrant students' stories only matter if they are present in large numbers. Ellie then acknowledged that many works of children's literature on transnationalism or immigration have focused on Latinx groups. She identified that literature focusing on Asian students' experiences is not much supported nor elevated in the mainstream curricula. Although only 25% of the students in her classroom are Asian descendants, she decided to include Asian American stories. Ellie was concerned that she might be the only teacher who incorporated multicultural literature portraying Asian Americans' lived experiences.

Ellie also believed that engaging in reading and learning about Asian Americans' transnational lifeworld would assist white students and other students of color to learn about different life experiences, cultures, and values from a broader perspective. The three teachers included multicultural children's literature and relevant class activities in their curricula to embrace their students' transnational and transcultural funds of knowledge (Cuero, 2010; Dabach & Fones, 2016), which allowed them to recognize and respect the different cultural identities present in their classroom to cultivate a broader cultural awareness and appreciation for diversity among all students (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019; de los Ríos, 2018; Dutro & Haberl, 2018; Lee, 2022, 2024).

### **Challenging Mainstream Discourses by Disrupting Monoglossic and Hegemonic Ideologies**

The teachers' lesson plans revealed that two teachers (Jase & Ellie) intentionally planned to provide instruction to challenge the current education systems that prioritize English language and white American culture as the norm. As a fourth-grade science teacher, Jase acknowledged that he initially thought it would be difficult to bring different cultural representations into his science class. However, after taking the four courses, Jase comprehended that science teachers

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could be and must be creative in how they bring transnational and transcultural lenses into teaching. When he planned to teach about different scientists who contributed to certain inventions, he included unknown historical facts. One of his lessons, for instance, discussed how electricity was discovered and the experiment with Thomas Edison. Jase reminded the class that Thomas Edison was credited with the discovery, but the truth was that Edison had the help of his students and the one who helped the most was a Black man named Lewis Latimer. Jase further explained that Edison had to take credit for Latimer's work because Latimer was a Black man and Edison knew the public would not accept that Latimer was the one who should be accredited with this discovery. By identifying that science often tends to be white-washed, Jase highlighted the larger story when people of color were involved. During the interviews, Jase stated that "I do my best to find the true stories and present them, letting my students know that history is usually written by the winners, so we do not always see the full story when learning about history in general." He added, "I hope my students understand that anyone and everyone can do science."

Ellie, who incorporated Asian American multicultural literature into her lessons, taught the class the widespread existence of racial injustice by presenting discriminating behaviors and unjust treatment toward Asian groups. One of her lessons included the Asian multicultural literature *Inside Out and Back Again* (Lai, 2011), which illuminates the story of immigrant experiences from a Vietnamese child refugee's perspective. Ellie's lesson displays that she not only addressed the Vietnamese protagonist's transnational and transcultural experiences but also highlighted racist biases towards her Asian family by pointing out stereotyped referents and detrimental markers in the narrative. Ellie stated during the interview that

I decided to use the same literature you introduced us during class not just because I have Vietnamese students in my class but also because it was shocking to me that the Vietnamese protagonist in the story was described as a 'pancake' by a white boy because her face was basically too flat. I wanted my students to think about the problem and injustice issue in that scene and then hoped to hear thoughts and reactions both from my Asian students and white students.

As displayed, Ellie led the students to be aware of the existence of social inequity and structural racism against Asians that have occurred in society. Likewise, both Jase and Ellie provided different types of instruction as Science and ELA teachers; they tried to challenge current mainstream discourses and transform traditional teaching practices and beliefs by disrupting monolithic, monoglossic, and monocultural ideologies to achieve educational justice and equity in the classroom (Clark & Whitney, 2009; Schiera, 2019; Ukpokodu, 2007).

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## Discussion

The four teachers appreciated these trans perspectives that confront monolithic conceptions of teacher education and value integrated approaches to teaching (Donahue, 2016; Mahon et al., 2019). These multidimensional lenses helped the teachers understand how bi/multilingual and transnational students (re)construct, deconstruct, and negotiate who they are by connecting both sides of the national, racial, cultural, and/or linguistic borders. Although more than or about half of the students were considered RCLD in the classrooms, the teachers could not directly contest the English-only instruction because the English-monolingual practices were prevalent in their classrooms. Yet, the teachers were able to shift their perspectives toward bilingual students' translanguaging performances (from negative to positive) after they learned about the aims and effectiveness of translanguaging. The teachers demonstrated that they could offer learning spaces for translanguaging when students of the same HL interacted with one another in small groups or pair work, even in monolingually oriented classrooms (Lee & García, 2020, 2021). Similar to past studies that have underscored teachers' practices of and attitudes toward translanguaging (e.g., Corral & Sayer, 2023; García & Kleyn, 2016; Mary & Young, 2020; Schissel et al., 2018), the present study suggests the importance of teachers' beliefs and perspectives when it comes to students' languaging practices in mainstream classrooms.

Many studies (e.g., Alamillo et al., 2017; Escamilla et al., 2023; Esquinca et al., 2014; Gort & Sembiente, 2015; Martínez et al., 2015; Palmer et al., 2014; Sembiente et al., 2023; Worthy et al., 2013) have discovered that teachers in Two-Way Dual Language classrooms provide a space for translanguaging to recognize and validate students' HLs despite the language allocation policy. For instance, Esquinca et al. (2014) found that the teacher in their study was supposed to deliver science instruction in English, but she guided her students to utilize their entire languages through translanguaging to engage in science content learning. The teachers in the past studies intentionally and purposefully used Spanish not only to protect the position of or validate the use of Spanish but also to challenge the hegemony of English in the classroom. The present study similarly shows that the teachers identified the pervasive linguistic power structure and then acknowledged translanguaging as a possible counter-hegemonic pedagogical approach (Beiler, 2021) that transcends named language boundaries that exist in English-only mainstream settings (Corral & Sayer, 2023; García & Otheguy, 2020; Ortega, 2019). The teachers' instructional approaches and plans for RCLD learners affirmed and leveraged their fluid and dynamic language practices.

The three ELA teachers (Lizzy, Grace, and Ellie) embraced the concepts of transnationalism and transculturalism in their lessons by positioning the students' transnational literacy practices at the center of their instruction. The teachers understood that literacy in transcultural and transnational contexts was a valuable skill that students needed to develop because it not only embraced transnational students' varied experiences and cultures in constructing their multifarious identities in a positive way (de los Ríos, 2020; Dutro & Haberl, 2018) but also

assisted white students in learning about others' lived experiences and cultural values. By incorporating children's literature that illuminates how other transnational children constructed and negotiated their hybrid identities as a part of their literacy activities, the teachers led their students to reflect on their sophisticated and vibrant life events and experiences within their transnational and transcultural networks of community (Lee, 2024a). There has been ongoing work in transnational and transcultural literacies that examines immigrant students' collective identity construction (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019; de los Ríos, 2018; Dutro & Haberl, 2018; Handsfield & Valente, 2016; Lee, 2024a; Machado & Hartman, 2020). This study indicates the important role of teachers in creating a safe and transformative learning space where students feel valued to share their dynamic transcultural stories and vibrant transnational lifeworld.

Earlier studies demonstrate how classroom teachers have contributed to dismantling linguistic hierarchies and existing power structures in diverse classrooms (Mendoza et al., 2023; Palmer et al., 2019; Tai & Wei, 2021). The current study corroborates the previous findings by exemplifying two teachers' (Jase and Ellie) new ideological orientations and pedagogical transformation. The teachers attempted to challenge current mainstream discourses by confronting monolithic, monoglossic, and monocultural ideologies. As the teachers identified that Eurocentric curriculum could perpetuate racism and white supremacy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus & Iftikar, 2014), the teachers included voices of people from marginalized communities (African Americans for Jase and Asian Americans for Ellie) in their lessons by disrupting fixed social constructs (i.e., racial/ethnic or linguistic hierarchies) and interrogating the hegemonic structure of school curriculum. Although much of elementary school curricula focuses on white culture from a Eurocentric viewpoint (Brochin & Medina, 2017), findings suggest the necessity of adopting different perspectives and rejecting assimilative viewpoints using critical lenses when designing and teaching lessons, especially in RCLD classroom settings where justice and equity should be promoted (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016; Lee, 2024b; Liu & Ball, 2019; Schiera, 2019; Ukpokodu, 2007).

### Implications

The findings of this study imply that teachers in mainstream classrooms where monoglossic and monocultural norms prevail can still build and create a transformative learning space. Educators need to consider that bi/multilingual students' translanguaging is not only viable and fluid but also valuable and conducive practice in facilitating their learning and development, even in monoglossic instructional contexts (García et al., 2021; Lee & García, 2020, 2021). Teachers also should be mindful of interrogating the hegemonic norm when designing lessons within the American school curriculum. When teachers understand that their classrooms can be a communal space where immigrant students feel comfortable and empowered to use all of their transnational and

transcultural funds of knowledge (Cuero, 2010; Dabach & Fones, 2016), students are more likely to liberate their voices (Lee, 2024b). As the teachers in this study showed, providing transnational literacy practices can be a powerful pedagogical tool to embrace immigrant learners' rich experiences and intersectional identities.

In addition, as demonstrated by the teachers Jase and Grace, educators need to understand that white monolingual teachers are also able to invite their students to bring in their bi/multilingual resources, transnational experiences, and transcultural knowledge. By using these asset-based lenses in their curriculum, educators can reduce inequalities for disadvantaged and marginalized communities and achieve social justice and equity. Acknowledging a lack of diversity in the teaching workforce (Chávez-Moreno et al., 2022; Seltzer, 2019), it is recommended that researchers and educators should focus on race-critical perspectives to deeply investigate the systemic ideological barriers, including implicit bias, colorblind ideology, and institutional practices that inadvertently perpetuate inequity and prevent marginalized groups from thriving within the U.S. education system (e.g., Wolfram et al., 2023). This study provides implications for teacher educators that they can use to guide teacher candidates to practice diverse ways of valuing the languages and cultures of RCLD students, for instance, by critically examining their own biases, incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy, and adapting teaching methods to honor students' unique identities and experiences. By doing so, teacher education programs can contribute to more inclusive and equitable learning communities, which should be an ultimate goal in education (Poza, 2017).

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